The Treasury of David

by

Charles H. Spurgeon

Vol. 1

Ps. 1-41 (Book I)

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When I was a teenager my father paid me $2 a volume to read the 21 volume set of Charles Spurgeon's Sermons. This volume is prepared in remembrance of his impact on my young life.
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My Preface shall at least possess the virtue of brevity, as I find it difficult to impart to it any other.

The delightful study of the Psalms has yielded me boundless profit and ever-growing pleasure; common gratitude constrains me to communicate to others a portion of the benefit, with the prayer that it may induce them to search further for themselves. That I have nothing better of my own to offer upon this peerless book is to me matter of deepest regret; that I have anything whatever to present is subject for devout gratitude to the Lord of grace. I have done my best, but, conscious of many defects, I heartily wish I could have done far better.

The Exposition here given is my own. I consulted a few authors before penning it, to aid me in interpretation and arouse my thoughts; but, still I can claim originality for my comments, at least so I honestly think. Whether they are better or worse for that, I know not; at least I know I have sought heavenly guidance while writing them, and therefore I look for a blessing on the printing of them.

The collection of quotations was an after-thought. In fact, matter grew upon me which I thought too good to throw away. It seemed to me that it might prove serviceable to others, if I reserved portions of my reading upon the various Psalms; those reserves soon acquired considerable bulk, so much so that even in this volume only specimens are given and not the bulk.

One thing the reader will please clearly to understand, and I beg him to bear it in mind; I am far from endorsing all I have quoted. I am neither responsible for the scholarship or orthodoxy of the writers. The names are given that each author may bear his own burden; and a variety of writers have been quoted that the thoughts of many minds might be before the reader. Still I trust nothing evil has been admitted; if it be so it is an oversight.

The research expended on this volume would have occupied far too much of my time, had not my friend and amanuensis Mr. John L. Keys, most diligently aided me in investigations at the British Museum, Dr. William's Library, and other treasuries of theological lore. With his help I have ransacked books by the hundred, often without finding a memorable line as a reward, but at other times with the most satisfactory result. Readers little know how great labour the finding of but one pertinent extract may involve; labour certainly I have not spared: my earnest prayer is that some measure of good may come of it to my brethren in the ministry and to the church at large.
The Hints to the Village Preacher are very simple, and an apology is due to my ministerial readers for inserting them, but I humbly hope they may render assistance to those for whom alone they are designed, viz., lay preachers whose time is much occupied, and whose attainments are slender.

Should this first volume meet with the approbation of the judicious, I shall hope by God's grace to continue the work as rapidly as I can consistently with the research demanded and my incessant pastoral duties. Another volume will follow in all probability in twelve months' time, if life be spared and strength be given.

It may be added, that although the comments were the work of my health, the rest of the volume is the product of my sickness. When protracted illness and weakness laid me aside from daily preaching, I resorted to my pen as an available means of doing good. I would have preached had I been able, but as my Master denied me the privilege of thus serving him, I gladly availed myself of the other method of bearing testimony for his name. O that he may give me fruit in this field also, and his shall be all the praise.
Psalm 1

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

TITLE. This Psalm may be regarded as THE PREFACE PSALM, having in it a notification of the contents of the entire Book. It is the psalmist's desire to teach us the way to blessedness, and to warn us of the sure destruction of sinners. This, then, is the matter of the first Psalm, which may be looked upon, in some respects, as the text upon which the whole of the Psalms make up a divine sermon.

DIVISION. This Psalm consists of two parts: in the first (from verse 1 to the end of the 3rd) David sets out wherein the felicity and blessedness of a godly man consisteth, what his exercises are, and what blessings he shall receive from the Lord. In the second part (from verse 4 to the end) he contrasts the state and character of the ungodly, reveals the future, and describes, in telling language, his ultimate doom.

EXPOSITION
Verse 1. "BLESSED"—see how this Book of Psalms opens with a benediction, even as did the famous Sermon of our Lord upon the Mount! The word translated "blessed" is a very expressive one. The original word is plural, and it is a controverted matter whether it is an adjective or a substantive. Hence we may learn the multiplicity of the blessings which shall rest upon the man whom God hath justified, and the perfection and greatness of the blessedness he shall enjoy. We might read it, "Oh, the blessednesses!" and we may well regard it (as Ainsworth does) as a joyful acclamation of the gracious man's felicity. May the like benediction rest on us!

Here the gracious man is described both negatively (verse 1) and positively (verse 2). He is a man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. He takes wiser counsel, and walks in the commandments of the Lord his God. To him the ways of piety are paths of peace and pleasantness. His footsteps are ordered by the Word of God, and not by the cunning and wicked devices of carnal men. It is a rich sign of inward grace when the outward walk is changed, and when ungodliness is put far from our actions. Note next, he standeth not in the way of sinners. His company is of a choicer sort than it was. Although a sinner himself, he is now a blood-washed sinner, quickened by the Holy Spirit, and renewed in heart. Standing by the rich grace of God in the congregation of the righteous, he dares not herd with the multitude that do evil. Again it is said, "nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." He finds no rest in the atheist's scoffings. Let others make a mock of sin, of eternity, of hell and heaven, and of the Eternal God; this man has learned better philosophy than that of the infidel,
and has too much sense of God's presence to endure to hear His name blasphemed. The seat of the scorner may be very lofty, but it is very near to the gate of hell; let us flee from it, for it shall soon be empty, and destruction shall swallow up the man who sits therein. Mark the gradation in the first verse:

He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,  
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,  
Nor sitteth in the seat of scornful.

When men are living in sin they go from bad to worse. At first they merely walk in the counsel of the careless and ungodly, who forget God—the evil is rather practical than habitual—but after that, they become habituated to evil, and they stand in the way of open sinners who wilfully violate God's commandments; and if let alone, they go one step further, and become themselves pestilent teachers and tempters of others, and thus they sit in the seat of the scornful. They have taken their degree in vice, and as true Doctors of Damnation they are installed, and are looked up to by others as Masters in Belial. But the blessed man, the man to whom all the blessings of God belong, can hold no communion with such characters as these. He keeps himself pure from these lepers; he puts away evil things from him as garments spotted by the flesh; he comes out from among the wicked, and goes without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ. O for grace to be thus separate from sinners.

And now mark his positive character. "His delight is in the law of the Lord." He is not under the law as a curse and condemnation, but he is in it, and he delights to be in it as his rule of life; he delights, moreover, to meditate in it, to read it by day, and think upon it by night. He takes a text and carries it with him all day long; and in the night-watches, when sleep forsakes his eyelids, he museth upon the Word of God. In the day of his prosperity he sings psalms out of the Word of God, and in the night of his affliction he comforts himself with promises out of the same book. "The law of the Lord" is the daily bread of the true believer. And yet, in David's day, how small was the volume of inspiration, for they had scarcely anything save the first five books of Moses! How much more, then, should we prize the whole written Word which it is our privilege to have in all our houses! But, alas, what ill-treatment is given to this angel from heaven! We are not all Berean searchers of the Scriptures. How few among us can lay claim to the benediction of the text! Perhaps some of you can claim a sort of negative purity, because you do not walk in the way of the ungodly; but let me ask you—Is your delight in the law of God? Do you study God's Word? Do you make it the man of your right hand—your best companion and hourly guide? If not, this blessing belongeth not to you.

Verse 3. "And he shall be like a tree planted"—not a wild tree, but "a tree planted," chosen, considered as property, cultivated and secured from the last terrible uprooting, for "every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted,
shall be rooted up:" Matthew 15:13. "By the rivers of water;" so that even if one river should fail, he hath another. The rivers of pardon and the rivers of grace, the rivers of the promise and the rivers of communion with Christ, are never-failing sources of supply. He is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season;" not unseasonable graces, like untimely figs, which are never full-flavored. But the man who delights in God's Word, being taught by it, bringeth forth patience in the time of suffering, faith in the day of trial, and holy joy in the hour of prosperity. Fruitfulness is an essential quality of a gracious man, and that fruitfulness should be seasonable. "His leaf also shall not wither;" his faintest word shall be everlasting; his little deeds of love shall be had in remembrance. Not simply shall his fruit be preserved, but his leaf also. He shall neither lose his beauty nor his fruitfulness. "And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Blessed is the man who hath such a promise as this. But we must not always estimate the fulfillment of a promise by our own eye-sight. How often, my brethren, if we judge by feeble sense, may we come to the mournful conclusion of Jacob, "All these things are against me!" For though we know our interest in the promise, yet we are so tried and troubled, that sight sees the very reverse of what that promise foretells. But to the eye of faith this word is sure, and by it we perceive that our works are prospered, even when everything seems to go against us. It is not outward prosperity which the Christian most desires and values; it is soul prosperity which he longs for. We often, like Jehoshaphat, make ships to go to Tarshish for gold, but they are broken at Eziongeber; but even here there is a true prospering, for it is often for the soul's health that we would be poor, bereaved, and persecuted. Our worst things are often our best things. As there is a curse wrapped up in the wicked man's mercies, so there is a blessing concealed in the righteous man's crosses, losses, and sorrows. The trials of the saint are a divine husbandry, by which he grows and brings forth abundant fruit.

Verse 4. We have now come to the second head of the Psalm. In this verse the contrast of the ill estate of the wicked is employed to heighten the coloring of that fair and pleasant picture which precedes it. The more forcible translation of the Vulgate and of the Septuagint version is— "Not so the ungodly, not so." And we are hereby to understand that whatever good thing is said of the righteous is not true in the case of the ungodly. Oh! how terrible is it to have a double negative put upon the promises! and yet this is just the condition of the ungodly. Mark the use of the term "ungodly," for, as we have seen in the opening of the Psalm, these are the beginners in evil, and are the least offensive of sinners. Oh! if such is the sad state of those who quietly continue in their morality, and neglect their God, what must be the condition of open sinners and shameless infidels? The first sentence is a negative description of the ungodly,
and the second is the positive picture. Here is their character — "they are like chaff," intrinsically worthless, dead, unserviceable, without substance, and easily carried away. Here, also, mark their doom, — "the wind driveth away;" death shall hurry them with its terrible blast into the fire in which they shall be utterly consumed.

Verse 5. They shall stand there to be judged, but not to be acquitted. Fear shall lay hold upon them there; they shall not stand their ground; they shall flee away; they shall not stand in their own defence; for they shall blush and be covered with eternal contempt.

Well may the saints long for heaven, for no evil men shall dwell there, "nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." All our congregations upon earth are mixed. Every Church hath one devil in it. The tares grow in the same furrows as the wheat. There is no floor which is as yet thoroughly purged from chaff. Sinners mix with saints, as dross mingles with gold. God's precious diamonds still lie in the same field with pebbles. Righteous Lots are this side heaven continually vexed by the men of Sodom. Let us rejoice then, that in "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" above, there shall by no means be admitted a single unrenewed soul. Sinners cannot live in heaven. They would be out of their element. Sooner could a fish live upon a tree than the wicked in Paradise. Heaven would be an intolerable hell to an impenitent man, even if he could be allowed to enter; but such a privilege shall never be granted to the man who perseveres in his iniquities. May God grant that we may have a name and a place in his courts above!

Verse 6. Or, as the Hebrew hath it yet more fully, "The Lord is knowing the way of the righteous." He is constantly looking on their way, and though it may be often in mist and darkness, yet the Lord knoweth it. If it be in the clouds and tempest of affliction, he understandeth it. He numbereth the hairs of our head; he will not suffer any evil to befall us. "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10.) "But the way of the ungodly shall perish." Not only shall they perish themselves, but their way shall perish too. The righteous carves his name upon the rock, but the wicked writes his remembrance in the sand. The righteous man ploughs the furrows of earth, and sows a harvest here, which shall never be fully reaped till he enters the enjoyments of eternity; but as for the wicked, he ploughs the sea, and though there may seem to be a shining trail behind his keel, yet the waves shall pass over it, and the place that knew him shall know him no more for ever. The very "way" of the ungodly shall perish. If it exist in remembrance, it shall be in the remembrance of the bad; for the Lord will cause the name of the wicked to rot, to become a stench in the nostrils of the good, and to be only known to the
wicked themselves by its putridity.

May the Lord cleanse our hearts and our ways, that we may escape the doom of the ungodly, and enjoy the blessedness of the righteous!

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EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

**Whole Psalm.** As the book of the Canticles is called the Song of Songs by a Hebraism, it being the most excellent, so this Psalm may not unfitly be entitled, the Psalm of Psalms, for it contains in it the very pith and quintessence of Christianity. What Jerome saith on St. Paul's epistles, the same may I say of this Psalm; it is short as to the composure, but full of length and strength as to the matter. This Psalm carries blessedness in the frontpiece; it begins where we all hope to end: it may well be called a Christian's Guide, for it discovers the quicksands where the wicked sink down in perdition, and the firm ground on which the saints tread to glory.—*Thomas Watson's Saints Spiritual Delight*, 1660.

This whole Psalm offers itself to be drawn into these two opposite propositions: a godly man is blessed, a wicked man is miserable; which seem to stand as two challenges, made by the prophet: one, that he will maintain a godly man against all comers, to be the only Jason for winning the golden fleece of blessedness; the other, that albeit the ungodly make a show in the world of being happy, yet they of all men are most miserable.—*Sir Richard Baker*, 1640

I have been induced to embrace the opinion of some among the ancient interpreters (Augustine, Jerome, etc.), who conceive that the first Psalm is intended to be descriptive of the character and reward of the JUST ONE, *i.e.* the Lord Jesus.—*John Fry*, B.A., 1842

**Verse 1.** The psalmist saith more to the point about true happiness in this short Psalm than any one of the philosophers, or all of them put together; they did but beat the bush, God hath here put the bird into our hand. *John Trapp*, 1660

**Verse 1.** Where the word *blessed* is hung out as a sign, we may be sure that we shall find a godly man within. *Sir Richard Baker*.

**Verse 1.** The seat of the drunkard is the seat of the scornful. *Matthew Henry*, 1662-1714

**Verse 1.** "*Walketh NOT,...NOR standeth,...NOR sitteth,*" etc. Negative precepts are in some cases more absolute and peremptory than affirmatives; for to say, "that hath walketh in the counsel of the godly," might not be sufficient; for, he might walk in the counsel of the godly, and yet walk in the counsel of the
ungodly too; not both indeed at once, but both at several times; where now, this
negative clears him at all times. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 1. The word (Heb) haish is emphatic, that man; that one among a
thousand who lives for the accomplishment of the end for which God created
him. Adam Clarke, 1844

Verse 1. "That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." Mark certain
circumstances of their differing characters and conduct. I. The ungodly man has
his counsel. II. The sinner has his way; and III. The scorner has his seat. The
ungodly man is unconcerned about religion; he is neither zealous for his own
salvation nor for that of others; and he counsels and advises those with whom
he converses to adopt his plan, and not trouble themselves about praying,
reading, repentance, etc., etc.; "there is no need for such things; live an honest
life, make no fuss about religion, and you will fare well enough at last." Now
"blessed is the man who walks not in this man's counsel," who does not come
into his measures, nor act according to his plan.

The sinner has his particular way of transgressing; one is a drunkard,
another dishonest, another unclean. Few are given to every species of vice.
There are many covetous men who abhor drunkenness, many drunkards who
abhor covetousness; and so of others. Each has his easily besetting sin;
therefore, says the prophet, "Let the wicked forsake HIS WAY." (Isaiah 55:7)
Now, blessed is he who stands not is such a man's WAY.

The scorner has brought, in reference to himself, all religion and moral
feeling to an end. He has sat down—is utterly confirmed in impiety, and makes
a mock at sin. His conscience is seared, and he is a believer in all unbelief.
Now, blessed is the man who sits not down in his SEAT. Adam Clarke.

Verse 1. In the Hebrew, the word "blessed" is a plural noun, ashrey
(blessednesses), that is, all blessednesses are the portion of that man who has
not gone away, etc.; as though it were said, "All things are well with that man
who," etc. Why do you hold any dispute? Why draw vain conclusions? If a man
has found that pearl of great price, to love the law of God and to be separate
from the ungodly, all blessednesses belong to that man; but, if he does not find
this jewel, he will seek for all blessednesses but will never find one! For as all
things are pure unto the pure, so all things are lovely unto the loving, all things
good unto the good; and, universally, such as thou art thyself, such is God
himself unto thee, though he is not a creature. He is perverse unto the perverse,
and holy unto the holy. Hence nothing can be good or saving unto him who is
evil: nothing sweet unto him unto whom the law of God is not sweet. The word
"counsel" is without doubt here to be received as signifying decrees and
doctrines, seeing that no society of men exists without being formed and
preserved by decrees and laws. David, however, by this term strikes at the pride and reprobate temerity of the ungodly. First, because they will not humble themselves so far as to walk in the law of the Lord, but rule themselves by their own counsel. And then he calls it their "counsel," because it is their prudence, and the way that seems to them to be without error. For this is the destruction of the ungodly—their being prudent in their own eyes and in their own esteem, and clothing their errors in the garb of prudence and of the right way. For if they came to men in the open garb of error, it would not be so distinguishing a mark of blessedness not to walk with them. But David does not here say, "in the folly of the ungodly," or "in the error of the ungodly:" and therefore he admonishes us to guard with all diligence against the appearance of what is right, that the devil transformed into an angel of light do not seduce us by his craftiness. And he contrasts the counsel of the wicked with the law of the Lord, that we may learn to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing, who are always ready to give counsel to all, to teach all, and to offer assistance unto all, when they are of all men least qualified to do so. The term "stood" descriptively represents their obstinacy, and stiff-neckedness, wherein they harden themselves and make their excuses in words of malice, having become incorrigible in their ungodliness. For "to stand," in the figurative manner of Scripture expression, signifies to be firm and fixed: as in Romans 14:4, "To his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." Hence the word "column" is by the Hebrew derived from their verb "to stand," as is the word statue among the Latins. For this is the very self-excuse and self-hardening of the ungodly—their appearing to themselves to live rightly, and to shine in the eternal show of works above all others. With respect to the term "seat," to sit in the seat, is to teach, to act the instructor and teacher; as in Matthew 23:2, "The scribes sit in Moses' chair." They sit in the seat of pestilence, who fill the church with the opinions of philosophers, with the traditions of men, and with the counsels of their own brain, and oppress miserable consciences, setting aside, all the while, the word of God, by which alone the soul is fed, lives, and is preserved. Martin Luther, 1536-1546.

Verse 1. "The scornful." Peccator cum in profundum venerit contemnet—when a wicked man comes to the depth and worst of sin, he despiseth. Then the Hebrew will despise Moses (Exodus 2:14), "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" Then Ahab will quarrel with Micaiah (1 Kings 22:18), because he doth not prophecy good unto him. Every child in Bethel will mock Elisha (2 Kings 2:23), and be bold to call him "bald pate." Here is an original drop of venom swollen to a main ocean of poison: as one drop of some serpents' poison, lighting on the hand, gets into the veins, and so spreads itself over all the body till it hath stifled the vital spirits. God shall "laugh you to scorn,"
(Psalm 2:4), for laughing Him to scorn; and at last despise you that have despised him in us. That which a man spits against heaven, shall fall back on his own face. Your indignities done to your spiritual physicians shall sleep in the dust with your ashes, but stand up against your souls in judgment. *Thomas Adams*, 1614.

*Verse 2.* "But his will is in the law of the Lord." The "will," which is here signified, is that delight of heart, and that certain pleasure, in the law, which does not look at what the law promises, nor at what it threatens, but at this only; that "the law is holy, and just, and good." Hence it is not only a love of the law, but that loving delight in the law which no prosperity, nor adversity, nor the world, nor the prince of it, can either take away or destroy; for it victoriously bursts its way through poverty, evil report, the cross, death, and hell, and in the midst of adversities, shines the brightest. *Martin Luther.*

*Verse 2.* "His delight is in the law of the Lord."—This delight which the prophet here speaks of is the only delight that neither blushes nor looks pale; the only delight that gives a repast without an after reckoning; the only delight that stands in construction with all tenses; and like AEneas Anchyses, carries his parents upon his back. *Sir Richard Baker.*

*Verse 2.* "In His law doth he meditate." In the plainest text there is a world of holiness and spirituality; and if we in prayer and dependence upon God did sit down and study it, we should behold much more than appears to us. It may be, at once reading or looking, we see little or nothing; as Elijah's servant went once, and saw nothing; therefore he was commanded to look seven times. What now? says the prophet, "I see a cloud rising, like a man's hand;" and by-and-by, the whole surface of the heavens was covered with clouds. So you may look lightly upon a Scripture and see nothing; meditate often upon it, and there you shall see a light, like the light of the sun. *Joseph Caryl*, 1647.

*Verse 2.* "In His law doth he meditate day and night."—The good man doth meditate on the law of God day and night. The pontificians beat off the common people from this common treasury, by objecting this supposed difficulty. Oh, the Scriptures are hard to be understood, do not you trouble your heads about them; we will tell you the meaning of them. They might as well say, heaven is a blessed place, but it is a hard way to it; do not trouble yourselves, we will go thither for you. Thus in the great day of trial, when they should be saved by their book, alas! they have no book to save them. Instead of the Scriptures they can present images; these are the layman's books; as if they were to be tried by a jury of carvers and painters, and not by the twelve apostles. Be not you so cheated; but study the gospel as you look for comfort.
by the gospel. He that hopes for the inheritance, will make much of the
conveyance. Thomas Adams.

Verse 2. To "meditate," as it is generally understood, signifies to discuss, to
dispute; and its meaning is always confined to a being employed in words, as in
Psalm 32:30, "The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom." Hence
Augustine has, in his translation, "chatter;" and a beautiful metaphor it is—as
chattering is the employment of birds, so a continual conversing in the law of
the Lord (for talking is peculiar to man), ought to be the employment of man.
But I cannot worthily and fully set forth the gracious meaning and force of this
word; for this "meditating" consists first in an intent observing of the words of
the law, and then in a comparing of the different Scriptures; which is a certain
delightful hunting, nay, rather a playing with stags in a forest, where the Lord
furnishes us with the stags, and opens to us their secret coverts. And from this
kind of employment, there comes forth at length a man well instructed in the
law of the Lord to speak unto the people. Martin Luther.

Verse 2. "In his law doth he meditate day and night." The godly man will read
the Word by day, that men, seeing his good works, may glorify his Father who
is in heaven; he will do it in the night, that he may not be seen of men: by day,
to show that he is not one of those who dread the light; by night, to show that
he is one who can shine in the shade: by day, for that is the time for working—
work whilst it is day; by night, lest his Master should come as a thief, and find

Verse 2. I have no rest, but in a nook, with the book. Thomas a Kempis, 1380-
1471.

Verse 2. "Meditate." Meditation doth discriminate and characterise a man; by
this he may take a measure of his heart, whether it be good or bad; let me allude
to that; "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. As the
meditation is, such is the man. Meditation is the touchstone of a Christian; it
shows what metal he is made of. It is a spiritual index; the index shows what is
in the book, so meditation shows what is in the heart. Thomas Watson's Saints'
Spiritual Delight.

Verse 2. Meditation chews the cud, and gets the sweetness and nutritive virtue
of the Word into the heart and life: this is the way the godly bring forth much
fruit. Bartholomew Ashwood's Heavenly Trade, 1688.

Verse 2. The naturalists observe that to uphold and accommodate bodily life,
there are diverse sorts of faculties communicated, and these among the rest:
1. An attractive faculty, to assume and draw in the food;
2. A retentive faculty, to retain it when taken in;
3. As assimilating faculty to concoct the nourishment;
4. An augmenting faculty, for drawing to perfection.

Meditation is all these. It helps judgment, wisdom, and faith to ponder, discern, and credit the things which reading and hearing supply and furnish. It assists the memory to lock up the jewels of divine truth in her sure treasury. It has a digesting power, and turns special truth into spiritual nourishment; and lastly, it helps the renewed heart to grow upward and increase its power to know the things which are freely given to us of God. Condensed from Nathaniel Ranew, 1670.

Verse 3. "A tree."—There is one tree, only to be found in the valley of the Jordan, but too beautiful to be entirely passed over; the oleander, with its bright blossoms and dark green leaves, giving the aspect of a rich garden to any spot where it grows. It is rarely if ever alluded to in the Scriptures. But it may be the tree planted by the streams of water which bringeth forth his fruit in due season, and "whose leaf shall not wither." A. P. Stanley, D.D., in "Sinai and Palestine."

Verse 3. "A tree planted by the rivers of water."—This is an allusion to the Eastern method of cultivation, by which rivulets of water are made to flow between the rows of trees, and thus, by artificial means, the trees receive a constant supply of moisture.

Verse 3. "His fruit in his season."—In such a case expectation is never disappointed. Fruit is expected, fruit is borne, and it comes also in the time in which it should come. A godly education, under the influences of the divine Spirit, which can never be withheld where they are earnestly sought, is sure to produce the fruits of righteousness; and he who reads, prays, and meditates, will ever see the work which God has given him to do; the power by which he is to perform it; and the times, places, and opportunities for doing those things by which God can obtain most glory, his own soul most good, and his neighbour most edification. Adam Clarke.

Verse 3. "In his season." The Lord reckons the times which pass over us, and puts them to our account: let us, therefore, improve them, and with the impotent persons at the pool of Bethesda, step in when the angel stirs the water. Now the church is afflicted, it is a season of prayer and learning; now the church is enlarged, it is a season of praise; I am now at a sermon, I will hear what God will say; now in the company of a learned and wise man, I will draw some knowledge and counsel from him; I am under a temptation, now is a fit time to
Psalm 1

verse 1. "In his season." Oh, golden and admirable word! by which is asserted the liberty of Christian righteousness. The ungodly have their stated days, stated times, certain works, and certain places; to which they stick so closely, that if their neighbours were perishing with hunger, they could not be torn from them. But this blessed man, being free at all times, in all places, for every work, and to every person, will serve you whenever an opportunity is offered him; whatsoever comes into his hands to do, he does it. He is neither a Jew, nor a Gentile, nor a Greek, nor a barbarian, nor of any other particular person. He gives his fruit in his season, so often as either God or man requires his work. Therefore his fruits have no name, and his times have no name. Martin Luther.

verse 3. "His leaf also shall not wither." The Lord's trees are all evergreens. No winter's cold can destroy their verdure; and yet, unlike evergreens in our country, they are all fruit bearers. C. H. S.

verse 3. "And whatsoever he doeth, [or, maketh or taketh in hand] shall prosper." And with regard to this "prospering," take heed that thou understandest not a carnal prosperity. This prosperity is hidden prosperity, and lies entirely secret in spirit; and therefore if thou hast not this prosperity that is by faith, thou shouldest rather judge thy prosperity to be the greatest adversity. For as the devil bitterly hates this leaf and the word of God, so does he also those who teach and hear it, and he persecutes such, aided by all the powers of the world. Therefore thou hearest of a miracle the greatest of all miracles, when thou hearest that all things prosper which a blessed man doeth. Martin Luther.
Verse 3. A critical journal has shown that instead of "Whatsoever it doeth shall prosper," the rendering might be, "Whatsoever it produceth shall come to maturity." This makes the figure entire, and is sanctioned by some MSS. and ancient versions.

Verse 3. (last clause). Outward prosperity, if it follow close walking with God, is very sweet; as the cipher, when it follows a figure, adds to the number, though it be nothing in itself. John Trapp.

Verse 4. "Chaff." Here, by the way, we may let the wicked know they have a thanks to give they little think of; that they may thank the godly for all the good days they live upon the earth, seeing it is for their sakes and not for their own that they enjoy them. For as the chaff while it is united and keeps close to the wheat, enjoys some privileges for the wheat's sake, and is laid up carefully in the barn; but as soon as it is divided, and parted from the wheat, it is cast out and scattered by the wind; so the wicked, whilst the godly are in company and live amongst them, partake for their sake of some blessedness promised to the godly; but if the godly forsake them or be taken from them, then either a deluge of water comes suddenly upon them, as it did upon the old world when Noah left it; or a deluge of fire, as it did upon Sodom, when Lot left it, and went out of the city. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 4. "Driveth away," or tosseth away; the Chaldee translateth for "wind," "whirlwind." Henry Ainsworth, 1639.

This shows the vehement tempest of death, which sweeps away the soul of the ungodly.

Verse 5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment," etc. And may not a reason also be conceived thus, why the ungodly can never come to be of the congregation of the righteous: the righteous go a way that God knows, and the wicked go a way that God destroys; and seeing that these ways can never meet, how should the men meet that go these ways? And to make sure work that they shall never meet indeed, the prophet expresseth the way of the righteous by the first link of the chain of God's goodness, which is his knowledge; but expresseth the way of the wicked by the last link of God's justice, which is his destroying; and though God's justice and his mercy do often meet, and are contiguous one to another, yet the first link of his mercy and the last link of his justice can never meet, for it never comes to destroying till God be heard to say Nescio vos, "I know you not," and nescio vos in God, and God's knowledge, can certainly never possibly meet together. Sir Richard Baker.
Verse 5. The Irish air will sooner brook a toad, or a snake, than heaven a sinner. John Trapp.

Verse 6. "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Behold how David here terrifies us away from all prosperous appearances, and commends to us various temptations and adversities. For this "way" of the righteous all men utterly reprobate; thinking also, that God knoweth nothing about any such way. But this is the wisdom of the cross. Therefore, it is God alone that knoweth the way of the righteous, so hidden is it to the righteous themselves. For his right hand leads them on in a wonderful manner, seeing that it is a way, not of sense, nor of reason, but of faith only; even of that faith that sees in darkness, and beholds things that are invisible. Martin Luther.

Verse 6. "The righteous." They that endeavour righteous living in themselves and have Christ's righteousness imputed to them. Thomas Wilcocks, 1586.

**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

Verse 1. May furnish an excellent text upon "Progress in Sin," or "The Purity of the Christian," or "The Blessedness of the Righteous." Upon the last subject speak of the believer as BLESSED—
1. By God;
2. In Christ;
3. With all blessings;
4. In all circumstances;
5. Through time and eternity;
6. To the highest degree.

Verse 1. Teaches a godly man to beware, (1) of the opinions, (2) of the practical life, and (3) of the company and association of sinful men. Show how meditation upon the Word will assist us in keeping aloof from these three evils. The insinuating and progressive nature of sin. J. Morrison.

Verse 1. In connection with the whole Psalm. The wide difference between the righteous and the wicked.

Verse 2. THE WORD OF GOD.
1. The believer's delight in it.
2. The believer's acquaintance with it.
We long to be in the company of those we love.
Verse 2. I. What is meant by "the law of the Lord."
   II. What there is in it for the believer to delight in.
   III. How he shows his delight, thinks of it, reads much, speaks of it, obeys it, does not delight in evil.

Verse 2. (last clause). The benefits, helps, and hindrances of meditation.

Verse 3. "The fruitful tree."
   I. Where it grows.
   II. How it came there.
   III. What it yields.
   IV. How to be like it.

Verse 3. "Planted by the rivers of water."
   I. The origination of Christian life, "planted."
   II. The streams which support it.
   III. The fruit expected from it.

Verse 3. Influence of religion upon prosperity.—Blair.
   The nature, causes, signs, and results of true prosperity.
   "Fruit in his season;" virtues to be exhibited at certain seasons—patience in affliction; gratitude in prosperity; zeal in opportunity, etc.
   "His leaf also shall not wither;" the blessing of retaining an unwithered profession.

Verses 3, 4. See No. 280 of "Spurgeon's Sermons." "The Chaff Driven Away."
   Sin puts a negative on every blessing.

Verse 5. The sinner's double doom.
   1. Condemned at the judgment-bar.
   2. Separated from the saints.
   Reasonableness of these penalties, "therefore," and the way to escape them.
   "The congregation of the righteous" viewed as the church of the first-born above. This may furnish a noble topic.

Verse 6. (first sentence). A sweet encouragement to the tried people of God.
   The knowledge here meant.
   1. Its character.—It is a knowledge of observation and approbation.
   2. Its source.—It is caused by omniscience and infinite love.
   3. Its results.—Support, deliverance, acceptance, and glory at last.
Verse 6. (last clause). His way of pleasure, of pride, of unbelief, of profanity, of persecution, of procrastinating, of self-deception, etc.: all these shall come to an end.

works upon the first psalm

The Way to Blessedness: a Commentary on the First Psalm. By PHINEAS FLETCHER. London. 1632

A Discourse about the State of True Happiness, delivered in certain Sermons in Oxford, and at Paul's Cross. By ROBERT BOLTON. London. 1625

David's Blessed Man; or, a Short Exposition on the First Psalm, directing a Man to True Happiness. By SAMUEL SMITH, preacher of the Word at Prittlewell in Essex. 1635 [Reprinted in Nicol's Series of Commentaries.]

Meditations and Disquisitions upon the First Psalm of David.—Blessed is the Man. By SIR RICHARD BAKER, Knight. London. 1640 [The same volume contains Meditations upon "Seven Consolatorie Psalms of David," namely, 23, 27, 30, 84, 103, and 116.]

The Christian on the Mount; or a Treatise concerning Meditation; wherein the necessity, usefulness, and excellency of Meditation are at large discussed. By THOMAS WATSON. 1660.
Psalm 2

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

TITLE. We shall not greatly err in our summary of this sublime Psalm if we call it THE PSALM OF MESSIAH THE PRINCE; for it sets forth, as in a wondrous vision, the tumult of the people against the Lord's anointed, the determinate purpose of God to exalt his own Son, and the ultimate reign of that Son over all his enemies. Let us read it with the eye of faith, beholding, as in a glass, the final triumph of our Lord Jesus Christ over all his enemies. Lowth has the following remarks upon this Psalm: "The establishment of David upon his throne, notwithstanding the opposition made to it by his enemies, is the subject of the Psalm. David sustains in it a twofold character, literal and allegorical. If we read over the Psalm, first with an eye to the literal David, the meaning is obvious, and put beyond all dispute by the sacred history. There is indeed an uncommon glow in the expression and sublimity in the figures, and the diction is now and then exaggerated, as it were on purpose to intimate, and lead us to the contemplation of higher and more important matters concealed within. In compliance with this admonition, if we take another survey of the Psalm as relative to the person and concerns of the spiritual David, a noble series of events immediately rises to view, and the meaning becomes more evident, as well as more exalted. The colouring which may perhaps seem too bold and glaring for the king of Israel, will no longer appear so when laid upon his great Antitype. After we have thus attentively considered the subjects apart, let us look at them together, and we shall behold the full beauty and majesty of this most charming poem. We shall perceive the two senses very distinct from each other, yet conspiring in perfect harmony, and bearing a wonderful resemblance in every feature and lineament, while the analogy between them is so exactly preserved, that either may pass for the original from whence the other was copied. New light is continually cast upon the phraseology, fresh weight and dignity are added to the sentiments, till, gradually ascending from things below to things above, from human affairs to those that are Divine, they bear the great important theme upwards with them, and at length place it in the height and brightness of heaven."

DIVISION. This Psalm will be best understood if it be viewed as a four-fold picture. (In verses 1, 2, 3) the Nations are raging; (4 to 6) the Lord in heaven derides them; (7 to 9) the Son proclaims the decree; and (from 10 to end) advice is given to the kings to yield obedience to the Lord's anointed. This division is not only suggested by the sense, but is warranted by the poetic form of the Psalm, which naturally falls into four stanzas of three verses each.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. We have, in these first three verses, a description of the hatred of human nature against the Christ of God. No better comment is needed upon it than the apostolic song in Acts 4:27, 28: "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." The Psalm begins abruptly with an angry interrogation; and well it may: it is surely but little to be wondered at, that the sight of creatures in arms against their God should amaze the psalmist's mind. We see the heathen raging, roaring like the sea, tossed to and fro with restless waves, as the ocean in a storm; and then we mark the
people in their hearts imagining a vain thing against God. Where there is much rage there is generally some folly, and in this case there is an excess of it. Note, that the commotion is not caused by the people only, but their leaders foment the rebellion. "The kings of the earth set themselves." In determined malice they arrayed themselves in opposition against God. It was not temporary rage, but deep-seated hate, for they set themselves resolutely to withstand the Prince of Peace. "And the rulers take counsel together." They go about their warfare craftily, not with foolish haste, but deliberately. They use all the skill which art can give. Like Pharaoh, they cry, "Let us deal wisely with them." O that men were half as careful in God's service to serve him wisely, as his enemies are to attack his kingdom craftily. Sinners have their wits about them, and yet saints are dull. But what say they? what is the meaning of this commotion? "Let us break their bands asunder." "Let us be free to commit all manner of abominations. Let us be our own gods. Let us rid ourselves of all restraint." Gathering impudence by the traitorous proposition of rebellion, they add—"let us cast away;" as if it were an easy matter — "let us fling off their cords from us." What! O ye kings, do ye think yourselves Samsons? and are the bands of Omnipotence but as green withs before you? Do you dream that you shall snap to pieces and destroy the mandates of God—the decrees of the Most High—as if they were but tow? and do ye say, "Let us cast away their cords from us?" Yes! There are monarchs who have spoken thus, and there are still rebels upon thrones. However mad the resolution to revolt from God, it is one in which man has persevered ever since his creation, and he continues in it to this very day. The glorious reign of Jesus in the latter day will not be consummated, until a terrible struggle has convulsed the nations. His coming will be as a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap, and the day thereof shall burn as an oven. Earth loves not her rightful monarch, but clings to the usurper's sway: the terrible conflicts of the last days will illustrate both the world's love of sin and Jehovah's power to give the kingdom to his only Begotten. To a graceless neck the yoke of Christ is intolerable, but to the saved sinner it is easy and light. We may judge ourselves by this, do we love that yoke, or do we wish to cast it from us?

Verse 4. Let us now turn our eyes from the wicked counsel-chamber and raging tumult of man, to the secret place of the majesty of the Most High. What doth God say? What will the King do unto the men who reject his only-begotten Son, the Heir of all things?

Mark the quiet dignity of the Omnipotent One, and the contempt which he pours upon the princes and their raging people. He has not taken the trouble to rise up and do battle with them—he despises them, he knows how absurd, how
irrational, how futile are their attempts against him—he therefore laughs at them.

Verse 5. After he has laughed he shall speak; he needs not smite; the breath of his lips is enough. At the moment when their power is at its height, and their fury most violent, then shall his Word go forth against them. And what is it that he says?—it is a very galling sentence—"Yet," says he, "despite your malice, despite your tumultuous gatherings, despite the wisdom of your counsels, despite the craft of your lawgivers, 'yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.'" Is not that a grand exclamation! He has already done that which the enemy seeks to prevent. While they are proposing, he has disposed the matter. Jehovah's will is done, and man's will frets and raves in vain. God's Anointed is appointed, and shall not be disappointed. Look back through all the ages of infidelity, hearken to the high and hard things which men have spoken against the Most High, listen to the rolling thunder of earth's volleys against the Majesty of heaven, and then think that God is saying all the while, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Yet Jesus reigns, yet he sees the travail of his soul, and "his unsuffering kingdom yet shall come" when he shall take unto himself his great power, and reign from the river unto the ends of the earth. Even now he reigns in Zion, and our glad lips sound forth the praises of the Prince of Peace. Greater conflicts may here be foretold, but we may be confident that victory will be given to our Lord and King. Glorious triumphs are yet to come; hasten them, we pray thee, O Lord! It is Zion's glory and joy that her King is in her, guarding her from foes, and filling her with good things. Jesus sits upon the throne of grace, and the throne of power in the midst of his church. In him is Zion's best safeguard; let her citizens be glad in him.

"Thy walls are strength, and at thy gates
A guard of heavenly warriors waits;
Nor shall thy deep foundations move,
Fixed on his counsels and his love.

Thy foes in vain designs engage;
Against his throne in vain they rage,
Like rising waves, with angry roar,
That dash and die upon the shore."

Verse 7. This Psalm wears something of a dramatic form, for now another person is introduced as speaking. We have looked into the council-chamber of the wicked, and to the throne of God, and now we behold the Anointed declaring his rights of sovereignty, and warning the traitors of their doom. God has laughed at the counsel and ravings of the wicked, and now Christ
the Anointed himself comes forward, as the Risen Redeemer, "declared to be
the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the
resurrection from the dead." Romans 1:4. Looking into the angry faces of the
rebellious kings, the Anointed One seems to say, "If this sufficeth not to make
you silent, 'I will declare the decree'." Now this decree is directly in conflict
with the device of man, for its tenour is the establishment of the very dominion
against which the nations are raving. "Thou art my Son." Here is a noble proof
of the glorious Divinity of our Immanuel. "For unto which of the angels said he
at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" What a mercy to
have a Divine Redeemer in whom to rest our confidence! "This day have I
begotten thee." If this refers to the Godhead of our Lord, let us not attempt to
fathom it, for it is a great truth, a truth reverently to be received, but not
irreverently to be scanned. It may be added, that if this relates to the Begotten
One in his human nature, we must here also rejoice in the mystery, but not
attempt to violate its sanctity by intrusive prying into the secrets of the Eternal
God. The things which are revealed are enough, without venturing into vain
speculations. In attempting to define the Trinity, or unveil the essence of
Divinity, many men have lost themselves: here great ships have foundered.
What have we to do in such a sea with our frail skiffs?

Verse 8. "Ask of me." It was a custom among great kings, to give to favoured
ones whatever they might ask. (See Esther 5:6; Matthew 14:7.) So Jesus hath
but to ask and have. Here he declares that his very enemies are his inheritance.
To their face he declares this decree, and "Lo! here," cries the Anointed One, as
he holds aloft in that once pierced hand the sceptre of his power, "He hath
given me this, not only the right to be a king, but the power to conquer." Yes!
Jehovah hath given to his Anointed a rod of iron with which he shall break
rebellious nations in pieces, and, despite their imperial strength, they shall be
but as potters' vessels, easily dashed into shivers, when the rod of iron is in the
hand of the omnipotent Son of God. Those who will not bend must break.
Potters' vessels are not to be restored if dashed in pieces, and the ruin of sinners
will be hopeless if Jesus shall smite them.

"Ye sinners seek his grace,
Whose wrath ye cannot bear;
Fly to the shelter of his cross,
And find salvation there."

Verse 10. The scene again changes, and counsel is given to those who have
taken counsel to rebel. They are exhorted to obey, and give the kiss of homage
and affection to him whom they have hated.

"Be wise."—It is always wise to be willing to be instructed, especially
when such instruction tends to the salvation of the soul. "Be wise now, therefore;" delay no longer, but let good reason weigh with you. Your warfare cannot succeed, therefore desist and yield cheerfully to him who will make you bow if you refuse his yoke. O how wise, how infinitely wise is obedience to Jesus, and how dreadful is the folly of those who continue to be his enemies! "Serve the Lord with fear;" let reverence and humility be mingled with your service. He is a great God, and ye are but puny creatures; bend ye, therefore, in lowly worship, and let a filial fear mingle with all your obedience to the great Father of the Ages. "Rejoice with trembling."—There must ever be a holy fear mixed with the Christian's joy. This is a sacred compound, yielding a sweet smell, and we must see to it that we burn no other upon the altar. Fear, without joy, is torment; and joy, without holy fear, would be presumption. Mark the solemn argument for reconciliation and obedience. It is an awful thing to perish in the midst of sin, in the very way of rebellion; and yet how easily could his wrath destroy us suddenly. It needs not that his anger should be heated seven times hotter; let the fuel kindle but a little, and we are consumed. O sinner! Take heed of the terrors of the Lord; for "our God is a consuming fire." Note the benediction with which the Psalm closes:—"Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Have we a share in this blessedness? Do we trust in him? Our faith may be slender as a spider's thread; but if it be real, we are in our measure blessed. The more we trust, the more fully shall we know this blessedness. We may therefore close the Psalm with the prayer of the apostles:—"Lord, increase our faith."

The first Psalm was a contrast between the righteous man and the sinner; the second Psalm is a contrast between the tumultuous disobedience of the ungodly world and the sure exaltation of the righteous Son of God. In the first Psalm, we saw the wicked driven away like chaff; in the second Psalm we see them broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. In the first Psalm, we beheld the righteous like a tree planted by the rivers of water; and here, we contemplate Christ the Covenant Head of the righteous, made better than a tree planted by the rivers of water, for he is made king of all the islands, and all the heathen bow before him and kiss the dust; while he himself gives a blessing to all those who put their trust in him. The two Psalms are worthy of the very deepest attention; they are, in fact, the preface to the entire Book of Psalms, and were by some of the ancients, joined into one. They are, however, two Psalms; for Paul speaks of this as the second Psalm. (Acts 13:33.) The first shows us the character and lot of the righteous; and the next teaches us that the Psalms are Messianic, and speak of Christ the Messiah—the Prince who shall reign from the river even unto the ends of the earth. That they have both a far-reaching prophetic outlook we are well assured, but we do not feel competent to open up that matter, and must leave it to abler hands.
EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Verse 1. "Why do nations make a noise," tumultuate, or rage? The Hebrew verb is not expressive of an internal feeling, but of the outward agitation which denotes it. There may be an allusion to the rolling and roaring of the sea, often used as an emblem of popular commotion, both in the Scriptures and the classics. The past tense of this verb (Why have they raged?) refers to the commotion as already begun, while the future in the next clause expresses its continuance. J. A. Alexander, D.D., 1850.

Verse 1. "Rage." The word with which Paul renders this in the Greek denotes rage, pride, and restiveness, as of horses that neigh, and rush into the battle. 'Efruaxag, from Fruassw, to snort or neigh, properly applied to a high-mettled horse. See Acts 4:25.

Verse 1. "A vain thing." A medal was struck by Diocletian, which still remains, bearing the inscription, "The name of Christians being extinguished." And in Spain, two monumental pillars were raised, on which were written:—I. "Diocletian Jovian Maximian Herculeus Caesares Augusti, for having extended the Roman Empire in the east and the west, and for having extinguished the name of Christians, who brought the Republic to ruin." II. "Diocletian Jovian Maximian Herculeus Caesares Augusti, for having adopted Galerius in the east, for having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ, for having extended the worship of the gods." As a modern writer has elegantly observed: "We have here a monument raised by Paganism, over the grave of its vanquished foe. But in this 'the people imagined a vain thing;' so far from being deceased, Christianity was on the eve of its final and permanent triumph, and the stone guarded a sepulchre empty as the urn which Electra washed with her tears. Neither in Spain, nor elsewhere, can be pointed out the burial place of Christianity; it is not, for the living have no tomb."

Verses 1-4. Herod, the fox, plotted against Christ, to hinder the course of his ministry and mediatorship, but he could not perform his enterprise; 'tis so all along, therefore it is said, "Why do the heathen imagine a vain thing?" A vain thing, because a thing successless, their hands could not perform it. It was vain, not only because there was no true ground of reason why they should imagine or do such a thing, but vain also because they laboured in vain, they could not do it, and therefore it follows, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." The Lord sees what fools they are, and men (yea, themselves) shall see it. The prophet gives us a elegant description to this purpose. Isaiah 59:5, 6. "They weave the spider's web . . . Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works." As if
he had said, they have been devising and setting things in a goodly frame to catch flies; they have been spinning a fine thread out of their brains, as the spider doth out of her bowels; such is their web, but when they have their web they cannot cut it out, or make it up into a garment. They shall go naked and cold, notwithstanding all their spinning and weaving, all their plotting and devising. The next broom that comes will sweep away all their webs and the spiders too, except they creep apace. God loves and delights to cross worldly proverbs and worldly craft. Joseph Caryl, 1647.

Verse 2. The many had done their part, and now the mighty show themselves. 

John Trapp.

Verse 2. "They banded themselves against the Lord, and against his Anointed." But why did they band themselves against the Lord, or against his Anointed? What was their desire of him? To have his goods? No, he had none for himself; but they were richer than he. To have his liberty? Nay, that would not suffice them, for they had bound him before. To bring the people unto dislike of him? Nay, that would not serve them, for they had done so already, until even his disciples were fled from him. What would they have, then? his blood? Yea, "they took counsel," saith Matthew, "to put him to death." They had the devil's mind, which is not satisfied but with death. And how do they contrive it? He saith, "they took counsel about it." Henry Smith, 1578

Verse 2. "Against Jehovah and against his Anointed." What an honour it was to David to be thus publicly associated with Jehovah! And because he was HIS anointed, to be an object of hatred and scorn to the ungodly world! If this very circumstance fearfully augmented the guilt, and sealed the doom of these infatuated heathen, surely it was that which above everything else would preserve the mind of David calm and serene, yea, peaceful and joyful notwithstanding the proud and boastful vauntiness of his enemies. . . .When writing this Psalm David was like a man in a storm, who hears only the roaring of the tempest, or sees nothing but the raging billows threatening destruction on every side of him. And yet his faith enabled him to say, "The people imagine a vain thing." They cannot succeed. They cannot defeat the counsels of heaven. They cannot injure the Lord's Anointed. David Pitcairn, 1851.

Verse 3. Resolved they were to run riot, as lawless, and aweless, and therefore they slander the sweet laws of Christ's kingdom as bonds and thick cords, which are signs of slavery. Jeremiah 27: 2, 6, 7. But what saith our Saviour? "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." It is no more burden to a regenerate man than wings to a bird. The law of Christ is no more as bands and cords, but
as girdles and garters which gird up his loins and expedite his course. John Trapp.

Verse 4. "He that sitteth in the heavens." Hereby it is clearly intimated, (1) that the Lord is far above all their malice and power, (2) that he seeth all their plots, looking down on all; (3) that he is of omnipotent power, and so can do with his enemies as he lists. "Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased." Psalm 115:3. Arthur Jackson, 1643.

Verse 4. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh," etc. Sinners' follies are the just sport of God's infinite wisdom and power; and those attempts of the kingdom of Satan, which in our eyes are formidable, in his are despicable. Matthew Henry.

Verse 4. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." They scoff at us, God laughs at them. Laugh? This seems a hard word at the first view: are the injuries of his saints, the cruelties of their enemies, the derision, the persecution of all that are round about us, no more but matter of laughter? Severe Cato thought that laughter did not become the gravity of Roman consuls; that it is a diminution of states, as another told princes, and it is attributed to the Majesty of heaven? According to our capacities, the prophet describes God, as ourselves would be in a merry disposition, deriding vain attempts. He laughs, but it is in scorn; he scorns, but it is with vengeance. Pharaoh imagined that by drowning the Israelite males, he had found a way to root their name from the earth; but when at the same time, his own daughter, in his own court gave princely education to Moses, their deliverer, did not God Laugh? Short is the joy of the wicked. Is Dagon put up to his place again? God's smile shall take off his head and his hands, and leave him neither wit to guide nor power to subsist. . . . . We may not judge of God's works until the fifth act: the case, deplorable and desperate in outward appearance, may with one smile from heaven find a blessed issue. He permitted his temple to be sacked and rifled, the holy vessels to be profaned and caroused in; but did not God's smile make Belshazzar to tremble at the handwriting on the wall? Oh, what are his frowns, if his smiles be so terrible! Thomas Adams.

Verse 4. The expression, "He that sitteth in the heavens," at once fixes our thoughts on a being infinitely exalted above man, who is of the earth, earthy. And when it is said, "HE shall laugh," this word is designed to convey to our minds the idea, that the greatest confederacies amongst kings and peoples, and their most extensive and vigorous preparations, to defeat HIS purposes or to injure HIS servants, are in HIS sight altogether insignificant and worthless. HE looks upon their poor and puny efforts, not only without uneasiness or fear, but
Psalm 2

Verse 4. "The Lord," in Hebrew, Adonai, mystically signifieth my stays, or my sustainers—my pillars. Our English word "Lord" hath much the same force, being contracted of the old Saxon word "Llaford," or "Hlafford," which cometh from "Laef," to sustain, refresh, cherish. Henry Ainsworth.

Verse 4. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh at them: the Lord shall have them in derision." This tautology or repetition of the same thing, which is frequent in the Scriptures, is a sign of the thing being established: according to the authority of the patriarch Joseph (Genesis 41:32), where, having interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh, he said, "and for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." And therefore, here also, "shall laugh at them," and "shall have them in derision," is a repetition to show that there is not a doubt to be entertained that all these things will most surely come to pass. And the gracious Spirit does all this for our comfort and consolation, that we may not faint under temptation, but lift up our heads with the most certain hope; because, "he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Hebrews 10:37. Martin Luther.

Verse 5. "Vex them;" either by horror of conscience, or corporal plagues; one way or the other he will have his pennyworths of them, as he always has had the persecutors of his people. John Trapp.

Verses 5, 9. It is easy for God to destroy his foes. . . . . Behold Pharaoh, his wise men, his hosts, and his horses plouting and plunging, and sinking like lead in the Red sea. Here is the end of one of the greatest plots ever formed against God's chosen. Of thirty Roman emperors, governors of provinces, and others high in office, who distinguished themselves by their zeal and bitterness in persecuting the early Christians, one became speedily deranged after some atrocious cruelty, one was slain by his own son, one became blind, the eyes of one started out of his head, one was drowned, one was strangled, one died in a miserable captivity, one fell dead in a manner that will not bear recital, one died of so loathsome a disease that several of his physicians were put to death because they could not abide the stench that filled his room, two committed suicide, a third attempted it, but had to call for help to finish the work, five
were assassinated by their own people or servants, five others died the most miserable and excruciating deaths, several of them having an untold complication of diseases, and eight were killed in battle, or after being taken prisoners. Among these was Julian the apostate. In the days of his prosperity he is said to have pointed his dagger to heaven defying the Son of God, whom he commonly called the Galilean. But when he was wounded in battle, he saw that all was over with him, and he gathered up his clotted blood, and threw it into the air, exclaiming, "Thou hast conquered, O thou Galilean." Voltaire has told us of the agonies of Charles IX. of France, which drove the blood through the pores of the skin of that miserable monarch, after his cruelties and treachery to the Hugenots. William S. Plumer, D.D., L.L.D., 1867.

Verse 6. "Yet have I set my King." Notice—1. The royal office and character of our glorious Redeemer: he is a King, "This name he hath on his vesture and on his thigh." Revelation 19:16. 2. The authority by which he reigns; he is "my King," says God the Father, and I have set him up from everlasting: "The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The world disowns his authority, but I own it; I have set him, I have "given him to be head over all things to the church." 3. His particular kingdom over which he rules; it is over "my holy hill of Zion" — an eminent type of the gospel church. The temple was built upon Mount Zion and therefore called a holy hill. Christ's throne is in his church, it is his head-quarters, and the place of his peculiar residence. Notice the firmness of the divine purpose with respect unto this matter. "Yet have I set" him "King;" i.e., whatever be the plots of hell and earth to the contrary, he reigns by his Father's ordination. Stephen Charnock, 1628-1680.

Verse 6. "Yet have I set my KING," etc.—Jesus Christ is a threefold King. First, his enemies' King; secondly, his saints' King; thirdly, his Father's King. First, Christ is his enemies' King, that is, he is King over his enemies. Christ is a King above all kings. What are all the mighty men, the great, the honourable men of the earth to Jesus Christ? They are but like a little bubble in the water; for if all the nations, in comparison to God, be but as the drop of the bucket, or the dust of the balance, as the prophet speaks in Isaiah 40:15, how little then must be the kings of the earth! Nay, beloved, Christ Jesus is not only higher than kings, but he is higher than the angels; yea, he is the head of angels, and, therefore, all the angels in heaven are commanded to worship him. Colossians 2:12; Hebrews 1:6. . . . . He is King over all kingdoms, over all nations, over all governments, over all powers, over all people. Daniel 7:14. . . . The very heathen are given to Christ, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Psalm 2:8.
Secondly. Jesus Christ is his saints' King. He is King of the bad, and of the good; but as for the wicked, he rules over them by his power and might; but the saints, he rules in them by his Spirit and graces. Oh! this is Christ's spiritual kingdom, and here he rules in the hearts of his people, here he rules over their consciences, over their wills, over their affections, over their judgments and understandings, and nobody hath anything to do here but Christ. Christ is not only the King of nations, but the King of saints; the one he rules over, the other he rules in.

Thirdly. Jesus Christ is his Father's King too, and so his Father calls him: "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Well may he be our King, when he is God's King. But you may say, how is Christ the Father's King? Because he rules for his Father. There is a twofold kingdom of God committed to Jesus Christ; first, a spiritual kingdom, by which he rules in the hearts of his people, and so is King of saints; and, secondly, a providential kingdom, by which he rules the affairs of this world, and so he is King of nations. Condensed from William Dyer's Christ's Famous Titles, 1665.

Verse 6. "Zion." The name "Zion" signifies a "distant view" (speculam). And the church is called "a distant view" (specula), not only because it views God and heavenly things by faith (that is, afar off), being wise unto the things that are above, not unto those that are of the earth; but also, because there are within her true viewers, or seers, and watchmen in the spirit, whose office is to take charge of the people under them, and to watch against the snares of enemies and sins; and such are called in the Greek bishops (episkopi), that is, spiers or seers; and you may for the same reason give them, from the Hebrew, the appellation of Zionists or Zioners. Martin Luther.

Verse 7. The dispute concerning the eternal filiation of our Lord betrays more of presumptuous curiosity than of reverent faith. It is an attempt to explain where it is far better to adore. We could give rival expositions of this verse, but we forbear. The controversy is one of the most unprofitable which ever engaged the pens of theologians. C. H. S.

Verse 8. "Ask of me." The priesthood doth not appear to be settled upon Christ by any other expression than this, "Ask of me." The Psalm speaks of his investiture in his kingly office; the apostle refers this to his priesthood, his commission for both took date at the same time; both bestowed, both confirmed by the same authority. The office of asking is grounded upon the same authority as the honour of king. Ruling belonged to his royal office, asking to his priestly. After his resurrection, the Father gives him a power and command of asking. Stephen Charnock.
Verse 8. As the limner looks on the person whose picture he would take, and
draws his lines to answer him with the nearest similitude that he can, so God
looks on Christ as the archetype to which he will conform the saint, in suffering,
in grace, in glory; yet so that Christ hath the pre-eminence in all. Every saint
must suffer, because Christ suffered: Christ must not have a delicate body
under a crucified head; yet never any suffered, or could, what he endured.
Christ is holy, and therefore so shall every saint be, but in an inferior degree; an
image cut in clay cannot be so exact as that engraved on gold. Now, our
conformity to Christ appears, that as the promises made to him were performed
upon his prayers to his Father, his promises made to his saints are given to them
in the same way of prayer: "Ask of me," saith God to his Son, "and I shall give
thee." And the apostle tells us, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." God hath
promised support to Christ in all his conflicts. Isaiah 42:1. "Behold my servant,
whom I uphold:" yet he prayed "with strong cries and tears," when his feet
stood within the shadow of death. A seed is promised to him, and victory over
his enemies, yet for both these he prays. Christ toward us acts as a king, but
toward his Father as a priest. All he speaks to God is by prayer and
intercession. So the saints, the promise makes them kings over their lusts,
conquerors over their enemies; but it makes them priests toward God, by prayer
humbly to sue out these great things given in the promise. William Gurnall,
1617-1679.

Verse 8. It will be observed in our Bible that two words of verse eight are in
italics, intimating that they are not translations of the Hebrew, but additions
made for the purpose of elucidating the meaning. Now if the "thee" and the
"for" are left out, the verse will read thus, "Ask of me, and I shall give
the heathen, thine inheritance, and thy possession, the uttermost parts of the earth."
And this reading is decidedly preferable to the other. It implies that by some
previous arrangement on the part of God, he had already assigned an
inheritance of the heathen, and the possession of the earth, to the person of
whom he says, "Thou art my Son." And when God says, "I will give," etc., he
reveals to his Anointed, not so much in what the inheritance consisted, and
what was the extent of possession destined for him, as the promise of his
readiness to bestow it. The heathen were already "the inheritance," and the ends
of the earth "the possession," which God had purposed to give to his Anointed.
Now he says to him, "Ask of me," and he promises to fulfil his purpose. This is
the idea involved in the words of the text, and the importance of it will become
more apparent, when we consider its application to the spiritual David, to the
true Son of God, "whom he hath appointed heir of all things."
Verse 9. The "rod" has a variety of meanings in Scripture. It might be of different materials, as it was employed for different purposes. At an early period, a wooden rod came into use as one of the insignia of royalty, under the name of sceptre. By degrees the sceptre grew in importance, and was regarded as characteristic of an empire, or of the reign of some particular king. A golden sceptre denoted wealth and pomp. The right, or straight sceptre, of which we read in Psalm 45:6, is expressive of the justice and uprightness, the truth and equity, which shall distinguish Messiah's reign, after his kingdom on earth has been established. But when it is said in Revelation 19:15, that he, "whose name is called the Word of God," will smite the nations, and "rule them with a rod of iron," if the rod signifies "his sceptre," then the "iron" of which it is made must be designed to express the severity of the judgments which the omnipotent "King of kings" will inflict on all who resist his authority. But to me it appears doubtful whether the "rod of iron" symbolises the royal sceptre of the Son of God at his second advent. It is mentioned in connection with "a sharp sword," which leads me to prefer the opinion that it also ought to be regarded as a weapon of war; at all events, the "rod of iron" mentioned in the Psalm we are endeavouring to explain, is evidently not the emblem of sovereign power, although represented as in the hands of a king, but an instrument of correction and punishment. In this sense the word "rod" is often used. . . . . When the correcting rod, which usually was a wand or cane, is represented as in this second Psalm, to be of "iron," it only indicates how weighty, how severe, how effectual the threatened chastisement will be—it will not merely bruise, but it will break. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron."

Now it is just such a complete breaking as would not readily be effected excepting by an iron rod, that is more fully expressed in the following clause of the verse, "Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." The completeness of the destruction, however, depends on two things. Even an iron rod, if gently used, or used against a hard and firm substance, might cause little injury; but, in the case before us, it is supposed to be applied with great force, "Thou shalt dash them;" and it is applied to what will prove as brittle and frangible as "a potter's vessel"—"Thou shalt dash them in pieces." . . . . Here, as in other respects, we must feel that the predictions and promises of this Psalm were but very partially fulfilled in the history of the literal David. Their real accomplishment, their awful completion, abides the day when the spiritual David shall come in glory and in majesty as Zion's King, with a rod of iron to dash in pieces the great antichristian confederacy of kings and peoples, and to take possession of his long-promised and dearly-purchased inheritance. And the signs of the times seem to indicate that the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

David Pitcairn.
Verse 10. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings," etc. As Jesus is King of kings and Judge of judges, so the gospel is the teacher of the greatest and wisest. If any are so great as to spurn its admonitions, God will make little of them; and if they are so wise as to despise its teachings, their fancied wisdom shall make fools of them. The gospel takes a high tone before the rulers of the earth, and they who preach it should, like Knox and Melvill, magnify their office by bold rebukes and manly utterances even in the royal presence. A clerical sycophant is only fit to be a scullion in the devil's kitchen. C. H. S.

Verse 11. "Serve the Lord with fear." This fear of God qualifies our joy. If you abstract fear from joy, joy will become light and wanton; and if you abstract joy from fear, fear then will become slavish. William Bates, D.D., 1625-1699.

Verse 11. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." There are two kinds of serving and rejoicing in God. First, a serving in security, and a rejoicing in the Lord without fear; these are peculiar to hypocrites, who are secure, who please themselves, and who appear to themselves to be not unuseful servants, and to have great merit on their side, concerning whom it is said (Psalm 10:5), "Thy judgments are far above out of his sight;" and also afterwards (Psalm 36:1), "There is no fear of God before his eyes." These do righteousness without judgment at all times; and permit not Christ to be the Judge to be feared by all, in whose sight no man living is justified. Secondly, a serving with fear and a rejoicing with trembling; these are peculiar to the righteous who do righteousnesses at all times, and always rightly attemper both; never being without judgments, on the one hand, by which they are terrified and brought to despair of themselves and of all their own works; nor without that righteousness on the other, on which they rest, and in which they rejoice in the mercy of God. It is the work of the whole lives of these characters to accuse themselves in all things, and in all things to justify and praise God. And thus they fulfil that word of Proverbs 28:14, "Blessed is the man that feareth alway;" and also that of Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord alway." Thus, between the upper and nether millstone (Deuteronomy 24:6), they are broken in pieces and humbled, and the husks being thus bruised off, they come forth the all-pure wheat of Christ. Martin Luther.

Verse 11. The fear of God promotes spiritual joy; it is the morning star which ushers in the sunlight of comfort. "Walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." God mingles joy with fear, that fear may not be slavish. Thomas Watson, 1660.

Verse 12. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry." From the Person, the Son, we shall pass to the act (Osculamini, kiss the Son); in which we shall see, that since this is an act which licentious men have depraved (carnal men do it, and treacherous men do it—Judas betrayed his Master by a kiss), and yet God commands this, and expresses love in this; everything that hath, or may be abused, must not therefore be abandoned; the turning of a thing out of the way, is not a taking of that thing away, but good things deflected to ill uses by some, may be by others reduced to their first goodness. Then let us consider and magnify the goodness of God, that hath brought us into this distance, that we may kiss the Son, that the expressing of this love lies in our hands, and that, whereas the love of the church, in the Old Testament, even in the Canticle, went no farther but to the Osculator me (O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! Canticles 1:1), now, in the Christian church, and in the visitation of a Christian soul, he hath invited us, enables us to kiss him, for he is presentally amongst us. This leads us to give an earnest persuasion and exhortation to kiss the Son, with all those affections, which we shall there find to be expressed in the Scriptures, in that testimony of true love, a holy kiss. But then, lest that persuasion by love should not be effectual and powerful enough to us, we shall descend from that duty, to the danger, from love, to fear, "lest he be angry:" and therein see first, that God, who is love, can be angry; and then, that this God who is angry here, is the Son of God, he that hath done so much for us, and therefore in justice may be angry; he that is our Judge, and therefore in reason we are to fear his anger: and then, in a third branch, we shall see how easily this anger departs—a kiss removes it.

Verse 12. "Kiss the Son." That is, embrace him, depend upon him all these ways: as thy kinsman, as thy sovereign; at thy going, at thy coming; at thy reconciliation, in the truth of religion in thyself, in a peaceable unity with the church, in a reverent estimation of those men, and those means, whom he sends. Kiss him, and be not ashamed of kissing him; it is that which the spouse desired, "I would kiss thee, and not be despised." Canticles 7:1. If thou be despised for loving Christ in his Gospel, remember that when David was thought base, for dancing before the ark, his way was to be more base. If thou be thought frivolous for thrusting in at service, in the forenoon, be more frivolous, and come again in the afternoon: "Tanto major requies, quanto ab amore Jesu nulla requies;" (Gregory) "The more thou troublest thyself, or art troubled by others for Christ, the more peace thou hast in Christ." . . . . "Lest he be angry." Anger, as it is a passion that troubles, and disorders, and
Psalm 2

Verse 12. "Kiss the Son." To make peace with the Father, kiss the Son. "Let him kiss me," was the church's prayer. Canticles 1:2. Let us kiss him — that be our endeavour. Indeed, the Son must first kiss us by his mercy, before we can kiss him by our piety. Lord, grant in these mutual kisses and interchangeable embraces now, that we may come to the plenary wedding supper hereafter; when the choir of heaven, even the voices of angels, shall sing epithalamiums, nuptial songs, at the bridal of the spouse of the Lamb. Thomas Adams.

Verse 12. "If his wrath be kindled but a little;" the Hebrew is, if his nose or nostril be kindled but a little; the nostril, being an organ of the body in which wrath shows itself, is put for wrath itself. Paleness and snuffling of the nose are symptoms of anger. In our proverbials, to take a thing in snuff, is to take it in anger. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 12. "His wrath." Unspeakable must the wrath of God be when it is kindled fully, since perdition may come upon the kindling of it but a little. John Newton.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Whole Psalm. Shows us the nature of sin, and the terrible results of it if it could reign.

Verse 1. Nothing is more irrational than irreligion. A weighty theme. The reasons why sinners rebel against God, stated, refuted, lamented, and
repented of.

The crowning display of human sin in man's hatred of the Mediator.

Verses 1 and 2. Opposition to the gospel, unreasonable and ineffectual. Two sermons by John Newton.

Verses 1 and 2. These verses show that all trust in man in the service of God is vain. Inasmuch as men oppose Christ, it is not good to hang our trust upon the multitude for their number, the earnest for their zeal, the mighty for their countenance, or the wise for their counsel, since all these are far oftener against Christ than for him.


Verse 3. The true reason of the opposition of sinners to Christ's truth, viz.: their hatred of the restraints of godliness.

Verse 4. God's derision of the rebellious, both now and hereafter.

Verse 5. The voice of wrath. One of a series of sermons upon the voices of the divine attributes.

  1. The opposition to it: "yet."
  2. The certainty of its existence: "Yet have I set."
  3. The power which maintains it: "have I set."
  4. The place of its manifestation: "my holy hill of Zion."
  5. The blessings flowing from it.

Verse 7. The divine decree concerning Christ, in connection with the decrees of election and providence. The Sonship of Jesus.

This verse teaches us faithfully to declare, and humbly to claim, the gifts and calling that God hath bestowed upon us. Thomas Wilcocks.


Prayer indispensable.—Jesus must ask.

Verse 9. The ruin of the wicked. Certain, irresistible, terrible, complete, irretrievable, "like a potter's vessel."

The destruction of systems of error and oppression to be expected. The gospel an iron rod quite able to break mere pots of man's making.
Verse 10. True wisdom, fit for kings and judges, lies in obeying Christ. The gospel, a school for those who would learn how to rule and judge well. They may consider its principles, its exemplar, its spirit, etc.

Verse 11. Mingled experience. See the case of the women returning from the sepulchre. Matthew 28:8. This may be rendered a very comforting subject, if the Holy Spirit direct the mind of the preacher. True religion, a compound of many virtues and emotions.

1. The command.
2. The argument.

Last clause.—Nature, object, and blessedness of saving faith.

WORK UPON THE SECOND PSALM
Zion's King: the Second Psalm expounded in the Light of History and Prophecy. By the Rev. DAVID PITCAIRN. 1851.
Psalm 3

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. "A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his Son." You will remember the sad story of David's flight from his own palace, when in the dead of the night, he forded the brook Kedron, and went with a few faithful followers to hide himself for awhile from the fury of his rebellious son. Remember that David in this was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, too, fled; he, too, passed over the brook Kedron when his own people were in rebellion against him, and with a feeble band of followers he went to the garden of Gethsemane. He, too, drank of the brook by the way, and therefore doth he lift up the head. By very many expositors this is entitled THE MORNING HYMN. May we ever wake with holy confidence in our hearts, and a song upon our lips!

DIVISION. This Psalm may be divided into four parts of two verses each. Indeed, many of the Psalms cannot be well understood unless we attentively regard the parts into which they should be divided. They are not continuous descriptions of one scene, but a set of pictures of many kindred subjects. As in our modern sermons, we divide our discourse into different heads, so is it in these Psalms. There is always unity, but it is the unity of a bundle of arrows, and not of a single solitary shaft. Let us now look at the Psalm before us. In the first two verses you have David making a complaint to God concerning his enemies; he then declares his confidence in the Lord (3, 4), sings of his safety in sleep (5, 6), and strengthens himself for future conflict (7, 8).

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. The poor broken-hearted father complains of the multitude of his enemies: and if you turn to 2 Samuel 15:12, you will find it written that "the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom," while the troops of David constantly diminished! "Lord how are they increased that trouble me!" Here is a note of exclamation to express the wonder of woe which amazed and perplexed the fugitive father. Alas! I see no limit to my misery, for my troubles are enlarged! There was enough at first to sink me very low; but lo! my enemies multiply. When Absalom, my darling, is in rebellion against me, it is enough to break my heart; but lo! Ahithophel hath forsaken me, my faithful counsellors have turned their backs on me; lo! my generals and soldiers have deserted my standard. "How are they increased that trouble me!" Troubles always come in flocks. Sorrow hath a numerous family.

"Many are they that rise up against me." Their hosts are far superior to mine! Their numbers are too great for my reckoning!

Let us here recall to our memory the innumerable host which beset our Divine Redeemer. The legions of our sins, the armies of fiends, the crowd of bodily pains, the host of spiritual sorrows, and all the allies of death and hell, set themselves in battle against the Son of Man. O how precious to know and believe that he has routed their hosts, and trodden them down in his anger!
Psalm 3

They who would have troubled us he has removed into captivity, and those who would have risen up against us he has laid low. The dragon lost his sting when he dashed it into the soul of Jesus.

Verse 2. David complains before his loving God of the worst weapon of his enemies' attacks, and the bitterest drop of his distresses. "Oh!" saith David, "many there be that say of my soul, There is no help for him in God." Some of his distrustful friends said this sorrowfully, but his enemies exultingly boasted of it, and longed to see their words proved by his total destruction. This was the unkindest cut of all, when they declared that his God had forsaken him. Yet David knew in his own conscience that he had given them some ground for this exclamation, for he had committed sin against God in the very light of day. Then they flung his crime with Bathsheba into his face, and they said, "Go up, thou bloody man; God hath forsaken thee and left thee." Shimei cursed him, and swore at him to his very face, for he was bold because of his backers, since multitudes of the men of Belial thought of David in like fashion. Doubtless, David felt this infernal suggestion to be staggering to his faith. If all the trials which come from heaven, all the temptations which ascend from hell, and all the crosses which arise from earth, could be mixed and pressed together, they would not make a trial so terrible as that which is contained in this verse. It is the most bitter of all afflictions to be led to fear that there is no help for us in God. And yet remember our most blessed Saviour had to endure this in the deepest degree when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He knew full well what is was to walk in darkness and to see no light. This was the curse of the curse. This was the wormwood mingled with the gall. To be deserted of his Father was worse than to be the despised of men. Surely we should love him who suffered this bitterest of temptations and trials for our sake. It will be a delightful and instructive exercise for the loving heart to mark the Lord in his agonies as here pourtrayed, for there is here, and in very many other Psalms, far more of David's Lord than of David himself.

"Selah." This is a musical pause; the precise meaning of which is not known. Some think it simply a rest, a pause in the music; others say it means, "Lift up the strain—sing more loudly—pitch the tune upon a higher key—there is nobler matter to come, therefore retune your harps." Harp-strings soon get out of order and need to be screwed up again to their proper tightness, and certainly our heart-strings are evermore getting out of tune, Let "Selah" teach us to pray

"O may my heart in tune be found
Like David's harp of solemn sound."
At least we may learn that wherever we see "Selah," we should look upon it as a note of observation. Let us read the passage which precedes and succeeds it with greater earnestness, for surely there is always something excellent where we are required to rest and pause and meditate, or when we are required to lift up our hearts in grateful song. "SELAH."

Verse 3. Here David avows his confidence in God. "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me." The word in the original signifies more than a shield; it means a buckler round about, a protection which shall surround a man entirely, a shield above, beneath, around, without and within. Oh! what a shield is God for his people! He wards off the fiery darts of Satan from beneath, and the storms of trials from above, while, at the same instant, he speaks peace to the tempest within the breast. Thou art "my glory." David knew that though he was driven from his capital in contempt and scorn, he should yet return in triumph, and by faith he looks upon God as honouring and glorifying him. O for grace to see our future glory amid present shame! Indeed, there is a present glory in our afflictions, if we could but discern it; for it is no mean thing to have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. David was honoured when he made the ascent of Olivet, weeping, with his head covered; for he was in all this made like unto his Lord. May we learn, in this respect, to glory in tribulations also! "And the lifter up of mine head"—thou shalt yet exalt me. Though I hang my head in sorrow, I shall very soon lift it up in joy and thanksgiving. What a divine trio of mercies is contained in this verse!—defence for the defenceless, glory for the despised, and joy for the comfortless. Verily we may well say, "there is none like the God of Jeshurun."

Verse 4. "I cried unto the Lord with my voice." Why doth he say, "with my voice?" Surely, silent prayers are heard. Yes, but good men often find that, even in secret, they pray better aloud than they do when they utter no vocal sound. Perhaps, moreover, David would think thus:—"My cruel enemies clamour against me; they lift up their voices, and, behold, I lift up mine, and my cry outsoars them all. They clamour, but the cry of my voice in great distress pierces the very skies, and is louder and stronger than all their tumult; for there is one in the sanctuary who hearkens to me from the seventh heaven, and he hath, heard me out of his holy hill." Answers to prayers are sweet cordials for the soul. We need not fear a frowning world while we rejoice in a prayer-hearing God.

Here stands another Selah. Rest awhile, O tried believer, and change the strain to a softer air.

Verse 5. David's faith enabled him to lie down; anxiety would certainly have kept him on tiptoe, watching for an enemy. Yea, he was able to sleep, to sleep
in the midst of trouble, surrounded by foes. "So he giveth his beloved sleep."
There is a sleep of presumption; God deliver us from it! There is a sleep of holy
confidence; God help us so to close our eyes! But David says he awaked also.
Some sleep the sleep of death; but he, though exposed to many enemies,
reclined his head on the bosom of his God, slept happily beneath the wing of
Providence in sweet security, and then awoke in safety. "For the Lord
sustained me." The sweet influence of the Pleiades of promise shone upon the
sleeper, and he awoke conscious that the Lord had preserved him. An excellent
divine has well remarked—"This quietude of a man's heart by faith in God, is a
higher sort of work than the natural resolution of manly courage, for it is the
gracious operation of God's Holy Spirit upholding a man above nature, and
therefore the Lord must have all the glory of it."

Verse 6. Buckling on his harness for the day's battle, our hero sings, "I will not
be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round
about." Observe that he does not attempt to under-estimate the number or
wisdom of his enemies. He reckons them at tens of thousands, and he views
them as cunning huntsmen chasing him with cruel skill. Yet he trembles not,
but looking his foeman in the face he is ready for the battle. There may be no
way of escape; they may hem me in as the deer are surrounded by a circle of
hunters; they may surround me on every side, but in the name of God I will
dash through them; or, if I remain in the midst of them, yet shall they not hurt
me; I shall be free in my very prison.

But David is too wise to venture to the battle without prayer; he therefore
betakes himself to his knees, and cries aloud to Jehovah.

Verse 7. His only hope is in his God, but that is so strong a confidence, that he
feels the Lord hath but to arise and he is saved. It is enough for the Lord to
stand up, and all is well. He compares his enemies to wild beasts, and he
declares that God hath broken their jaws, so that they could not injure him;
"Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly." Or else he alludes to the peculiar
temptations to which he was then exposed. They had spoken against him; God,
therefore, has smitten them upon the cheek bone. They seemed as if they would
devour him with their mouths; God hath broken their teeth, and let them say
what they will, their toothless jaws shall not be able to devour him. Rejoice, O
believer, thou hast to do with a dragon whose head is broken, and with enemies
whose teeth are dashed from their jaws!

Verse 8. This verse contains the sum and substance of Calvinistic doctrine.
Search Scripture through, and you must, if you read it with a candid mind, be
persuaded that the doctrine of salvation by grace alone is the great doctrine of
the word of God: "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord." This is a point
concerning which we are daily fighting. Our opponents say, "Salvation belongeth to the free will of man; if not to man's merit, yet at least to man's will;" but we hold and teach that salvation from first to last, in every iota of it, belongs to the Most High God. It is God that chooses his people. He calls them by his grace; he quickens them by his Spirit, and keeps them by his power. It is not of man, neither by man; "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." May we all learn this truth experimentally, for our proud flesh and blood will never permit us to learn it in any other way. In the last sentence the peculiarity and speciality of salvation are plainly stated: "Thy blessing is upon thy people." Neither upon Egypt, nor upon Tyre, nor upon Ninevah; thy blessing is upon thy chosen, thy blood-bought, thine everlastingly-beloved people. "Selah:" lift up your hearts, and pause, and meditate upon this doctrine. "Thy blessing is upon thy people." Divine, discriminating, distinguishing, eternal, infinite, immutable love, is a subject for constant adoration. Pause, my soul, at this Selah, and consider thine own interest in the salvation of God; and if by humble faith thou art enabled to see Jesus as thine by his own free gift of himself to thee, if this greatest of all blessings be upon thee, rise up and sing—

"Rise, my soul! adore and wonder!
Ask, 'O why such love to me?'
Grace hath put me in the number
Of the Saviour's family:
    Hallelujah!
Thanks, eternal thanks, to thee!"

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Title. With regard to the authority of the TITLES, it becomes us to speak with diffidence, considering the very opposite opinions which have been offered upon this subject by scholars of equal excellence. In the present day, it is too much the custom to slight or omit them altogether, as though added, nobody knows when or by whom, and as, in many instances, inconsistent with the subject-matter of the Psalm itself: while Augustine, Theodoret, and various other early writers of the Christian church, regard them as a part of the inspired text; and the Jews still continue to make them a part of their chant, and their rabbins to comment upon them.

It is certainly unknown who invented or placed them where they are; but it is unquestionable that they have been so placed from time immemorial; they occur in the Septuagint, which contains also in a few instances titles to Psalms that are without any in the Hebrew; and they have been copied after the Septuagint by Jerome. So far as the present writer has been able to penetrate the
obscurity that occasionally hangs over them, they are a direct and most valuable key to the general history or subject of the Psalms to which they are prefixed; and, excepting where they have been evidently misunderstood or misinterpreted, he has never met with a single instance in which the drift of the title and its respective Psalm do not exactly coincide. Many of them were, doubtless, composed by Ezra at the time of editing his own collection, at which period some critics suppose the whole to have been written; but the rest appear rather to be coeval, or nearly so, with the respective Psalms themselves, and to have been written about the period of their production. John Mason Good, M.D., F.R.S., 1854.

See title. Here we have the first use of the word Psalm. In Hebrew, Mizmor, which hath the signification of pruning, or cutting off superfluous twigs, and is applied to songs made of short sentences, where many superfluous words are put away. Henry Ainsworth.

Upon this note an old writer remarks, "Let us learn from this, that in times of sore trouble men will not fetch a compass and use fine words in prayer, but will offer a prayer which is pruned of all luxuriance of wordy speeches."

Whole Psalm. Thus you may plainly see how God hath wrought in his church in old time, and therefore should not discourage yourselves for any sudden change; but with David, acknowledge your sins to God, declare unto him how many there be that vex you and rise up against you, naming you Huguenots, Lutherans, Heretics, Puritans, and the children of Belial, as they named David. Let the wicked idolaters brag that they will prevail against you and overcome you, and that God hath given you over, and will be no more your God. Let them put their trust in Absalom, with his large golden locks; and in the wisdom of Ahithophel, the wise counsellor; yet say you, with David, "Thou, O Lord, art my defender, and the lifter up of my head." Persuade yourselves, with David, that the Lord is your defender, who hath compassed you round about, and is, as it were, a "shield" that doth cover you on every side. It is he only that may and will compass you about with glory and honour. It is he that will thrust down those proud hypocrites from their seat, and exalt the lowly and meek. It is he which will "smite" your "enemies on the cheek bone," and burst all their teeth in sunder. He will hang up Absalom by his own long hairs; and Ahithophel through desperation shall hang himself. The bands shall be broken, and you delivered; for this belongeth unto the Lord, to save his from their enemies, and to bless his people, that they may safely proceed in their pilgrimage to heaven without fear. Thomas Tymme's "Silver Watch Bell", 1634.

Verse 1. Absalom's faction, like a snowball, strangely gathered in its motion. David speaks of it as one amazed; and well he might, that a people he had so
many ways obliged, should almost generally revolt from him, and rebel against
him, and choose for their head such a silly, giddy young fellow as Absalom
was. How slippery and deceitful are the many! And how little fidelity and
constancy is to be found among men! David had had the hearts of his subjects
as much as ever any king had, and yet now of a sudden he had lost them! As
people must not trust too much to princes (Psalm 146:3), so princes must not
build too much upon their interest in the people. Christ the Son of David had
many enemies, when a great multitude came to seize him, when the crowd
cried, "Crucify him, crucify him," how were they then increased that troubled
him! Even good people must not think it strange if the stream be against them,
and the powers that threaten them grow more and more formidable. Matthew
Henry.

Verse 2. When the believer questions the power of God, or his interest in it, his
joy gusheth out as blood out of a broken vein. This verse is a sore stab indeed.
William Gurnall.

Verse 2. A child of God startles at the very thought of despairing of help in
God; you cannot vex him with anything so much as if you offer to persuade
him, "There is no help for him in God." David comes to God, and tells him
what his enemies said of him, as Hezekiah spread Rabshakeh's blasphemous
letter before the Lord; they say, "There is no help for me in thee;" but, Lord, if
it be so, I am undone. They say to my soul, "There is no salvation" (for so the
word is) "for him in God;" but, Lord, do thou say unto my soul, "I am thy
salvation" (Psalm 35:3), and that shall satisfy me, and in due time silence them.
Matthew Henry.

Verses 2, 4, 8. "Selah." (Heb.) Much has been written on this word, and still its
meaning does not appear to be wholly determined. It is rendered in the Targum
or Chaldee paraphrase, (Hebrew), lealmin, for ever, or to eternity. In the Latin
Vulgate, it is omitted, as if it were no part of the text. In the Septuagint it is
rendered Diaqalma, supposed to refer to some variation or modulation of the
voice in singing. Schleusner, Lex. The word occurs seventy-three times in the
Psalms, and three times in the book of Habakkuk (3:3, 9, 13). It is never
translated in our version, but in all these places the original word Selah is
retained. It occurs only in poetry, and is supposed to have had some reference
to the singing or cantillation of the poetry, and to be probably a musical term.
In general, also, it indicates a pause in the sense, as well as in the musical
performance. Gesenius (Lex.) supposes that the most probable meaning of this
musical term or note is silence or pause, and that its use was, in chanting the
words of the Psalm, to direct the singer to be silent, to pause a little, while the
instruments played an interlude or harmony. Perhaps this is all that can now be
known of the meaning of the word, and this is enough to satisfy every reasonable enquiry. It is probable, if this was the use of the term, that it would commonly correspond with the sense of the passage, and be inserted where the sense made a pause suitable; and this will doubtless be found usually to be the fact. But anyone acquainted at all with the character of musical notation, will perceive at once that we are not to suppose that this would be invariably or necessarily the fact, for the musical pauses by no means always correspond with pauses in the sense. This word, therefore, can furnish very little assistance in determining the meaning of the passages where it is found. Ewald supposes, differing from this view, that it rather indicates that in the places where it occurs the voice is to be raised, and that it is synonymous with up, higher, loud, or distinct, from (Hebrew) sal, (Hebrew) salal, to ascend. Those who are disposed to enquire further respecting its meaning, and the uses of musical pauses in general, may be referred to Ugolin, "Thesau. Antiq. Sacr.," tom. xxii. Albert Barnes, 1868.

Verses 2, 4, 8. Selah, (Heb.) is found seventy-three times in the Psalms, generally at the end of a sentence or paragraph; but in Psalm 55:19 and 57:3, it stands in the middle of the verse. While most authors have agreed in considering this word as somehow relating to the music, their conjectures about its precise meaning have varied greatly. But at present these two opinions chiefly obtain. Some, including Herder, De Wette, Ewald (Poet. Böcher, i. 179), and Delitzsch, derive it from (Heb.), or (Heb.), to raise, and understand an elevation of the voice or music; others, after Gesenius, in Thesaurus, derive it from (Heb.), to be still or silent, and understand a pause in the singing. So Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, and Tholuck. Probably selah was used to direct the singer to be silent, or to pause a little, while the instruments played an interlude (so Sept., diuqualma or symphony. In Psalm 9:16, it occurs in the expression higgaion selah, which Gesenius, with much probability, renders instrumental music, pause; i.e., let the instruments strike up a symphony, and let the singer pause. By Tholuck and Hengstenberg, however, the two words are rendered meditation, pause; i.e., let the singer meditate while the music stops. Benjamin Davies, Ph.D., L.L.D., article Psalms, in Kitto's Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature.

Verse 3. "Lifter up of my head." God will have the body partake with the soul—as in matters of grief, so in matters of joy; the lanthorn shines in the light of the candle within. Richard Sibbs, 1639.

There is a lifting up of the head by elevating to office, as with Pharaoh's butler; this we trace to the divine appointment. There is a lifting up in honour after shame, in health after sickness, in gladness after sorrow, in restoration
after a fall, in victory after a temporary defeat; in all these respects the Lord is the lifter up of our head. *C. H. S.*

Verse 4. When prayer leads the van, in due time deliverance brings up the rear. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 4. "He heard me." I have often heard persons say in prayer, "Thou art a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God," but the expression contains a superfluity, since for God to hear is, according to Scripture, the same thing as to answer. *C. H. S.*

Verse 5. "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." The title of the Psalm tells us when David had this sweet night's rest; not when he lay on his bed of down in his stately palace at Jerusalem, but when he fled for his life from his unnatural son Absalom, and possibly was forced to lie in the open field under the canopy of heaven. Truly it must be a soft pillow indeed that could make him forget his danger, who then had such a disloyal army at his back hunting of him; yea, so transcendent is the influence of this peace, that it can make the creature lie down as cheerfully to sleep in the grave, as on the softest bed. You will say that child is willing that calls to be put to bed; some of the saints have desired God to lay them at rest in their beds of dust, and that not in a pet and discontent with their present trouble, as Job did, but from a sweet sense of this peace in their bosoms. "Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," was the swan-like song of old Simeon. He speaks like a merchant that had got all his goods on ship-board, and now desires the master of the ship to hoist sail, and be gone homewards. Indeed, what should a Christian, that is but a foreigner here, desire to stay any longer for in the world, but to get his full lading in for heaven? And when hath he that, if not when he is assured of his peace with God? This peace of the gospel, and sense of the love of God in the soul, doth so admirably conduce to the enabling of a person in all difficulties, and temptations, and troubles, that ordinarily, before he calls his saints to any hard service, or hot work, he gives them a draught of this cordial wine next their hearts, to cheer them up and embolden them in the conflict. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 5. Gurnall, who wrote when there were houses on old London Bridge, has quaintly said, "Do you not think that they sleep as soundly who dwell on London Bridge as they who live at Whitehall or Cheapside? for they know that the waves which rush under them cannot hurt them. Even so may the saints rest quietly over the floods of trouble or death, and fear no ill."
Verse 5. Xerxes, the Persian, when he destroyed all the temples in Greece, caused the temple of Diana to be preserved for its beautiful structure: that soul which hath the beauty of holiness shining in it, shall be preserved for the glory of the structure; God will not suffer his own temple to be destroyed. Would you be secured in evil times? Get grace and fortify this garrison; a good conscience is a Christian's fort-royal. David's enemies lay round about him; yet, saith he, "I laid me down and slept". A good conscience can sleep in the mouth of a cannon; grace is a Christian's coat of mail, which fears not the arrow or bullet. True grace may be shot at, but can never be shot through; grace puts the soul into Christ, and there it is safe, as the bee in the hive, as the dove in the ark. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," Romans 8:1.

Thomas Watson.

Verse 5. "The Lord sustained me." It would not be unprofitable to consider the sustaining power manifested in us while we lie asleep. In the flowing of the blood, heaving of the lung, etc., in the body, and the continuance of mental faculties while the image of death is upon us. C. H. S.

Verse 6. "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about." The psalmist will trust, despite appearances. He will not be afraid though ten thousands of people have set themselves against him round about. Let us here limit our thoughts to this one idea, "despite appearances." What could look worse to human sight than this array of ten thousands of people? Ruin seemed to stare him in the face; wherever he looked an enemy was to be seen. What was one against ten thousand? It often happens that God's people come into circumstances like this; they say, "All these things are against me;" they seem scarce able to count their troubles; they cannot see a loophole through which to escape; things look very black indeed; it is great faith and trust which says under these circumstances, "I will not be afraid."

These were the circumstances under which Luther was placed, as he journeyed toward Worms. His friend Spalatin heard it said, by the enemies of the Reformation, that the safe conduct of a heretic ought not to be respected, and became alarmed for the reformer. "At the moment when the latter was approaching the city, a messenger appeared before him with this advice from the chaplain, 'Do not enter Worms!' And this from his best friend, the elector's confidant, from Spalatin himself! . . . . . But Luther, undismayed, turned his eyes upon the messenger, and replied, 'Go, and tell your master, that even should there be as many devils in Worms as tiles upon the housetops, still I would enter it.' The messenger returned to Worms, with this astounding answer: 'I was then undaunted,' said Luther, a few days before his death, 'I
feared nothing."

At such seasons as these, the reasonable men of the world, those who walk by sight and not by faith, will think it reasonable enough that the Christian should be afraid; they themselves would be very low if they were in such a predicament. Weak believers are now ready to make excuses for us, and we are only too ready to make them for ourselves; instead of rising above the weakness of the flesh, we take refuge under it, and use it as an excuse. But let us think prayerfully for a little while, and we shall see that it should not be thus with us. To trust only when appearances are favourable, is to sail only with the wind and tide, to believe only when we can see. Oh! let us follow the example of the psalmist, and seek that unreservedness of faith which will enable us to trust God, come what will, and to say as he said, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about." Philip Bennet Power's 'I wills' of the Psalms, 1862.

Verse 6. "I will not be afraid," etc. It makes no matter what our enemies be, though for number, legions; for power, principalities; for subtlety, serpents; for cruelty, dragons; for vantage of place, a prince of the air; for maliciousness, spiritual wickedness; stronger is he that is in us, than they who are against us; nothing is able to separate us from the love of God. In Christ Jesus our Lord, we shall be more than conquerors. William Cowper, 1612.

Verse 7. "Arise, O Lord," Jehovah! This is a common scriptural mode of calling upon God to manifest his presence and his power, either in wrath or favour. By a natural anthropomorphism, it describes the intervals of such manifestations as periods of inaction or of slumber, out of which he is besought to rouse himself. "Save me," even me, of whom they say there is no help for him in God. "Save me, O my God," mine by covenant and mutual engagement, to whom I therefore have a right to look for deliverance and protection. This confidence is warranted, moreover, by experience. "For thou hast," in former exigencies, "smitten all mine enemies," without exception "(on the) cheek" or jaw, an act at once violent and insulting. J. A. Alexander, D.D.

Verse 7. "Upon the cheek bone."—The language seems to be taken from a comparison of his enemies with wild beasts. The cheek bone denotes the bone in which the teeth are placed, and to break that is to disarm the animal. Albert Barnes, in loc.

Verse 7. When God takes vengeance upon the ungodly, he will smite in such a manner as to make them feel his almightiness in every stroke. All his power shall be exercised in punishing and none in pitying. O that every obstinate
sinner would think of this, and consider his unmeasurable boldness in thinking himself able to grapple with Omnipotence! *Stephen Charnock.*

**Verse 8.** "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord:" parallel passage in Jonah 2:9, "Salvation is of the Lord." The mariners might have written upon their ship, instead of Castor and Pollux, or the like device, *Salvation is the Lord's*; the Ninevites might have written upon their gates, *Salvation is the Lord's*; and whole mankind, whose cause is pitted and pleaded by God against the hardness of Jonah's heart, in the last, might have written on the palms of their hands, *Salvation is the Lord's*. It is the argument of both the Testaments, the staff and supportation of heaven and earth. They would both sink, and all their joints be severed, if the salvation of the Lord's were not. The birds in the air sing no other notes, the beasts in the field give no other voice, than *Salus Jehovæ*, Salvation is the Lord's. The walls and fortresses to our country's gates, to our cities and towns, bars to our houses, a surer cover to our heads than a helmet of steel, a better receipt to our bodies than the confection of apothecaries, a better receipt to our souls than the pardons of Rome, is *Salus Jehovæ*, the salvation of the Lord. *The salvation of the Lord* blesseth, preserveth, upholdeth all that we have; our basket and our store, the oil in our cruses, our presses, the sheep in our folds, our stalls, the children in the womb, at our tables, the corn in our fields, our stores, our garner; it is not the virtue of the stars, nor nature of all things themselves, that giveth being and continuance to any of these blessings. And, "What shall I more say?" as the apostle asked (Hebrews 9) when he had spoken much, and there was much more behind, but time failed him. Rather, what should I not say? for the world is my theatre at this time, and I neither think nor can feign to myself anything that hath not dependence upon this acclamation, *Salvation is the Lord's*. Plutarch writeth, that the Amphictions in Greece, a famous council assembled of twelve sundry people, wrote upon the temple of Apollo Pythius, instead of the Iliads of Homer, or songs of Pindarus (large and tiring discourses), short sentences and memoratives, as, *Know thyself, Use moderation, Beware of suretyship*, and the like; and doubtless though every creature in the world, whereof we have use, be a treatise and narration unto us of the goodness of God, and we might weary our flesh, and spend our days in writing books of that inexplicable subject, yet this short apothegm of Jonah comprehendeth all the rest, and standeth at the end of the song, as the altars and stones that the patriarch set up at the parting of the ways, to give knowledge to the after-world by what means he was delivered. I would it were daily preached in our temples, sung in our streets, written upon our door-posts, painted upon our walls, or rather cut with an adamant claw upon the tables of our hearts, that we might never forget salvation to be the Lord's. We have need of such remembrances to keep us in practise of revolving the mercies
of God. For nothing decayeth sooner than love; *nihil facilius quam amar putrescit*. And of all the powers of the soul, memory is most delicate, tender and brittle, and first waxeth old, *memoria delicata, tenera, fragilis, in quam primum senectus incurrit*; and of all the apprehensions of memory, first benefit, *primum senescit beneficium*. John King's Commentary on Jonah, 1594.

Verse 8. "Thy blessing is upon thy people." The saints are not only blessed when they are comprehensors, but while they are viators. They are blessed before they are crowned. This seems a paradox to flesh and blood: what, reproached and maligned, yet blessed! A man that looks upon the children of God with a carnal eye, and sees how they are afflicted, and like the ship in the gospel, which was covered with waves (Matthew 8:24), would think they were far from blessedness. Paul brings a catalogue of his sufferings (2 Corinthians 11:24-26), "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck," etc. And those Christians of the first magnitude, of whom the world was not worthy, "Had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword." Hebrews 11:36, 37. What! and were all these during the time of their sufferings blessed? A carnal man would think, if this be to be blessed, God deliver him from it. But, however sense would give their vote, our Saviour Christ pronounceth the godly man blessed; though a mourner, though a martyr, yet blessed. Job on the dunghill was blessed Job. The saints are blessed when they are cursed. Shimei did curse David (2 Samuel 16:5), "He came forth and cursed him;" yet when he was cursed David he was blessed David. The saints though they are bruised, yet they are blessed. Not only they shall be blessed, but they are so. Psalm 119:1. "Blessed are the undefiled." Psalm 3:8. "Thy blessing is upon thy people." Thomas Watson.

As a curious instance of Luther's dogmatical interpretations we give very considerable extracts from his rendering of this Psalm without in any degree endorsing them. C. H. S.

*Whole Psalm.* That the meaning of this Psalm is not historical, is manifest from many particulars, which militate against its being so understood. And first of all, there is this which the blessed Augustine has remarked; that the words, "I laid me down to sleep and took my rest," seem to be the words of Christ rising from the dead. And then that there is at the end the blessing of God pronounced upon the people, which manifestly belongs to the whole church. Hence, the blessed Augustine interprets the Psalm in a threefold way; first, concerning Christ the head; secondly, concerning the whole of Christ, that is, Christ and his church, the head and the body; and thirdly, figuratively, concerning any private
Christian. Let each have his own interpretation. I, in the meantime, will interpret it concerning Christ; being moved so to do by the same argument that moved Augustine—that the fifth verse does not seem appropriately to apply to any other but Christ. First, because, "lying down" and "sleeping," signify in this place altogether a natural death, not a natural sleep. Which may be collected from this—because it then follows, "and rose again." Whereas if David had spoken concerning the sleep of the body, he would have said, "and awoke;" though this does not make so forcibly for the interpretation of which we are speaking, if the Hebrew word would be closely examined. But again, what new thing would he advance by declaring that he laid him down and slept? Why did he not say also that he walked, ate, drank, laboured, or was in necessity, or mention particularly some other work of the body? And moreover, it seems an absurdity under so great a tribulation, to boast of nothing else but the sleep of the body; for that tribulation would rather force him to a privation from sleep, and to be in peril and distress; especially since those two expressions, "I laid me down," and "I slept," signify the quiet repose of one lying down in his place, which is not the state of one who falls asleep from exhausture through sorrow. But this consideration makes the more forcibly for us—that he therefore glories in his rising up again because it was the Lord that sustained him, who raised him up while sleeping, and did not leave him in sleep. How can such a glorying agree, and what new kind of religion can make it agree, with any particular sleep of the body? (for in that case, would it not apply to the daily sleep also?) and especially, when this sustaining of God indicates at the same time an utterly forsaken state in the person sleeping, which is not the case in corporal sleep; for there the person sleeping may be protected even by men being his guards; but this sustaining being altogether of God, implies, not a sleep, but a heavy conflict. And lastly, the word HEKIZOTHI itself favours such an interpretation; which, being here put absolutely and transitively, signifies, "I caused to arise or awake." As if he had said, "I caused myself to awake, I roused myself." Which certainly more aptly agrees with the resurrection of Christ than with the sleep of the body; both because those who are asleep are accustomed to be roused and awaked, and because it is no wonderful matter, nor a matter worthy of so important a declaration, for anyone to awake of himself, seeing that it is what takes place every day. But this matter being introduced by the Spirit as a something new and singular, is certainly different from all that which attends common sleeping and waking.

Verse 2. "There is no help for him in his God." In the Hebrew the expression is simply, "in God," without the pronoun "his", which seems to me to give clearness and force to the expression. As if he had said, They say of me that I am not only deserted and oppressed by all creatures, but that even God, who is
present with all things, and preserves all things, and protects all things, forsakes me as the only thing out of the whole universe that he does not preserve. Which kind of temptation Job seems also to have tasted where he says, "Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee?" Job 7:20. For there is no temptation, no, not of the whole world together, nor of all hell combined in one, equal unto that wherein God stands contrary to man, which temptation Jeremiah prays against (Jeremiah 17:17), "Be not a terror unto me; thou art my hope in the days of evil;" and concerning which also the sixth Psalm following saith, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger;" and we find the same petitions throughout the psaltery. This temptation is wholly unsupportable, and is truly hell itself; as it is said in the same sixth Psalm, "for in death there is no remembrance of thee," etc. In a word, if you have never experienced it, you can never form any idea of it whatever.

Verse 3. "For thou, O Lord, art my helper, my glory, and the lifter up of my head." David here contrasts three things with three; helper, with many troublings; glory, with many rising up; and the lifter up of the head, with the blaspheming and insulting. Therefore, the person here represented is indeed alone in the estimation of man, and even according to his own feelings also; but in the sight of God, and in a spiritual view, he is by no means alone; but protected with the greatest abundance of help; as Christ saith (John 16:32), "Behold, the hour cometh when ye shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." . . . The words contained in this verse are not the words of nature, but of grace; not of free-will, but of the spirit of strong faith; which, even though seeing God, as in the darkness of the storm of death and hell, a deserting God, acknowledges him a sustaining God; when seeing him as a condemner, acknowledges him a Saviour. Thus this faith does not judge of things according as they seem to be, or are felt, like a horse or mule which have no understanding; but it understands things which are not seen, for "hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" Romans 8:24.

Verse 4. "I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill." In the Hebrew, the verb is in the future, and is, as Hieronymus translates it, "I will cry," and "he shall hear;" and this pleases me better than the perfect tense; for they are the words of one triumphing in, and praising and glorifying God, and giving thanks unto him who sustained, preserved, and lifted him up, according as he had hoped in the preceding verse. For it is usual with those that triumph and rejoice, to speak of those things which they have done and suffered, and to sing a song of praise unto their helper and deliverer; as in Psalm 66:16, "Come, then, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath
Psalm 3 53

done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with
my tongue." And also Psalm 81:1, "Sing aloud unto God our strength." And so
again, Exodus 15:1, "Let us sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed
gloriously." And so here, being filled with an overflowing sense of gratitude
and joy, he sings of his being dead, of his having slept and rose up again, of his
enemies being smitten, and of the teeth of the ungodly being broken. This it is
which causes the change; for he who hitherto had been addressing God in the
second person, changes on a sudden his address to others concerning God, in
the third person, saying, "and he heard me", not "and thou hearest me;" and
also, "I cried unto the Lord", not, "I cried unto thee," for he wants to make all
know what benefits God has heaped upon him; which is peculiar to a grateful
mind.

Verse 5. "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." Christ,
by the words of this verse, signifies his death and burial. . . . For it is not
to be supposed that he would have spoken so importantly concerning mere
natural rest and sleep; especially since that which preceeds, and that which
follows, compel us to understand him as speaking of a deep conflict and a
glorious victory over his enemies. By all which things he stirs us up and
animates us to faith in God, and commends unto us the power and grace of
God; that he is able to raise us up from the dead; an example of which he sets
before us, and proclaims it unto us as wrought in himself. . . . . . And this is
shown also farther in his using gentle words, and such as tend wonderfully to
lessen the terror of death. "I laid me down (saith he), and slept." He does not
say, I died, and was buried; for death and the tomb had lost both their name and
their power. And now death is not death, but a sleep; and the tomb not a tomb,
but a bed and resting place; which was the reason why the words of this
prophecy were put somewhat obscurely and doubtfully, that it might by that
means render death most lovely in our eyes (or rather most contemptible), as
being that state from which, as from the sweet rest of sleep, an undoubted
arising and awaking are promised. For who is not most sure of an awaking and
arising, who lies down to rest in a sweet sleep (where death does not prevent)?
This person, however, does not say that he died, but that he laid him down to
sleep, and that therefore he awakened. And moreover, as sleep is useful and
necessary for a better renewal of the powers of the body (as Ambrosius says in
his hymn), and as sleep relieves the weary limbs, so is death also equally
useful, and ordained for the arriving at a better life. And this is what David says
in the following Psalm, "I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest, for
thou, O Lord, in a singular manner hast formed me in hope." Therefore, in
considering death, we are not so much to consider death itself, as that most
certain life and resurrection which are sure to those who are in Christ; that
those words (John 8:51) might be fulfilled, "If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." But how is it that he shall never see it? Shall he not feel it? Shall he not die? No! he shall only see sleep, for, having the eyes of his faith fixed upon the resurrection, he so glides through death, that he does not even see death; for death, as I have said, is to him no death at all. And hence, there is that also of John 11:25, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Verse 7. "For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheekbone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly." Hieronymus uses this metaphor of "cheek bones", and "teeth", to represent cutting words, detractions, calumnies, and other injuries of the same kind, by which the innocent are oppressed: according to that of Proverbs 30:14, "There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men." It was by these that Christ was devoured, when, before Pilate, he was condemned to the cross by the voices and accusations of his enemies. And hence it is that the apostle saith (Galatians 5:15), "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

Verse 8. "Salvation is of the Lord, and thy blessing is upon thy people." A most beautiful conclusion this, and, as it were, the sum of all the feelings spoken of. The sense is, it is the Lord alone that saves and blesses: and even though the whole mass of all evils should be gathered together in one against a man, still, it is the Lord who saves: salvation and blessing are in his hands. What then shall I fear? What shall I not promise myself? When I know that no one can be destroyed, no one reviled, without the permission of God, even though all should rise up to curse and to destroy; and that no one of them can be blessed and saved without the permission of God, how much soever they may bless and strive to save themselves. And as Gregory Nazianzen says, "Where God gives, envy can avail nothing; and where God does not give, labour can avail nothing." And in the same way also Paul saith (Romans 8:31), "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And so, on the contrary, if God be against them, who can be for them? And why? Because "salvation is of the Lord," and not of them, nor of us, for "vain is the help of man." Martin Luther.

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

*Verse 1. The saint telling his griefs to his God.*

(1) His right to do so.

(2) The proper manner of telling them.

(3) The fair results of such holy communications with the Lord.
When may we expect increased troubles? Why are they sent? What is our wisdom in reference to them?

**Verse 2.** The lie against the saint and the libel upon his God.

**Verse 3.** The threefold blessing which God affords to his suffering ones—Defence, Honour, Joy. Show how all these may be enjoyed by faith, even in our worst estate.

**Verse 4.**
1. In dangers we should pray.
2. God will graciously hear.
3. We should record his answers of grace.
4. We may strengthen ourselves for the future by remembering the deliverances of the past.

**Verse 5.**
1. Describe sweet sleeping.
2. Describe happy waking.
3. Show how both are to be enjoyed, "for the Lord sustained me."

**Verse 6.** Faith surrounded by enemies and yet triumphant.

**Verse 7.**
1. Describe the Lord's past dealing with his enemies; "thou hast."
2. Show that the Lord should be our constant resort, "O Lord," "O my God."
3. Enlarge upon the fact that the Lord is to be stirred up: "Arise."
4. Urge believers to use the Lord's past victories as an argument with which to prevail with him.

**Verse 7. (last clause).** Our enemies vanquished foes, toothless lions.

**Verse 8. (first clause).** Salvation of God from first to last. (See the exposition.)

**Verse 8. (last clause).** They were blessed in Christ, through Christ, and shall be blessed with Christ. The blessing rests upon their persons, comforts, trials, labours, families, etc. It flows from grace, is enjoyed by faith, and is insured by oath, etc. *James Smith's Portions*, 1802-1862.
Psalm 4

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

TITLE. This Psalm is apparently intended to accompany the third, and make a pair with it. If the last may be entitled THE MORNING PSALM, this from its matter is equally deserving of the title of THE EVENING HYMN. May the choice words of the 8th verse be our sweet song of rest as we retire to our repose!

"Thus with my thoughts composed to peace,
I'll give mine eyes to sleep;
Thy hand in safety keeps my days,
And will my slumbers keep."

The Inspired title runs thus: "To the chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm of David." The chief musician was the master or director of the sacred music of the sanctuary. Concerning this person carefully read 1 Chronicles 6:31, 32; 15:16-22; 25: 1, 7. In these passages will be found much that is interesting to the lover of sacred song, and very much that will throw a light upon the mode of praising God in the temple. Some of the titles of the Psalms are, we doubt not, derived from the names of certain renowned singers, who composed the music to which they were set.

On Neginoth, that is, on stringed instruments, or hand instruments, which were played on with the hand alone, as harps and cymbals. The joy of the Jewish church was so great that they needed music to set forth the delightful feelings of their souls. Our holy mirth is none the less overflowing because we prefer to express it in a more spiritual manner, as becometh a more spiritual dispensation. In allusion to these instruments to be played on with the hand, Nazianzen says, "Lord, I am an instrument for thee to touch." Let us lay ourselves open to the Spirit's touch, so shall we make melody. May we be full of faith and love, and we shall be living instruments of music.

Hawker says: "The Septuagint read the word which we have rendered in our translation chief musician Lamenez, instead of Lamenetoth, the meaning of which is unto the end. From whence the Greek and Latin fathers imagined, that all psalms which bear this inscription refer to the Messiah, the great end. If so, this Psalm is addressed to Christ; and well it may, for it is all of Christ, and spoken by Christ, and hath respect only to his people as being one with Christ. The Lord the Spirit give the reader to see this, and he will find it most blessed.

DIVISION. In the first verse David pleads with God for help. In the second he expostulates with his enemies, and continues to address them to the end of verse 5. Then from verse 6 to the close he delightfully contrasts his own satisfaction and safety with the disquietude of the ungodly in their best estate. The Psalm was most probably written upon the same occasion as the preceeding, and is another choice flower from the garden of affliction. Happy is it for us that David was tried, or probably we should never have heard these sweet sonnets of faith.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. This is another instance of David's common habit of pleading past mercies as a ground for present favour. Here he reviews his Ebenezers and takes comfort from them. It is not to be imagined that he who has helped us in six troubles will leave us in the seventh. God does nothing by halves, and he will never cease to help us until we cease to need. The manna shall fall every morning until we cross the Jordan.
Observe, that David speaks first to God and then to men. Surely we should all speak the more boldly to men if we had more constant converse with God. He who dares to face his Maker will not tremble before the sons of men.

The name by which the Lord is here addressed, "God of my righteousness," deserves notice, since it is not used in any other part of Scripture. It means, Thou art the author, the witness, the maintainer, the judge, and the rewarde of my righteousness; to thee I appeal from the calumnies and harsh judgments of men. Herein is wisdom, let us imitate it and always take our suit, not to the petty courts of human opinion, but into the superior court, the King's Bench of heaven.

"Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress." A figure taken from an army enclosed in a defile, and hardly pressed by the surrounding enemy. God hath dashed down the rocks and given me room; he hath broken the barriers and set me in a large place. Or, we may understand it thus:— "God hath enlarged my heart with joy and comfort, when I was like a man imprisoned by grief and sorrow." God is a never-failing comforter.

"Have mercy upon me." Though thou mayest justly permit my enemies to destroy me, on account of my many and great sins, yet I flee to thy mercy, and I beseech thee hear my prayer, and bring thy servant out of his troubles. The best of men need mercy as truly as the worst of men. All the deliverances of saints, as well as the pardons of sinners, are the free gifts of heavenly grace.

Verse 2. In this second division of the Psalm, we are led from the closet of prayer into the field of conflict. Remark the undaunted courage of the man of God. He allows that his enemies are great men (for such is the import of the Hebrew words translated—sons of men), but still he believes them to be foolish men, and therefore chides them, as though they were but children. He tells them that they love vanity, and seek after leasing, that is, lying, empty fancies, vain conceits, wicked fabrications. He asks them how long they mean to make his honour a jest, and his fame a mockery? A little of such mirth is too much, why need they continue to indulge in it? Had they not been long enough upon the watch for his halting? Had not repeated disappointments convinced them that the Lord's anointed was not to be overcome by all their calumnies? Did they mean to jest their souls into hell, and go on with their laughter until swift vengeance should turn their merriment into howling? In the contemplation of their perverse continuance in their vain and lying pursuits, the Psalmist solemnly pauses and inserts a Selah. Surely we too may stop awhile, and meditate upon the deep-seated folly of the wicked, their continuance in evil, and their sure destruction; and we may learn to admire that grace which has made us to differ, and taught us to love truth, and seek after righteousness.
Verse 3. "But know." Fools will not learn, and therefore they must again and again be told the same thing, especially when it is such a bitter truth which is to be taught them, viz.:—the fact that the godly are the chosen of God, and are, by distinguishing grace, set apart and separated from among men. Election is a doctrine which unrenewed men cannot endure, but nevertheless, it is a glorious and well-attested truth, and one which should comfort the tempted believer. Election is the guarantee of complete salvation, and an argument for success at the throne of grace. He who chose us for himself will surely hear our prayer. The Lord's elect shall not be condemned, nor shall their cry be unheard. David was king by divine decree, and we are the Lord's people in the same manner: let us tell our enemies to their faces, that they fight against God and destiny, when they strive to overthrow our souls. O beloved, when you are on your knees, the fact of your being set apart as God's own peculiar treasure, should give you courage and inspire you with fervency and faith. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?" Since he chose to love us he cannot but choose to hear us.

Verse 4. "Tremble and sin not." How many reverse this counsel and sin but tremble not. O that men would take the advice of this verse and commune with their own hearts. Surely a want of thought must be one reason why men are so mad as to despite Christ and hate their own mercies. O that for once their passions would be quiet and let them be still, that so in solemn silence they might review the past, and meditate upon their inevitable doom. Surely a thinking man might have enough sense to discover the vanity of sin and the worthlessness of the world. Stay, rash sinner, stay, ere thou take the last leap. Go to thy bed and think upon thy ways. Ask counsel of thy pillow, and let the quietude of night instruct thee! Throw not away thy soul for nought! Let reason speak! Let the clamorous world be still awhile, and let thy poor soul plead with thee to bethink thyself before thou seal its fate, and ruin it for ever! Selah. O sinner! pause while I question thee awhile in the words of a sacred poet,—

"Sinner, is thy heart at rest?
Is thy bosom void of fear?
Art thou not by guilt oppress'd?
Speaks not conscience in thine ear?

Can this world afford thee bliss?
Can it chase away thy gloom?
Flattering, false, and vain it is;
Tremble at the worldling's doom!
Think, O sinner, on thy end,
See the judgment-day appear,
Thither must thy spirit wend,
There thy righteous sentence hear.

Wretched, ruin'd, helpless soul,
To a Saviour's blood apply;
He alone can make thee whole,
Fly to Jesus, sinner, fly!"

Verse 5. Provided that the rebels had obeyed the voice of the last verse, they would now be crying,—"What shall we do to be saved?" And in the present verse, they are pointed to the sacrifice, and exhorted to trust in the Lord. When the Jew offered sacrifice righteously, that is, in a spiritual manner, he thereby set forth the Redeemer, the great sin-atoning Lamb; there is, therefore, the full gospel in this exhortation of the Psalmist. O sinners, flee ye to the sacrifice of Calvary, and there put your whole confidence and trust, for he who died for men is the LORD JEHOVAH.

Verse 6. We have now entered upon the third division of the Psalm, in which the faith of the afflicted one finds utterance in sweet expressions of contentment and peace.

There were many, even among David's own followers, who wanted to see rather than to believe. Alas! this is the tendency of us all! Even the regenerate sometimes groan after the sense and sight of prosperity, and are sad when darkness covers all good from view. As for worldlings, this is their unceasing cry. "Who will shew us any good?" Never satisfied, their gaping mouths are turned in every direction, their empty hearts are ready to drink in any fine delusion which impostors may invent; and when these fail, they soon yield to despair, and declare that there is no good thing in either heaven or earth. The true believer is a man of a very different mould. His face is not downward like the beasts', but upward like the angels'. He drinks not from the muddy pools of Mammon, but from the fountain of life above. The light of God's countenance is enough for him. This is his riches, his honour, his health, his ambition, his ease. Give him this, and he will ask no more. This is joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Oh, for more of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that our fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ may be constant and abiding!

Verse 7. "It is better," said one, "to feel God's favour one hour in our repenting souls, that to sit whole ages under the warmest sunshine that this world affordeth." Christ in the heart is better than corn in the barn, or wine in the vat. Corn and wine are but fruits of the world, but the light of God's countenance is
the ripe fruit of heaven. "Thou art with me," is a far more blessed cry than "Harvest home." Let my granary be empty, I am yet full of blessings if Jesus Christ smiles upon me; but if I have all the world, I am poor without him.

We should not fail to remark that this verse is the saying of the righteous man, in opposition to the saying of the many. How quickly doth the tongue betray the character! "Speak, that I may see thee!" said Socrates to a fair boy. The metal of a bell is best known by its sound. Birds reveal their nature by their song. Owls cannot sing the carol of the lark, nor can the nightingale hoot like the owl. Let us, then, weigh and watch our words, lest our speech should prove us to be foreigners, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.

Verse 8. Sweet Evening Hymn! I shall not sit up to watch through fear, but I will lie down; and then I will not lie awake listening to every rustling sound, but I will lie down in peace and sleep, for I have nought to fear. He that hath the wings of God above him needs no other curtain. Better than bolts or bars is the protection of the Lord. Armed men kept the bed of Solomon, but we do not believe that he slept more soundly than his father, whose bed was the hard ground, and who was haunted by blood-thirsty foes. Note the word "only", which means that God alone was his keeper, and that though alone, without man's help, he was even then in good keeping, for he was "alone with God." A quiet conscience is a good bedfellow. How many of our sleepless hours might be traced to our untrusting and disordered minds. They slumber sweetly whom faith rocks to sleep. No pillow so soft as a promise; no coverlet so warm as an assured interest in Christ.

O Lord, give us this calm repose on thee, that like David we may lie down in peace, and sleep each night while we live; and joyfully may we lie down in the appointed season, to sleep in death, to rest in God!

Dr. Hawker's reflection upon this Psalm is worthy to be prayed over and fed upon with sacred delight. We cannot help transcribing it.

"Reader! let us never lose sight of the Lord Jesus while reading this Psalm. He is the Lord our righteousness; and therefore, in all our approaches to the mercy seat, let us go there in a language corresponding to this which calls Jesus the Lord our righteousness. While men of the world, from the world are seeking their chief good, let us desire his favour which infinitely transcends corn and wine, and all the good things which perish in the using. Yes, Lord, thy favour is better than life itself. Thou causest them that love thee to inherit substance, and fillest all their treasure.

"Oh! thou gracious God and Father, hast thou in such a wonderful manner set apart one in our nature for thyself? Hast thou indeed chosen one out of the people? Hast thou beheld him in the purity of his nature,—as one in every point Godly? Hast thou given him as the covenant of the people? And hast thou
declared thyself well pleased in him? Oh! then, well may my soul be well pleased in him also. Now do I know that my God and Father will hear me when I call upon him in Jesus' name, and when I look up to him for acceptance for Jesus' sake! Yes, my heart is fixed, O Lord, my heart is fixed; Jesus is my hope and righteousness; the Lord will hear me when I call. And henceforth will I both lay me down in peace and sleep securely in Jesus, accepted in the Beloved; for this is the rest wherewith the Lord causeth the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Verse 1. "Hear me when I call," etc. Faith is a good orator and a noble disputer in a strait; it can reason from God's readiness to hear: "Hear me when I call, O God." And from the everlasting righteousness given to the man in the justification of his person: "O God of my righteousness." And from God's constant justice in defending the righteousness of his servant's cause: "O God of my righteousness." And from both present distresses and those that are by-past, wherein he hath been, and from by-gone mercies received: "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress." And from God's grace, which is able to answer all objections from the man's unworthiness or ill-deserving: "Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer." David Dickson, 1653.

Verse 1. "Hear me." The great Author of nature and of all things does nothing in vain. He instituted not this law, and, if I may so express it, art of praying, as a vain and insufficient thing, but endows it with wonderful efficacy for producing the greatest and happiest consequences. He would have it to be the key by which all the treasures of heaven should be opened. He has constructed it as a powerful machine, by which we may, with easy and pleasant labour, remove from us the most dire and unhappy machinations of our enemy, and may with equal ease draw to ourselves what is most propitious and advantageous. Heaven and earth, and all the elements, obey and minister to the hands which are often lifted up to heaven in earnest prayer. Yea, all works, and, which is yet more and greater, all the words of God obey it. Well known in the sacred Scriptures are the examples of Moses and Joshua, and that which James (5:17) particularly mentions of Elijah, whom he expressly calls aetotaëns, a man subject to like infirmities with ourselves, that he might illustrate the admirable force of prayer, by the common and human weakness of the person by whom it was offered. And that Christian legion under Antonius is well known and justly celebrated, which for the singular ardour and efficacy of its prayers, obtained the name of keraunoboloz, the thundering legion. Robert Leighton, D.D., Archbishop of Glasgow, 1611 - 1684.
Verse 2. "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah." Prayer soars above the violence and impiety of men, and with a swift wing commits itself to heaven, with happy omen, if I may allude to what the learned tell us of the augury of the ancients, which I shall not minutely discuss. Fervent prayers stretch forth a strong, wide-extended wing, and while the birds of night hover beneath, they mount aloft, and point out, as it were, the proper seats to which we should aspire. For certainly there is nothing that cuts the air so swiftly, nothing that takes so sublime, so happy, so auspicious a flight as prayer, which bears the soul on its pinions, and leaves far behind all the dangers, and even the delights of this low world of ours. Behold this holy man, who just before was crying to God in the midst of distress, and with urgent importunity entreating that he might be heard, now, as if he were already possessed of all he had asked, taking upon him boldly to rebuke his enemies, how highly soever they were exalted, and how potent soever they might be even in the royal palace. Robert Leighton, D.D.

Verse 2. "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?" etc. We might imagine every syllable of this precious Psalm used by our Master some evening, when about to leave the temple for the day, and retiring to his wonted rest at Bethany (v. 8), after another fruitless expostulation with the men of Israel. And we may read it still as the very utterance of his heart, longing over man, and delighting in God. But, further, not only is this the utterance of the Head, it is also the language of one of his members in full sympathy with him in holy feeling. This is a Psalm with which the righteous may make their dwellings resound, morning and evening, as they cast a sad look over a world that rejects God's grace. They may sing it while they cling more and more every day to Jehovah, as their all-sufficient heritage, now and in the age to come. They may sing it, too, in the happy confidence of faith and hope, when the evening of the world's day is coming, and may then fall asleep in the certainty of what shall greet their eyes on the resurrection morning—

"Sleeping embosomed in his grace,
Till morning-shadows flee.

Andrew A. Bonar, 1859

Verse 2. "Love vanity." They that love sin, love vanity; they chase a bubble, they lean upon a reed, their hope is as a spider's web.

"Leasing." This is an old Saxon word signifying falsehood.
Verse 2. "How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?" "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." This our first parents found, and therefore named their second son Abel, or vanity. Solomon, that had tried these things, and could best tell the vanity of them, he preacheth this sermon over again and again. "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." It is sad to think how many thousands there be that can say with the preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;" nay, swear it, and yet follow after these things as if there were no other glory, nor felicity, but what is to be found in these things they call vanity. Such men will sell Christ, heaven, and their souls, for a trifle, that call these things vanity, but do not cordially believe them to be vanity, but set their hearts upon them as if they were their crown, the top of all their royalty and glory. Oh! let your souls dwell upon the vanity of all things here below, till your hearts so thoroughly convinced and persuaded of the vanity of them, as to trample upon them, and make them a footstool for Christ to get up, and ride in a holy triumph in your hearts.

Gilemex, king of Vandals, led in triumph by Belisarius, cried out, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The fancy of Lucian, who placeth Charon on the top of a high hill, viewing all the affairs of men living, and looking on their greatest cities as little bird's nests, is very pleasant. Oh, the imperfection, the ingratitude, the levity, the inconstancy, the perfidiousness of those creatures we most servilely affect! Ah, did we but weigh man's pain with his payment, his crosses with his mercies, his miseries with his pleasures, we should then see that there is nothing got by the bargain, and conclude, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Chrysostom said once, "That if he were the fittest in the world to preach a sermon to the whole world, gathered together in one congregation, and had some high mountain for his pulpit, from whence he might have a prospect of all the world in his view, and were furnished with a voice of brass, a voice as loud as the trumpets of the archangel, that all the world might hear him, he would choose to preach upon no other text than that in the Psalms, O mortal men, 'How long will ye love vanity, and follow after leasing?'" Thomas Brooks, 1608-1680.

Verse 2. "Love vanity." Men's affections are according to their principles; and every one loves that most without him which is most suitable to somewhat within him: liking is founded in likeness, and has therefore that word put upon it. It is so in whatsoever we can imagine; whether in temporals or spirituals, as to the things of this life, or of a better. Men's love is according to some working and impression upon their own spirits. And so it is here in the point of vanity; those which are vain persons, they delight in vain things; as children, they love such matters as are most agreeable to their childish dispositions, and as do suit
them in that particular. Out of the heart comes all kind of evil. *Thomas Horton*, 1675.

**Verse 3.** "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." When God chooseth a man, he chooseth him for himself; for himself to converse with, to communicate himself unto him as a friend, a companion, and his delight. Now, it is holiness that makes us fit to live with the holy God for ever, since without it we cannot see him (Hebrews 12:14), which is God's main aim, and more than our being his children; as one must be supposed a man, one of mankind, having a soul reasonable, ere we can suppose him capable of adoption, or to be another man's heir. As therefore it was the main first design in God's eye, before the consideration of our happiness, let it be so in ours. *Thomas Goodwin*, 1600-1679.

**Verse 3.** What rare persons the godly are: "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour." Proverbs 12:26. As the flower of the sun, as the wine of Lebanon, as the sparkling upon Aaron's breastplate, such is the orient splendour of a person embellished with godliness. . . . . . . The godly are precious, therefore they are set apart for God, "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." We set apart things that are precious; the godly are set apart as God's peculiar treasure (Psalm 135:4); as his garden of delight (Canticles 4:12); as his royal diadem (Isaiah 43:3); the godly are the excellent of the earth (Psalm 16:3); comparable to fine gold (Lamentations 4:2); double refined (Zechariah 13:9). They are the glory of the creation. (Isaiah 46:13). Origen compares the saints to sapphires and crystals: God calls them jewels (Malachi 3:17). *Thomas Watson*.

**Verse 3.** "The Lord will hear when I call unto him." Let us remember that the experience of one of the saints concerning the verity of God's promises, and of the certainty of the written privileges of the Lord's people, is a sufficient proof of the right which all his children have to the same mercies, and a ground of hope that they also shall partake of them in their times of need. *David Dickson*, 1653.

**Verse 4.** "Stand in awe and sin not." Jehovah is a name of great power and efficacy, a name that hath in it five vowels, without which no language can be expressed; a name that hath in it also three syllables, to signify the Trinity of persons, the eternity of God, One in Three and Three in One; a name of such dread and reverence amongst the Jews, that they tremble to name it, and therefore they use the name Adonai (Lord) in all their devotions. And thus ought every one to "stand in awe, and sin not," by taking the name of God in vain; but to sing praise, and honour, to remember, to declare, to exalt, to praise
and bless it; for holy and reverend, only worthy and excellent is his name.  
*Rayment, 1630.*

**Verse 4.** "Commune with your own heart." The language is similar to that which we use when we say, "Consult your better judgment," or "Take counsel of your own good sense." *Albert Barnes, in loc.*

**Verse 4.** If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness in solitude, accustom thyself to soliloquies, I mean to conference with thyself. He needs never be idle that hath so much business to do with his own soul. It was a famous answer which Antisthenes gave when he was asked what fruit he reaped by all his studies. By them, saith he, I have learned both to live and talk with myself. Soliloquies are the best disputes; every good man is best company for himself of all the creatures. Holy David enjoineth this to others, "Commune with your own hearts upon your bed, and be still." "Commune with your own hearts;" when ye have none to speak with, talk to yourselves. Ask yourselves for what end ye were made, what lives ye have led, what times ye have lost, what love ye have abused, what wrath ye have deserved. Call yourselves to a reckoning, how ye have improved your talents, how true or false ye have been to your trust, what provision ye have laid in for an hour of death, what preparation ye have made for a great day of account. "Upon your beds." Secrecy is the best opportunity for this duty. The silent night is a good time for this speech. When we have no outward objects to disturb us, and to call our eyes, as the fools' eyes are always, to the ends of the earth; then our eyes, as the eyes of the wise, may be in our heads; and then our minds, like the windows in Solomon's temple, may be broad inwards. The most successful searches have been made in the night season; the soul is then wholly shut up in the earthly house of the body, and hath no visits from strangers to disquiet its thoughts. Physicians have judged dreams a probable sign whereby they might find out the distempers of the body. Surely, then, the bed is no bad place to examine and search into the state of the soul. "And be still." Self-communion will much help to curb your headstrong, ungodly passions. Serious consideration, like the casting up of earth amongst bees, will allay inordinate affections when they are full of fury, and make such a hideous noise. Though sensual appetites and unruly desires are, as the people of Ephesus, in an uproar, pleading for their former privilege, and expecting their wonted provisions, as in the days of their predominancy, if conscience use its authority, commanding them in God's name, whose officer it is, to keep the king's peace, and argue it with them, as the town-clerk of Ephesus, "We are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this day's concourse;" all is
frequently by this means hushed, and the tumult appeased without any further mischief. George Swinnock, 1627 - 1673.

Verse 4. "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." When we are most retired from the world, then we are most fit to have, and usually have, most communion with God. If a man would but abridge himself of sleep, and wake with holy thoughts, when deep sleep falleth upon sorrowful labouring men, he might be entertained with visions from God, though not such visions as Eliphaz and others of the saints have had, yet visions he might have. Every time God communicates himself to the soul, there is a vision of love, or mercy, or power, somewhat of God in his nature, or in his will, is showed unto us. David shows us divine work when we go to rest. The bed is not all for sleep: "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." Be still or quiet, and then commune with your hearts; and if you will commune with your hearts, God will come and commune with your hearts, too, his Spirit will give you a loving visit and visions of his love. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 4. "Stand in awe."

With sacred awe pronounce his name,
Whom words nor thoughts can reach.

John Needham, 1768.

Verse 6. Where Christ reveals himself there is satisfaction in the slenderest portion, and without Christ there is emptiness in the greatest fullness. Alexander Grosse, on enjoying Christ, 1632.

Verse 6. "Many," said David. "ask who will shew us any good?" meaning riches, and honour, and pleasure, which are not good. But when he came to godliness itself, he leaves out "many," and prayeth in his own person, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us;" as if none would join with him. Henry Smith.

Verse 6. "Who will shew us any good?" This is not a fair translation. The word any is not in the text, nor anything equivalent to it; and not a few have quoted it, and preached upon the text, placing the principal emphasis upon this illegitimate. The place is sufficiently emphatic. There are multitudes who say, Who will shew us good? Man wants good; he hates evil as evil, because he has pain, suffering, and death through it; and he wishes to find that supreme good which will content his heart, and save him from evil. But men mistake this good. They look for a good that is to gratify their passions; they have no notion
of any happiness that does not come to them through the medium of their senses. Therefore they reject spiritual good, and they reject the Supreme God, by whom alone all the powers of the soul of man can be gratified. Adam Clarke.

Verse 6. "Lift thou up," etc. This was the blessing of the high priest and is the heritage of all the saints. It includes reconciliation, assurance, communion, benediction, in a word, the fulness of God. Oh, to be filled therewith! C. H. S.

Verses 6, 7. Lest riches should be accounted evil in themselves, God sometimes gives them to the righteous; and lest they should be considered as the chief good, he frequently bestows them on the wicked. But they are more generally the portion of his enemies than his friends. Alas! what is it to receive and not be received? to have none other dews of blessing than such as shall be followed by showers of brimstone? We may compass ourselves with sparks of security, and afterwards be securers in eternal misery. This world is a floating island, and so sure as we cast anchor upon it, we shall be carried away by it. God, and all that he has made, is not more than God without anything that he has made. He can never want treasure who has such a golden mine. He is enough without the creature, but the creature is not anything without him. It is, therefore, better to enjoy him without anything else, than to enjoy everything else without him. It is better to be a wooden vessel filled with wine, than a golden one filled with water. William Secker's Nonsuch Professor, 1660.

Verse 7. What madness and folly is it that the favourites of heaven should envy the men of the world, who at best do but feed upon the scraps that come from God's table! Temporals are the bones; spirituals are the marrow. Is it below a man to envy the dogs, because of the bones? And is it not much more below a Christian to envy others for temporals, when himself enjoys spirituals? Thomas Brooks.

Verse 7. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart." The comforts which God reserves for his mourners are filling comforts (Romans 15:13); "The God of hope fill you with joy" (John 16:24); "Ask that your joy may be full." When God pours in the joys of heaven they fill the heart, and make it run over (2 Corinthians 7:4); "I am exceeding joyful;" the Greek is, I overflow with joy, as a cup that is filled with wine till it runs over. Outward comforts can no more fill the heart than a triangle can fill a circle. Spiritual joys are satisfying (Psalm 63:5); "My heart shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips;" "Thou hast put gladness in my heart." Worldly joys do put gladness into the face, but the spirit of God puts gladness into the heart; divine joys are heart joys (Zechariah 10:7; John 16:22); "Your
heart shall rejoice" (Luke 1:47); "My spirit rejoiced in God." And to show how filling these comforts are, which are of a heavenly extraction, the psalmist says they create greater joy than when "corn and wine increase." Wine and oil may delight but not satisfy; they have their vacuity and indigence. We may say, as Zechariah 10:2, "They comfort in vain;" outward comforts do sooner cloy than cheer, and sooner weary that fill. Xerxes offered great rewards to him that could find out a new pleasure; but the comforts of the Spirit are satisfactory, they recruit the heart (Psalm 94:19), "Thy comforts delight my soul." There is as much difference between heavenly comforts and earthly, as between a banquet that is eaten, and one that is painted on the wall. *Thomas Watson.*

*Verse 8.* It is said of the husbandman, that having cast his seed into the ground, he sleeps and riseth day and night, and the seed springs and grows he knoweth not how. Mark 4:26,27. So a good man having by faith and prayer cast his care upon God, he resteth night and day, and is very easy, leaving it to his God to perform all things for him according to his holy will. *Matthew Henry.*

*Verse 8.* When you have walked with God from morning until night, it remaineth that you *conclude* the day well, when you would give yourself to rest at night. Wherefore, first, look back and take a strict view of your whole carriage that *day past.* Reform what you find amiss; and rejoice, or be grieved, as you find you have done well or ill, as you have advanced or declined in grace that day. Secondly, since you cannot sleep in safety if God, who is your *keeper* (Psalm 121:4, 5), do not *wake and watch for you* (Psalm 127:1); and though you have *God* to watch when you sleep, you cannot be safe, if he that watcheth be your *enemy.* Wherefore it is very convenient that at night you renew and confirm your peace with God by faith and prayer, commending and committing yourself to God's tuition by prayer (Psalm 3:4, 5; Psalm 92:2), with thanksgiving before you go to bed. Then shall you *lie down in safety.* Psalm 4:8. All this being done, yet while you are *putting off* your apparel, when you are *lying down,* and when you are *in bed,* before you sleep, it is good that you *commune with your own heart.* Psalm 4:4. If possibly you can fall asleep with *some heavenly meditation,* then will your sleep be *more sweet* (Proverbs 3:21, 24, 25); and *more secure* (Proverbs 6:21, 22); your *dreams* fewer, or more *comfortable:* your head will be fuller of good thoughts (Proverbs 6:22), and your heart will be in a *better frame* when you *awake,* whether in the night or in the morning. *Condensed from Henry Scudder's Daily Walk, 1633.*

*Verse 8.* "*I will both,*" etc. We have now to retire for a moment from the strife of tongues and the open hostility of foes, into the stillness and privacy of the chamber of sleep. Here, also, we find the "I will" of trust. "*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.*" God
is here revealed to us as exercising personal care in the still chamber. And there is something here which should be inexpressibly sweet to the believer, for this shows the minuteness of God's care, the individuality of his love; how it condescends and stoops, and acts, not only in great, but also in little spheres; not only where glory might be procured from great results, but where nought is to be had save the gratitude and love of a poor feeble creature, whose life has been protected and preserved, in a period of helplessness and sleep. How blessed would it be if we made larger recognition of God in the still chamber; if we thought of him as being there in all hours of illness, of weariness, and pain; if we believed that his interest and care are as much concentrated upon the feeble believer there as upon his people when in the wider battle field of the strife of tongues. There is something inexpressibly touching in this "lying down" of the Psalmist. In thus lying down he voluntarily gave up any guardianship of himself; he resigned himself into the hands of another; he did so completely, for in the absence of all care he slept; there was here a perfect trust. Many a believer lies down, but it is not to sleep. Perhaps he feels safe enough so far as his body is concerned, but cares and anxieties invade the privacy of his chamber; they come to try his faith and trust; they threaten, they frighten, and alas! prove too strong for trust. Many a poor believer might say, "I will lay me down, but not to sleep." The author met with a touching instance of this, in the case of an aged minister whom he visited in severe illness. This worthy man's circumstances were narrow, and his family trials were great; he said, "The doctor wants me to sleep, but how can I sleep with care sitting on my pillow?" It is the experience of some of the Lord's people, that although equal to an emergency or a continued pressure, a re-action sets in afterwards; and when they come to be alone their spirits sink, and they do not realise that strength from God, or feel that confidence in him which they felt while the pressure was exerting its force. . . . . . There is a trial in stillness; and oftentimes the still chamber makes a larger demand upon loving trust than the battle field. O that we could trust God more and more with personal things! O that he were the God of our chamber, as well as of our temples and houses! O that we could bring him more and more into the minutiae of daily life! If we did thus, we should experience a measure of rest to which we are, perhaps, strangers now; we should have less dread of the sick chamber; we should have that unharassed mind which conduces most to repose, in body and soul; we should be able to say, "I will lie down and sleep, and leave to-morrow with God!" Ridley's brother offered to remain with him during the night preceding his martyrdom, but the bishop declined, saying, that "he meant to go to bed, and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life." Philip Bennett Power's 'I Wills' of the Psalms.
Verse 8. Due observation of Providence will both beget and secure inward tranquillity in your minds amidst the vicissitudes and revolutions of things in this unstable vain world. "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for the Lord only maketh me dwell in safety." He resolves that sinful fears of events shall not rob him of his inward quiet, nor torture his thoughts with anxious presages; he will commit all his concerns into that faithful fatherly hand that had hitherto wrought all things for him; and he means not to lose the comfort of one night's rest, nor bring the evil of to-morrow upon the day; but knowing in whose hand he was, wisely enjoys the sweet felicity of a resigned will. Now this tranquillity of our minds is as much begotten and preserved by a due consideration of providence as by anything whatsoever. John Flavel, 1627 - 1691.

Verse 8. Happy is the Christian, who having nightly with this verse, committed himself to his bed as to his grave, shall at last, with the same words, resign himself to his grave as to his bed, from which he expects in due time to arise, and sing a morning hymn with the children of the resurrection. George Horne, D.D., 1776.

Verse 8. "Sleep,"

"How blessed was that sleep
The sinless Saviour knew!
In vain the storm-sinds blew,
Till he awoke to others woes,
And hushed the billows to repose.

How beautiful is sleep—
The sleep that Christians know!
Ye mourners! cease your woe,
While soft upon his Saviour's breast,
The righteous sinks to endless rest."

Mrs. M'Cartree.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER
Verse 1. Is full of matter for a sermon upon, past mercies a plea for present help. The first sentence shows that believers desire, expect, and believe in a God that heareth prayer. The title—God of my righteousness, may furnish a text (see exposition), and the last sentence may suggest a sermon upon, "The best of saints must still appeal to God's mercy and sovereign grace."
Verse 2. *Depravity of man* as evinced
   (1) by continuance in despising Christ,
   (2) by loving vanity in his heart, and
   (3) seeking lies in his daily life.

Verse 2. The length of the sinner's sin. "How long?" May be bounded by repentance, shall be by death, and yet shall continue in eternity.


Verse 3. "*The Lord will hear when I call unto him.*" Answers to prayer certain to special persons. Mark out those who can claim the favour.


Verse 4. The sinner directed to review himself, that he may be convinced of sin. *Andrew Fuller,* 1754-1815.

Verse 4. "*Be still.*" Advice—good, practical, but hard to follow. Times when seasonable. Graces needed to enable one to be still. Results of quietness. Persons who most need the advice. Instances of its practice. here is much material for a sermon.

Verse 5. The nature of those sacrifices of righteousness which the Lord's people are expected to offer. *William Ford Vance,* 1827.

Verse 6. The cry of the world and the church contrasted. *Vox populi* not always *Vox Dei.*

Verse 6. The cravings of the soul all satisfied in God.

Verses 6, 7. An assurance of the Saviour's love, the source of unrivalled joy.

Verse 7. The believer's joys.
   (1) Their source, "*Thou;*
   (2) Their season—even now—"*Thou hast;*
   (3) Their position, "*in my heart;*
   (4) Their excellence, "*more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.*"

   Another excellent theme suggests itself— "The superiority of the joys of
grace to the joys of earth;" or, "Two sorts of prosperity—which is to be the more desired?"


Verse 8. A bedchamber for believers, a vesper song to sing in it, and a guard to keep the door.

Verse 8. The Christian's good night.

Verses 2 to 8. The means which a believer should use to win the ungodly to Christ.
   (1) Expostulation, verse 2.
   (2) Instruction, verse 3.
   (3) Exhortation, verses 4, 5.
   (4) Testimony to the blessedness of true religion as in verses 6, 7.
   (5) Exemplification of that testimony by the peace of faith, verse 8.

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WORKS UPON THE FOURTH PSALM

Choice and Practical Expositions on four select Psalms: namely, the Fourth Psalm, in eight Sermons, etc. By THOMAS HORTON, D.D. 1675

Meditations, Critical and Practical, on Psalm IV., in Archbishop Leighton's Works.
Psalm 5

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. "To the Chief Musician upon Nehiloth, a Psalm of David." The Hebrew word Nehiloth is taken from another word, signifying "to perforate;" "to bore through," whence it comes to mean a pipe or a flute; so that this song was probably intended to be sung with an accompaniment of wind instruments, such as the horn, the trumpet, flute, or cornet. However, it is proper to remark that we are not sure of the interpretation of these ancient titles, for the Septuagint translates it, "For him who shall obtain inheritance," and Aben Ezra thinks it denotes some old and well known melody to which this Psalm was to be played. The best scholars confess that great darkness hangs over the precise interpretation of the title; nor is this much to be regretted, for it furnishes an internal evidence of the great antiquity of the Book. Throughout the first, second, third, and forth Psalms, you will have noticed that the subject is a contrast between the position, the character, and the prospects of the righteous and of the wicked. In this Psalm you will note the same. The Psalmist carries out a contrast between himself made righteous by God's grace, and the wicked who opposed him. To the devout mind there is here presented a precious view of the Lord Jesus, of whom it is said that in the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears.

DIVISION. The Psalm should be divided into two parts, from the first to the seventh verse, and then from the eighth to the twelfth. In the first part of the Psalm David most vehemently beseeches the Lord to hearken to his prayer, and in the second part he retraces the same ground.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. There are two sorts of prayers—those expressed in words, and the unuttered longings which abide as silent meditations. Words are not the essence but the garments of prayer. Moses at the Red Sea cried to God, though he said nothing. Yet the use of language may prevent distraction of mind, may assist the powers of the soul, and may excite devotion. David, we observe, uses both modes of prayer, and craves for the one a hearing, and for the other a consideration. What an expressive word! "Consider my meditation." If I have asked that which is right, give it to me; if I have omitted to ask that which I most needed, fill up the vacancy in my prayer. "Consider my meditation." Let thy holy soul consider it as presented through my all-glorious Mediator: then regard thou it in thy wisdom, weigh it in the scales, judge thou of my sincerity, and of the true state of my necessities, and answer me in due time for thy mercy's sake! There may be prevailing intercession where there are no words; and alas! there may be words where there is no true supplication. Let us cultivate the spirit of prayer which is even better than the habit of prayer. There may be seeming prayer where there is little devotion. We should begin to pray before we kneel down, and we should not cease when we rise up.
Verse 2. "The voice of my cry." In another Psalm we find the expression, "The voice of my weeping." Weeping has a voice—a melting, plaintive tone, an ear-piercing shrillness, which reaches the very heart of God; and crying hath a voice—a soul-moving eloquence; coming from our heart it reaches God's heart. Ah! my brothers and sisters, sometimes we cannot put our prayers into words: they are nothing but a cry: but the Lord can comprehend the meaning, for he hears a voice in our cry. To a loving father his children's cries are music, and they have a magic influence which his heart cannot resist. "My King, and my God." Observe carefully these little pronouns, "my King, and my God." They are the pith and marrow of the plea. Here is a grand argument why God should answer prayer—because he is our King and our God. We are not aliens to him: he is the King of our country. Kings are expected to hear the appeals of their own people. We are not strangers to him; we are his worshippers, and he is our God: ours by covenant, by promise, by oath, by blood.

"For unto thee will I pray." Here David expresses his declaration that he will seek to God, and to God alone. God is to be the only object of worship: the only resource of our soul in times of need. Leave broken cisterns to the godless, and let the godly drink from the Divine fountain alone. "Unto thee will I pray." He makes a resolution, that as long as he lived he would pray. He would never cease to supplicate, even though the answer should not come.

Verse 3. Observe, this is not so much a prayer as a resolution, "'My voice shalt thou hear;' I will not be dumb, I will not be silent, I will not withhold my speech, I will cry to thee for the fire that dwells within compels me to pray." We can sooner die than live without prayer. None of God's children are possessed with a dumb devil.

"In the morning." This is the fittest time for intercourse with God. An hour in the morning is worth two in the evening. While the dew is on the grass, let grace drop upon the soul. Let us give to God the mornings of our days and the morning of our lives. Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night. Devotion should be both the morning star and the evening star. If we merely read our English version, and want an explanation of these two sentences, we find it in the figure of an archer, "I will direct my prayer unto thee," I will put my prayer upon the bow, I will direct it towards heaven, and then when I have shot up my arrow, I will look up to see where it has gone. But the Hebrew has a still fuller meaning than this—"I will direct my prayer." It is the word that is used for the laying in order of the wood and the pieces of the victim upon the altar, and it is used also for the putting of the shewbread upon the table. It means just this: "I will arrange my prayer before thee;" I will lay it out upon the altar in the morning, just as the priest lays out the morning sacrifice. I will arrange my prayer; or, as old Master Trapp has it, "I will
marshall up my prayers," I will put them in order, call up all my powers, and bid them stand in their proper places, that I may pray with all my might, and pray acceptably.

"And will look up," or, as the Hebrew might better be translated, "I will look out,' I will look out for the answer; after I have prayed, I will expect that the blessing shall come." It is a word that is used in another place where we read of those who watched for the morning. So will I watch for thine answer, O my Lord! I will spread out my prayer like the victim on the altar, and I will look up, and expect to receive the answer by fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice.

Two questions are suggested by the last part of this verse. Do we not miss very much of the sweetness and efficacy of prayer by a want of careful meditation before it, and of hopeful expectation after it? We too often rush into the presence of God without forethought or humility. We are like men who present themselves before a king without a petition, and what wonder is it that we often miss the end of prayer? We should be careful to keep the stream of meditation always running; for this is the water to drive the mill of prayer. It is idle to pull up the flood-gates of a dry brook, and then hope to see the wheel revolve. Prayer without fervency is like hunting with a dead dog, and prayer without preparation is hawking with a blind falcon. Prayer is the work of the Holy Spirit, but he works by means. God made man, but he used the dust of the earth as a material: the Holy Ghost is the author of prayer, but he employs the thoughts of a fervent soul as the gold with which to fashion the vessel. Let not our prayers and praises be the flashes of a hot and hasty brain, but the steady burning of a well-kindled fire.

But, furthermore, do we not forget to watch the result of our supplications? We are like the ostrich, which lays her eggs and looks not for her young. We sow the seed, and are too idle to seek a harvest. How can we expect the Lord to open the windows of his grace, and pour us out a blessing, if we will not open the windows of expectation and look up for the promised favour? Let holy preparation link hands with patient expectation, and we shall have far larger answers to our prayers.

Verse 4. And now the Psalmist having thus expressed his resolution to pray, you hear him putting up his prayer. He is pleading against his cruel and wicked enemies. He uses a most mighty argument. He begs of God to put them away from him, because they were displeasing to God himself. "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee."

"When I pray against my tempters," says David, "I pray against the very things which thou thyself abhorrest." Thou hatest evil: Lord, I beseech thee, deliver me from it!
Let us learn here the solemn truth of the hatred which a righteous God must bear toward sin. *He has no pleasure in wickedness*, however wittily, grandly, and proudly it may array itself: Its glitter has no charm for him. Men may bow before successful villainy, and forget the wickedness of the battle in the gaudiness of the triumph, but the Lord of Holiness is not such-an-one as we are. "Neither shall evil dwell with thee." He will not afford it the meanest shelter. Neither on earth nor in heaven shall evil share the mansion of God. Oh, how foolish are we if we attempt to entertain two guests so hostile to one another as Christ Jesus and the devil! Rest assured, Christ will not live in the parlour of our hearts if we entertain the devil in the cellar of our thoughts.

Verse 5. "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight." Sinners are fools written large. A little sin is a great folly, and the greatest of all folly is great sin. Such sinful fools as these must be banished from the court of heaven. Earthly kings were wont to have fools in their trains, but the only wise God will have no fools in his palace above. "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity." It is not a little dislike, but a thorough hatred which God bears to workers of iniquity. To be hated of God is an awful thing. O let us be very faithful in warning the wicked around us, for it will be a terrible thing for them to fall into the hands of an angry God!

Verse 6. Observe, that evil speakers must be punished as well as evil workers, for "thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing." All liars shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. A man may lie without danger of the law of man, but he will not escape the law of God. Liars have short wings, their flight shall soon be over, and they shall fall into the fiery floods of destruction. "The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." Bloody men shall be made drunk with their own blood, and they who began by deceiving others shall end with being deceived themselves. Our old proverb saith, "Bloody and deceitful men dig their own graves." The voice of the people is in this instance the voice of God. How forcible is the word *abhorr*! Does it not show us how powerful and deep-seated is the hatred of the Lord against the workers of iniquity?

Verse 7. With this verse the first part of the Psalm ends. The Psalmist has bent his knee in prayer; he has described before God, as an argument for his deliverance, the character and the fate of the wicked; and now he contrasts this with the condition of the righteous. "But as for me, I will come into thy house." I will not stand at a distance, I will come into thy sanctuary, just as a child comes into his father's house. But I will not come there by my own merits; no, I have a multitude of sins, and therefore I will come in the multitude of thy mercy. I will approach thee with confidence because of thy immeasurable
Psalm 5

grace. God's judgments are all numbered, but his mercies are innumerable; he gives his wrath by weight, but without weight his mercy. "And in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple,"—towards the temple of thy holiness. The temple was not built on earth at that time; it was but a tabernacle; but David was wont to turn his eyes spiritually to that temple of God's holiness where between the wings of the Cherubim Jehovah dwells in light ineffable. Daniel opened his window toward Jerusalem, but we open our hearts toward heaven.

Verse 8. Now we come to the second part, in which the Psalmist repeats his arguments, and goes over the same ground again.

"Lead me, O Lord," as a little child is led by its father, as a blind man is guided by his friend. It is safe and pleasant walking when God leads the way. "In thy righteousness," not in my righteousness, for that is imperfect, but in thine, for thou art righteousness itself. "Make thy way," not my way, "straight before my face." Brethren, when we have learned to give up our own way, and long to walk in God's way, it is a happy sign of grace; and it is no small mercy to see the way of God with clear vision straight before our face. Errors about duty may lead us into a sea of sins, before we know where we are.

Verse 9. This description of depraved man has been copied by the Apostle Paul, and, together with some other quotations, he has placed it in the second chapter of Romans, as being an accurate description of the whole human race, not of David's enemies only, but of all men by nature. Note that remarkable figure, "Their throat is an open sepulchre," a sepulchre full of loathsomeness, of miasma, of pestilence and death. But, worse than that, it is an open sepulchre, with all its evil gases issuing forth, to spread death and destruction all around. So, with the throat of the wicked, it would be a great mercy if it could always be closed. If we could seal in continual silence the mouth of the wicked it would be like a sepulchre shut up, and would not produce much mischief. But, "their throat is an open sepulchre," consequently all the wickedness of their heart exhales, and comes forth. How dangerous is an open sepulchre; men in their journeys might easily stumble therein, and find themselves among the dead. Ah! take heed of the wicked man, for there is nothing that he will not say to ruin you; he will long to destroy your character, and bury you in the hideous sepulchre of his own wicked throat. One sweet thought here, however. At the resurrection there will be a resurrection not only of bodies, but characters. This should be a great comfort to a man who has been abused and slandered. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun." The world may think you vile, and bury your character; but if you have been upright, in the day when the graves shall give up their dead, this open sepulchre of the sinner's throat shall be compelled to give up your heavenly character, and
you shall come forth and be honoured in the sight of men. "They flatter with their tongue." Or, as we might read it, "They have an oily tongue, a smooth tongue." A smooth tongue is a great evil; many have been bewitched by it. There be many human ant-eaters that with their long tongues covered with oily words entice and entrap the unwary and make their gain thereby. When the wolf licks the lamb, he is preparing to wet his teeth in its blood.

Verse 10. "Against thee:" not against me. If they were my enemies I would forgive them, but I cannot forgive thine. We are to forgive our enemies, but God's enemies it is not in our power to forgive. These expressions have often been noticed by men of over refinement as being harsh, and grating on the ear. "Oh!" say they, "they are vindictive and revengeful." Let us remember that they might be translated as prophecies, not as wishes; but we do not care to avail ourselves of this method of escape. We have never heard of a reader of the Bible who, after perusing these passages, was made revengeful by reading them, and it is but fair to test the nature of a writing by its effects. When we hear a judge condemning a murderer, however severe his sentence, we do not feel that we should be justified in condemning others for any private injury done to us. The Psalmist here speaks as a judge, ex officio; he speaks as God's mouth, and in condemning the wicked he gives us no excuse whatever for uttering anything in the way of malediction upon those who have caused us personal offence. The most shameful way of cursing another is by pretending to bless him. We were all somewhat amused by noticing the toothless malice of that wretched old priest of Rome, when he foolishly cursed the Emperor of France with his blessing. He was blessing him in form and cursing him in reality. Now, in direct contrast we put this healthy commination of David, which is intended to be a blessing by warning the sinner of the impending curse. O impenitent man, be it known unto thee that all thy godly friends will give their solemn assent to the awful sentence of the Lord, which he shall pronounce upon thee in the day of doom! Our verdict shall applaud the condemning curse which the Judge of all the earth shall thunder against the godless.

In the following verse we once more find the contrast which has marked the preceding Psalms.

Verse 11. Joy is the privilege of the believer. When sinners are destroyed our rejoicing shall be full. They laugh first and weep ever after; we weep now, but shall rejoice eternally. When they howl we shall shout, and as they must groan for ever, so shall we ever shout for joy. This holy bliss of ours has a firm foundation, for, O Lord, we are joyful in thee. The eternal God is the well-spring of our bliss. We love God, and therefore we delight in him. Our heart is
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at ease in our God. We fare sumptuously every day because we feed on him. We have music in the house, music in the heart, and music in heaven, for the Lord Jehovah is our strength and our song; he also is become our salvation.

Verse 12. Jehovah has ordained his people the heirs of blessedness, and nothing shall rob them of their inheritance. With all the fulness of his power he will bless them, and all his attributes shall unite to satiate them with divine contentment. Nor is this merely for the present, but the blessing reaches into the long and unknown future. "Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous." This is a promise of infinite length, of unbounded breadth, and of unutterable preciousness. As for the defence which the believer needs in this land of battles, it is here promised to him in the fullest measure. There were vast shields used by the ancients as extensive as a man's whole person, which would surround him entirely. So says David, "With favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield." According to Ainsworth there is here also the idea of being crowned, so that we wear a royal helmet, which is at once our glory and defence. O Lord, ever give to us this gracious coronation!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAlNT SAYINGS

Verse 1. "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation." It is certain that the greater part of men, as they babble out vain, languid, and ineffectual prayers, most unworthy the ear of the blessed God, so they seem in some degree to set a just estimate upon them, neither hoping for any success from them, nor indeed seeming to be at all solicitous about it, but committing them to the wind as vain words, which in truth they are. But far be it from a wise and pious man, that he should so foolishly and coldly trifle in so serious an affair; his prayer has a certain tendency and scope, at which he aims with assiduous and repeated desires, and doth not only pray that he may pray, but that he may obtain an answer; and as he firmly believes that it may be obtained, so he firmly, and constantly, and eagerly urges his petitions, that he may not flatter himself with an empty hope. Robert Leighton, D.D.

Verses 1, 2. Observe the order and force of the words, "my cry," "the voice of my prayer;" and also, "give ear," "consider," "hearken." These expressions all evince the urgency and energy of David's feelings and petitions. First we have, "give ear;" that is, hear me. But it is of little service for the words to be heard, unless the "cry," or the roaring, or the meditation, be considered. As if he had said, in a common way of expression, I speak with deep anxiety and concern, but with a failing utterance; and I cannot express myself, nor make myself understood as I wish. Do thou, therefore, understand from my feelings more than I am able to express in words. And, therefore, I add my "cry;" that what I
cannot express in words for thee to hear, I may by my "cry" signify to thine understanding. And when thou hast understood me, then, O Lord, "Hearken unto the voice of my prayer," and despise not what thou hast thus heard and understood. We are not, however, to understand that hearing, understanding, and hearkening, are all different acts in God, in the same way as they are in us; but that our feelings towards God are to be thus varied and increased; that is, that we are first to desire to be heard, and then, that our prayers which are heard may be understood; and then, that being understood, they may be hearkened unto, that is, not disregarded. Martin Luther.

Verse 1. "Meditation" fits the soul for supplication; meditation fills the soul with good liquor, and then prayer broaches it, and sets it a-running. David first mused, and then spake with his tongue, "Lord, make me to know mine end." Psalm 39:3, 4. Nay, to assure us that meditation was the mother which bred and brought forth prayer, he calls the child by its parent's name, "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation." Meditation is like the charging of a piece, and prayer the discharging of it. "Isaac went into the field to meditate." Genesis 24:63. The Septuagint, the Geneva translation, and Tremellius, in his marginal notes on it, read it to "pray;" and the Hebrew word (Heb.) used there signifieth both to pray and meditate; whereby we may learn that they are very near akin; like twins, they be in the same womb, in the same word. Meditation is the best beginning of prayer, and prayer is the best conclusion of meditation. When the Christian, like Daniel, hath first opened the windows of his soul by contemplation, then he may kneel down to prayer. George Swinnock.

Verse 3. "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord."

When first thy eyes unveil, give thy soul leave To do the like; our bodies but forerun The spirit's duty: true hearts spread and heave Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun; Give him thy first thoughts, then, so shalt thou keep Him company all day, and in him sleep.

Yet never sleep the sun up; prayer should Dawn with the day, there are set awful hours 'Twixt heaven and us; the manna was not good After sun-rising, for day sullies flowers. Rise to prevent the sun; sleep doth sins glut, And heaven's gate opens when the world's is shut.
Walk with thy fellow creatures; note the hush
And whisperings amongst them. Not a spring
Or leaf but hath his morning hymn; each bush
And oak doth know I AM—canst thou not sing?
O leave thy cares and follies! Go this way,
And thou art sure to prosper all the day.

Henry Vaughn, 1621-1695.

Verse 3. "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning." "In the morning shall my prayer prevent thee," said Heman. That is the fittest time for devotion, you being then fresh in your spirits, and freest from distractions. Which opportunity for holy duties may fitly be called the wings of the morning. Edward Reyner, 1658.

Verse 3. "In the morning." "In the days of our fathers," says Bishop Burnet, "when a person came early to the door of his neighbour, and desired to speak with the master of the house, it was as common a thing for the servants to tell him with freedom—'My master is at prayer,' as it now is to say, 'My master is not up.'"

Verse 3. "In the morning I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up," or, I will marshall my prayer, I will bring up petition after petition, pleading after pleading, even till I become like Jacob, a prince with God, till I have won the field and got the day. Thus the word is applied by a metaphor both to disputations with men and supplications to God. Further, we may take the meaning plainly without any strain of rhetoric, Set thy words in order before me. Method is good in everything, either an express or covert method. Sometimes it is the best of art to cover it: in speaking there is a special use of method, for though, as one said very well (speaking of those who are more curious about method than serious about matter), "Method never converted any man;" yet method and the ordering of words is very useful. Our speeches should not be heaps of words, but words bound up; not a throng of words, but words set in array, or, as it were, in rank and file. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 3. "I will direct my prayer unto thee and will look up." In the words you may observe two things: first, David's posture in prayer; secondly, his practice after prayer. First, his posture in prayer, "I will direct my prayer unto thee." Secondly, his practice after prayer, "And I will look up." The prophet in these words, makes use of two military words. First, he would not only pray, but marshall up his prayers, he would put them in battle array; so much the Hebrew word (Heb.) imports. Secondly, when he had done this, then he would be as a
spy upon his watch-tower, to see whether he prevailed, whether he got the day or no; and so much the Hebrew word (Heb) imports. When David had set his prayers, his petitions, in rank and file, in good array, then he was resolved he would look abroad, he would look about him to see at what door God would send in an answer to prayer. He is either a fool or a madman, he is either very weak or very wicked, that prays and prays but never looks after his prayers; that shoots many an arrow toward heaven, but never minds where his arrows alight. *Thomas Brooks.*

*Verse 3.* David would direct his prayer to God and look up; not down to the world, down to corruption, but up to God what he would speak. Psalm 85:8. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak," Let the resolution of the prophet be thine, "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." Micah 7:7. *William Greenhill,* 1650.

*Verse 3.* "I will direct my prayer to thee, and will look up," that is, I will trade, I will send out my spiritual commodities, and expect a gainful return; I will make my prayers, and not give them for lost, but look up for an answer. God will bring man home by a way contrary to that by which he wandered from him. Man fell from God by distrust, by having God in suspicion; God will bring him back by trust, by having good thoughts of him. Oh, how richly laden might the vessel which thou sendest out come home, wouldst thou but long and look for its return! *George Swinnock.*

*Verse 3.* Faith hath a supporting act after prayer; it supports the soul to expect a gracious answer: "I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up," or I will look; for what, but for a return? An unbelieving heart shoots at random, and never minds where his arrow lights, or what comes of his praying; but faith fills the soul with expectation. As a merchant, when he casts up his estate, he counts what he hath sent beyond sea, as well as what he hath in hand; so doth faith reckon upon what he hath sent to heaven in prayer and not received, as well as those mercies which he hath received, and are in hand at present. Now this expectation which faith raiseth in the soul after prayer, appears in the power that it hath to quiet and compose the soul in the interim between the sending forth, as I may say, the ship of prayer, and its return home with its rich lading it goes for, and it is more or less, according as faith's strength is. 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. Yea, it will make the Christian disburse his praises for the mercy long before it is received. . . . . . For want of looking up many a prayer is lost. If you do not believe, why do you pray? And
if you believe, why do you not expect? By praying you seem to depend on God; by not expecting, you again renounce your confidence. What is this but to take his name in vain? O Christian, stand to your prayer in a holy expectation of what you have begged upon the credit of the promise. . . . . Mordecai, no doubt, had put up many prayers for Esther, and therefore he waits at the king's gate, looking what answer God would in his providence give therunto. Do thou likewise. William Gurnall.

Verse 4. "Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness." As a man that cutteth with a dull knife is the cause of cutting, but not of the ill-cutting and hacking of the knife—the knife is the cause of that; or if a man strike upon an instrument that is out of tune, he is the cause of the sound, but not of the jarring sound—that is the fault of the untuned strings; or, as a man riding upon a lame horse, stirs him—the man is the cause of the motion, but the horse himself of the halting motion: thus God is the author of every action, but not of the evil of that action—that is from man. He that makes instruments and tools of iron or other metal, he maketh not the rust and canker which corrupteth them, that is from another cause; nor doth that heavenly workman, God Almighty, bring in sin and iniquity; nor can he be justly blamed if his creatures do soil and besmear themselves with the foulness of sin, for he made them good. Spencer's Things New and Old.

Verses 4-6. Here the Lord's alienation from the wicked is set forth gradually, and seems to rise by six steps. First, he hath no pleasure in them; secondly, they shall not dwell with him; thirdly, he casteth them forth, they shall not stand in his sight; fourthly, his heart turns from them, thou hatest all the workers of iniquity; fifthly, his hand is turned upon them, thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing; sixthly, his spirit rises against them, and is alienated from them, the Lord will abhor the bloody man. This estrangement is indeed a strange (yet a certain) punishment to "the workers of iniquity." These words, "the workers of iniquity," may be considered two ways. First, as intending (not all degrees of sinners, or sinners of every degree, but) the highest degree of sinners, great, and gross sinners, resolved and wilful sinners. Such as sin industriously, and, as it were, artificially, with skill and care to get themselves a name, as if they had an ambition to be accounted workmen that need not to be ashamed of doing that whereof all ought to be ashamed; these, in strictness of Scripture sense, are "workers of iniquity." Hence note, notorious sinners make sin their business, or trade. Though every sin be a work of iniquity, yet only some sinners are "workers of iniquity;" and they who are called so, make their calling to sin. We read of some who love and make a lie. Revelation 22:15. A lie may be told by those who neither love nor make it; but there are lie-makers, and they, sure
enough, are lovers of a lie. Such craftsmen in sinning are also described in Psalm 58:2—"Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth." The psalmist doth not say, they had wickedness in their heart, but 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. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 5. What an astonishing thing is sin, which maketh the God of love and Father of mercies an enemy to his creatures, and which could only be purged by the blood of the Son of God! Though all must believe this who believe the Bible, yet the exceeding sinfulness of sin is but weakly apprehended by those who have the deepest sense of it, and will never be fully known in this world. Thomas Adam's Private Thoughts, 1701-1784.

Verse 5 (last clause). "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity." For what God thinks of sin, see Deuteronomy 7:22; Proverbs 6:16; Revelation 2:6, 15; where he expresseth his detestation and hatred of it, from which hatred proceeds all those direful plagues and judgments thundered from the fiery mouth of his most holy law against it; nay, not only the work, but worker also of iniquity becomes the object of his hatred. William Gurnall.

Verse 5 (last clause). "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity." If God's hatred be against the workers of iniquity, how great is it against iniquity itself! If a man hates a poisonous creature, he hates poison much more. The strength of God's hatred is against sin, and so should we hate sin, and hate it with strength; it is an abomination unto God, let it be so unto us. Proverbs 6:16-19, "These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him; a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." William Greenhill.

Verse 5 (last clause). Those whom the Lord hates must perish. But he hates impenitent sinners, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity." Now, who are so properly workers of iniquity as those who are so eager at it that they will not leave this work, though they be in danger to perish for it? Christ puts it out of doubt. The workers of iniquity must perish. Luke 13:27. Those whom the Lord will tear in his wrath must perish with a witness; but those whom he hates, he tears, &c. Job 16:8. What more due to such impenitent sinners than hatred? What more proper than wrath, since they treasure up wrath? Romans 2:5. Will he entertain those in the bosom of love whom his soul hates? No; destruction is their portion. Proverbs 21:15. If all the curses of the law, all the threatenings of the gospel, all judgments in earth or in hell, will be the ruin of him, he must
perish. If the Lord's arm be strong enough to wound him dead, he must die. Psalm 68:21. . . . . . Avoid all that Christ hates. If you love, approve, entertain that which is hateful to Christ, how can he love you? What is that which Christ hates? The psalmist (Psalm 45:7) tells us, making it one of Christ's attributes, to hate wickedness. . . . As Christ hates iniquity, so the "workers of iniquity." You must not love them, so as to be intimate with them, delight in the company of evil doers, openly profane, scorners of godliness, obstructors of the power of it. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. If you love so near relations to wicked men, Christ will have no relation to you. If you would have communion with Christ in sweet acts of love, you must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, nor those that act them. David Clarkson, B.D., 1621-1686.

Verse 6. "Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing," whether in jest or earnest. Those that lie in jest will (without repentance) go to hell in earnest. John Trapp.

Verse 6. "Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing," etc. In the same field where Absalom raised battle against his father, stood the oak that was his gibbet. The mule whereon he rode was his hangman, for the mule carried him to the tree, and the hair wherein he gloried served for a rope to hang. Little know the wicked how everything which now they have shall be a snare to trap them when God begins to punish them. William Cowper, 1612.

Verse 7. "In thy fear will I worship." As natural fear makes the spirits retire from the outward parts of the body to the heart, so a holy fear of miscarrying in so solemn a duty would be a means to call thy thoughts from all exterior carnal objects, and fix them upon the duty in hand. As the sculpture is on the seal, so will the print on the wax be; if the fear of God be deeply engraven on thy heart, there is no doubt but it will make a suitable impression on the duty thou performest. William Gurnall.

Verse 7. David saith, "In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple." The temple did shadow forth the body of our Lord Christ, the Mediator, in whom only our prayers and service are accepted with the Father which Solomon respected in looking towards the temple. Thomas Manton, D.D., 1620-1677.

Verse 7. "But as for me," etc. A blessed verse this! a blessed saying! The words and the sense itself, carry with them a powerful contrast. For there are two things with which this life is exercised, HOPE and FEAR, which are, as it were, those two springs of Judges 1:15, the one from above, the other from beneath. Fear comes from beholding the threats and fearful judgments of God; as being a God in whose sight no one is clean, every one is a sinner, every one is
damnable. But hope comes from beholding the promises, and the all-sweet mercies of God; as it is written (Psalm 25:6), "Remember, O Lord, thy loving kindnesses, and thy tender mercies which have been ever of old." Between these two, as between the upper and nether millstone, we must always be ground and kept, that we may never turn either to the right hand or to the left. For this turning is the state peculiar to hypocrites, who are exercised with the two contrary things, security and presumption. Martin Luther.

Verse 9. If the whole soul be infected with such a desperate disease, what a great and difficult work it is to regenerate, to restore men again to spiritual life and vigour, when every part of them is seized by such a mortal distemper! How great a cure doth the Spirit of God effect in restoring a soul by sanctifying it! To heal but the lungs or the liver, if corrupted, is counted a great cure, though performed but upon one part of thee; but all thy inward parts are very rottenness. "For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue." How great a cure is it then to heal thee! Such as is only in the skill and power of God to do. Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 9. "Their throat is an open sepulchre." This figure graphically portrays the filthy conversation of the wicked. Nothing can be more abominable to the senses than an open sepulchre, when a dead body beginning to putrefy steams forth its tainted exhalations. What proceeds out of their mouth is infected and putrid; and, as the exhalation from a sepulchre proves the corruption within, so it is with the corrupt conversation of sinners. Robert Haldane's "Expositions of the Epistle to the Romans," 1835.

Verse 9. "Their throat is an open sepulchre." This doth admonish us, (1) that the speeches of natural unregenerate men are unsavory, rotten, and hurtful to others; for, as a sepulchre doth send out noisome savours and filthy smells, so evil men do utter rotten and filthy words. (2) As a sepulchre doth consume and devour bodies cast into it, so wicked men do with their cruel words destroy others; they are like a gulf to destroy others. (3) As a sepulchre, having devoured many corpses, is still ready to consume more, being never satisfied, so wicked men, having overthrown many with their words, do proceed in their outrage, seeking whom they may devour. Thomas Wilson, 1653.


Verse 10. All those portions where we find apparently prayers that breathe revenge, are never to be thought of as anything else than the breathed assent of
righteous souls to the justice of their God, who taketh vengeance on sin. When taken as the words of Christ himself, they are no other than an echo of the Intercessor's acquiescence at last in the sentence on the barren fig-tree. It is as if he cried aloud, "Hew it down now, I will intercede no longer, the doom is righteous, destroy them, O God; cast them out in (or, for) the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against thee." And in the same moment he may be supposed to invite his saints to sympathise in his decision; just as in Revelation 18:20, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets." In like manner when one of Christ's members, in entire sympathy with his Head, views the barren fig-tree from the same point of observation, and sees the glory of God concerned in inflicting the blow, he too can cry, "Let the axe smite!" Had Abraham stood beside the angel who destroyed Sodom, and seen how Jehovah's name required the ruin of these impenitent rebels, he would have cried out, "Let the shower descend; let the fire and brimstone come down!" not in any spirit of revenge; not from want of tender love to souls, but from intense earnestness of concern for the glory of his God. We consider this explanation to be the real key that opens all the difficult passages in this book, where curses seem to be called for on the head of the ungodly. They are no more than a carrying out of Deuteronomy 27:15-26, "Let all the people say, Amen," and an entering into the Lord's holy abhorrence of sin, and delight in acts of justice expressed in the "Amen, hallelujah," of Revelation 19:3. Andrew A. Bonar, 1859.

Verse 10. (Or imprecatory passages generally.) Lord, when in my daily service I read David's Psalms, give me to alter the accent of my soul according to their several subjects. In such Psalms wherein he confesseth his sins, or requesteth thy pardon, or praiseth for former, or prayeth for future favours, in all these give me to raise my soul to as high a pitch as may be. But when I come to such Psalms wherein he curseth his enemies, O there let me bring my soul down to a lower note. For those words were made only to fit David's mouth. I have the like breath, but not the same spirit to pronounce them. Nor let me flatter myself, that it is lawful for me, with David, to curse thine enemies, lest my deceitful heart entitle mine enemies to be thine, and so what was religion in David, prove malice in me, whilst I act revenge under the pretense of piety. Thomas Fuller, D.D., 1608-1661.

Verse 12. When the strong man armed comes against us, when he darts his fiery darts, what can hurt us, if God compass us about with his lovingkindness as with a shield? He can disarm the tempter and restrain his malice, and tread him under our feet. If God be not with us, if he do not give us sufficient grace, so subtle, so powerful, so politic an enemy, will be too hard for us. How surely are
we foiled, and get the worse, when we pretend to grapple with him in our own
strength! How many falls, and how many bruises by those falls have we got, by
relying too much on our own skill? How often have we had the help of God
when we have humbly asked it! And how sure are we to get the victory, if
Christ pray for us that we do not fail! Luke 22:31. Where can we go for shelter
but unto God our Maker! When this lion of the forest does begin to roar, how
will he terrify and vex us, till he that permits him for awhile to trouble us, be
pleased to chain him up again! Timothy Rogers, 1691.

Verse 12. "As with a shield." Luther, when making his way into the presence of
Cardinal Cajetan, who had summoned him to answer for his heretical opinions
at Augsburg, was asked by one of the Cardinal's minions, where he should find
a shelter, if his patron, the Elector of Saxony, should desert him? "Under the
shield of heaven!" was the reply. The silenced minion turned round, and went
his way.

Verse 12. "With favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield." The shield is
not for the defence of any particular part of the body, as almost all the other
pieces are: helmet, fitted for the head; plate, designed for the breast; and so
others, they have their several parts, which they are fastened to; but the shield is
a piece that is intended for the defence of the whole body. It was used therefore
to be made very large; for its broadness, called a gate or door, because so long
and large, as in a manner to cover the whole body. And if the shield were not
large enough at once to cover every part, yet being a movable piece of armour,
the skilful soldier might turn it this way or that way, to catch the blow or arrow
from lighting on any part they were directed to. And this indeed doth
excellently well set forth the universal use that faith is of to the Christian. It
defends the whole man: every part of the Christian by it is preserved. . . . . The
shield doth not only defend the whole body, but it is a defence to the soldier's
armour also; it keeps the arrow from the helmet as well as head, from the breast
and breastplate also. Thus faith, it is armour upon armour, a grace that
preserves all the other graces. William Gurnall.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verses 1, 2. Prayer in its threefold form. "Words, meditation, cry." Showing
how utterance is of no avail without heart, but that fervent longings and silent
desires are accepted, even when unexpressed.

Verse 3. The excellence of morning devotion.
Verse 3. (last two clauses)
  1. Prayer directed.
  2. Answers expected.

Verse 4. God's hatred of sin an example to his people.

Verse 5. "The foolish." Show why sinners are justly called fools.

Verse 7. "Multitude of thy nercy." Dwell upon the varied grace and goodness of God.

Verse 7. The devout resolution

Verse 7.
  I. Observe the singularity of the resolution.
  II. Mark the object of the resolution. It regards the service of God in the sanctuary. "I will come into thine house . . . in thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple."
  III. The manner in which he would accomplish the resolution.
    (1) Impressed with a sense of the divine goodness: "I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy."
    (2) Filled with holy veneration: "And in thy fear will I worship." William Jay, 1842.

Verse 8. God's guidance needed always and especially when enemies are watching us.

Verse 10. Viewed as a threatening. The sentence, "Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions," is specially fitted to be the groundwork of a very solemn discourse.

Verse 11.
  I. The character of the righteous: faith and love.
  II. The privileges of the righteous.
    (1) Joy—great, pure, satisfying, triumphant, (shout) constant (ever).
    (2) Defence—by power, providence, angels, grace, etc.

Verse 11. Joy in the Lord both a duty and a privilege.

Verse 12. (first clause). The divine blessing upon the righteous. It is ancient, effectual, constant, extensive, irreversible, surpassing, eternal, infinite.
Verse 12. (*second clause*). A sense of divine favour a defence to the soul.
Psalm 6

Title

This Psalm is commonly known as the first of the Penitential Psalms, (The other six are 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143) and certainly its language well becomes the lips of a penitent, for it expresses at once the sorrow, (verses 3, 6, 7), the humiliation (verses 2 and 4), and the hatred of sin (verse 8), which are the unfailing marks of the contrite spirit when it turns to God. O Holy Spirit, beget in us the true repentance which needeth not to be repented of. The title of this Psalm is "To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith (1 Chronicles 15:21), A Psalm of David," that is, to the chief musician with stringed instruments, upon the eighth, probably the octave. Some think it refers to the bass or tenor key, which would certainly be well adapted to this mournful ode. But we are not able to understand these old musical terms, and even the term "Selah," still remains untranslated. This, however, should be no difficulty in our way. We probably lose but very little by our ignorance, and it may serve to confirm our faith. It is a proof of the high antiquity of these Psalms that they contain words, the meaning of which is lost even to the best scholars of the Hebrew language. Surely these are but incidental (accidental I might almost say, if I did not believe them to be designed by God), proofs of their being, what they profess to be, the ancient writings of King David of olden times.

Division

You will observe that the Psalm is readily divided into two parts. First, there is the Psalmist's plea in his great distress, reaching from the first to the end of the seventh verse. Then you have, from the eighth to the end, quite a different theme. The Psalmist has changed his note. He leaves the minor key, and betakes himself to sublimer strains. He tunes his note to the high key of confidence, and declares that God hath heard his prayer, and hath delivered him out of all his troubles.

Exposition

Verse 1. Having read through the first division, in order to see it as a whole, we will now look at it verse by verse. "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger." The Psalmist is very conscious that he deserves to be rebuked, and he feels, moreover, that the rebuke in some form or other must come upon him, if not for condemnation, yet for conviction and sanctification. "Corn is cleaned with wind, and the soul with chastenings." It were folly to pray against the golden hand which enriches us by its blows. He does not ask that the rebuke may be totally withheld, for he might thus lose a blessing in disguise; but, "Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger." If thou remindest me of my sin, it is good; but, oh, remind me not of it as one incensed against me, lest thy servant's heart should sink in despair. Thus saith Jeremiah, "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." I know that I must be chastened, and though I shrink from the rod yet do I feel that it will be for my benefit; but, oh, my God, "chasten me not in thy hot displeasure," lest the rod become a sword, and lest in smiting, thou shouldst also kill. So may we pray that the chastisements of our gracious God, if they may not be entirely
removed, may at least be sweetened by the consciousness that they are "not in
anger, but in his dear covenant love."

Verse 2. "Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak." Though I deserve
destruction, yet let thy mercy pity my frailty. This is the right way to plead with
God if we would prevail. Urge not your goodness or your greatness, but plead
your sin and your littleness. Cry, "I am weak," therefore, O Lord, give me
strength and crush me not. Send not forth the fury of thy tempest against so
weak a vessel. Temper the wind to the shorn lamb. Be tender and pitiful to a
poor withering flower, and break it not from its stem. Surely this is the plea that
a sick man would urge to move the pity of his fellow if he were striving with
him, "Deal gently with me, 'for I am weak.'" A sense of sin had so spoiled the
Psalmist's pride, so taken away his vaunted strength, that he found himself
weak to obey the law, weak through the sorrow that was in him, too weak,
perhaps, to lay hold on the promise. "I am weak." The original may be read, "I
am one who droops," or withered like a blighted plant. Ah! beloved, we know
what this means, for we, too, have seen our glory stained, and our beauty like a
faded flower.

Verse 3. "O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed." Here he prays for healing,
not merely the mitigation of the ills he endured, but their entire removal, and
the curing of the wounds which had arisen therefrom. His bones were "shaken,"
as the Hebrew has it. His terror had become so great that his very bones shook;
not only did his flesh quiver, but the bones, the solid pillars of the house of
manhood, were made to tremble. "My bones are shaken." Ah, when the soul
has a sense of sin, it is enough to make the bones shake; it is enough to make a
man's hair stand up on end to see the flames of hell beneath him, an angry God
above him, and danger and doubt surrounding him. Well might he say, "My
bones are shaken." Lest, however, we should imagine that it was merely bodily
sickness— although bodily sickness might be the outward sign—the Psalmist
goes on to say, "My soul is also sore vexed." Soul-trouble is the very soul of
trouble. It matters not that the bones shake if the soul be firm, but when the soul
itself is also sore vexed this is agony indeed. "But thou, O Lord, how long?"
This sentence ends abruptly, for words failed, and grief drowned the little
comfort which dawned upon him. The Psalmist had still, however, some hope;
but that hope was only in his God. He therefore cries, "O Lord, how long?" The
coming of Christ into the soul in his priestly robes of grace is the grand hope of
the penitent soul; and, indeed, in some form or other, Christ's appearance is,
and ever has been, the hope of the saints.

Calvin's favourite exclamation was, "Domine usquequo"—"O Lord, how
long?" Nor could his sharpest pains, during a life of anguish, force from him
any other word. Surely this is the cry of the saints under the altar, "O Lord, how long?" And this should be the cry of the saints waiting for the millennial glories, "Why are his chariots so long in coming; Lord, how long?" Those of us who have passed through conviction of sin knew what it was to count our minutes hours, and our hours years, while mercy delayed its coming. We watched for the dawn of grace, as they that watch for the morning. Earnestly did our anxious spirits ask, "O Lord, how long?"

Verse 4. "Return, O Lord; deliver my soul." As God's absence was the main cause of his misery, so his return would be enough to deliver him from his trouble. "Oh save me for thy mercies' sake." He knows where to look, and what arm to lay hold upon. He does not lay hold on God's left hand of justice, but on his right hand of mercy. He knew his iniquity too well to think of merit, or appeal to anything but the grace of God.

"For thy mercies' sake." What a plea that is! How prevalent it is with God! If we turn to justice, what plea can we urge? but if we turn to mercy we may still cry, notwithstanding the greatness of our guilt, "Save me for thy mercies' sake."

Observe how frequently David here pleads the name of Jehovah, which is always intended where the word LORD is given in capitals. Five times in four verses we here meet with it. Is not this a proof that the glorious name is full of consolation to the tempted saint? Eternity, Infinity, Immutability, Self-existence, are all in the name Jehovah, and all are full of comfort.

Verse 5. And now David was in great fear of death—death temporal, and perhaps death eternal. Read the passage as you will, the following verse is full of power. "For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Churchyards are silent places; the vaults of the sepulchre echo not with songs. Damp earth covers dumb mouths. "O Lord!" saith he, "if thou wilt spare me I will praise thee. If I die, then must my mortal praise at least be suspended; and if I perish in hell, then thou wilt never have any thanksgiving from me. Songs of gratitude cannot rise from the flaming pit of hell. True, thou wilt doubtless be glorified, even in my eternal condemnation, but then O Lord, I cannot glorify thee voluntarily; and among the sons of men, there will be one heart the less to bless thee." Ah! poor trembling sinners, may the Lord help you to use this forcible argument! It is for God's glory that a sinner should be saved. When we seek pardon, we are not asking God to do that which will stain his banner, or put a blot on his escutcheon. He delighteth in mercy. It is his peculiar, darling attribute. Mercy honours God. Do not we ourselves say, "Mercy blesseth him that gives, and
him that takes?" And surely, in some diviner sense, this is true of God, who, when he gives mercy, glorifies himself.

Verse 6. The Psalmist gives a fearful description of his long agony: "I am weary with my groaning." He has groaned till his throat was hoarse; he had cried for mercy till prayer became a labour. God's people may groan, but they may not grumble. Yea, they must groan, being burdened, or they will never shout in the day of deliverance. The next sentence, we think, is not accurately translated. It should be, "I shall make my bed to swim every night" (when nature needs rest, and when I am most alone with my God). That is to say, my grief is fearful even now, but if God do not soon save me, it will not stay of itself, but will increase, until my tears will be so many, that my bed itself shall swim. A description rather of what he feared would be, than of what had actually taken place. May not our forebodings of future woe become arguments which faith may urge when seeking present mercy?

Verse 7. "I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all my enemies." As an old man's eye grows dim with years, so, says David, my eye is grown red and feeble through weeping. Conviction sometimes has such an effect upon the body, that even the outward organs are made to suffer. May not this explain some of the convulsions and hysterical attacks which have been experienced under convictions in the revivals in Ireland? Is it surprising that some souls be smitten to the earth, and begin to cry aloud; when we find that David himself made his bed to swim, and grew old while he was under the heavy hand of God? Ah! brethren, it is no light matter to feel one's self a sinner, condemned at the bar of God. The language of this Psalm is not strained and forced, but perfectly natural to one in so sad a plight.

Verse 8. Hitherto, all has been mournful and disconsolate, but now—

"Your harps, ye trembling saints,
Down from the willows take."

Ye must have your times of weeping, but let them be short. Get ye up, get ye up, from your dunghills! Cast aside your sackcloth and ashes! Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

David has found peace, and rising from his knees he begins to sweep his house of the wicked. "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." The best remedy for us against an evil man is a long space between us both. "Get ye gone; I can have no fellowship with you." Repentance is a practical thing. It is not enough to bemoan the desecration of the temple of the heart, we must scourge out the buyers and sellers, and overturn the tables of the money
Psalm 6

changers. A pardoned sinner will hate the sins which cost the Saviour his blood. Grace and sin are quarrelsome neighbours, and one or the other must go to the wall.

"For the Lord hath hear the voice of my weeping." What a fine Hebraism, and what grand poetry it is in English! "He hath heard the voice of my weeping." Is there a voice in weeping? Does weeping speak? In what language doth it utter its meaning? Why, in that universal tongue which is known and understood in all the earth, and even in heaven above. When a man weeps, whether he be a Jew or Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, it has the same meaning in it. Weeping is the eloquence of sorrow. It is an unstrammering orator, needing no interpreter, but understood of all. Is it not sweet to believe that our tears are understood even when words fail? Let us learn to think of tears as liquid prayers, and of weeping as a constant dropping of importunate intercession which will wear its way right surely into the very heart of mercy, despite the stony difficulties which obstruct the way. My God, I will "weep" when I cannot plead, for thou hearest the voice of my weeping.

Verse 9. "The Lord hath heard my supplication." The Holy Spirit had wrought into the Psalmist's mind the confidence that his prayer was heard. This is frequently the privilege of the saints. Praying the prayer of faith, they are often infallibly assured that they have prevailed with God. We read of Luther that, having on one occasion wrestled hard with God in prayer, he came leaping out of his closet crying, "Vicimus, vicimus;" that is, We have conquered, we have prevailed with God." Assured confidence is no idle dream, for when the Holy Ghost bestows it upon us, we know its reality, and could not doubt it, even though all men should deride our boldness. "The Lord will receive my prayer." Here is past experience used for future encouragement. He hath, he will. Note this, O believer, and imitate its reasoning.

Verse 10. "Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed." This is rather a prophecy than an imprecation, it may be read in the future, "All my enemies shall be ashamed and sore vexed." They shall return and be ashamed instantaneously,—in a moment;—their doom shall come upon them suddenly. Death's day is doom's day, and both are sure and may be sudden. The Romans were wont to say, "The feet of the avenging Deity are shod with wool." With noiseless footsteps vengeance nears its victim, and sudden and overwhelming shall be its destroying stroke. If this were an imprecation, we must remember that the language of the old dispensation is not that of the new. We pray for our enemies, not against them. God have mercy on them, and bring them into the right way.

Thus the Psalm, like those which precede it, shews the different estates of
the godly and the wicked. O Lord, let us be numbered with thy people, both now and forever!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. David was a man that was often exercised with sickness and troubles from enemies, and in all the instances almost that we meet with in the Psalms of these his afflictions, we may observe the outward occasions of trouble brought him under the suspicion of God's wrath and his own iniquity; so that he was seldom sick, or persecuted, but this called on the disquiet of conscience, and brought his sin to remembrance; as in this Psalm, which was made on the occasion of his sickness, as appears from verse eight, wherein he expresseth the vexation of his soul under the apprehension of God's anger; all his other griefs running into this channel, as little brooks, losing themselves in a great river, change their name and nature. He that at first was only concerned for his sickness, is now wholly concerned with sorrow and smart under the fear and hazard of his soul's condition; the like we may see in Psalm 38, and many places more. Richard Gilpin, 1677.

Verse 1. "Rebuke me not." God hath two means by which he reduceth his children to obedience; his word, by which he rebukes them; and his rod, by which he chastiseth them. The word precedes, admonishing them by his servants whom he hath sent in all ages to call sinners to repentance: of the which David himself saith, "Let the righteous rebuke me;" and as a father doth first rebuke his disordered child, so doth the Lord speak to them. But when men neglect the warnings of his word, then God as a good Father, takes up the rod and beats them. Our Saviour wakened the three disciples in the garden three times, but seeing that served not, he told them that Judas and his band were coming to awaken them whom his own voice could not waken. A. Symson, 1638.

Verse 1. "Jehovah, rebuke me not in thine anger," etc. He does not altogether refuse punishment, for that would be unreasonable; and to be without it, he judged would be more hurtful than beneficial to him; but what he is afraid of is the wrath of God, which threatens sinners with ruin and perdition. To anger and indignation David tacitly opposes fatherly and gentle chastisement, and this last he was willing to bear. John Calvin, 1509 - 1564.

Verse 1. "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger."

The anger of the Lord? Oh, dreadful thought!
How can a creature frail as man endure
The tempest of his wrath? Ah, whither flee
To 'scape the punishment he well deserves?
Flee to the cross! the great atonement there
Will shield the sinner, if he supplicate
For pardon with repentance true and deep,
And faith that questions not. Then will the frown
Of anger pass from off the face of God,
Like a black tempest cloud that hides the sun.

Anon.

Verse 1. "Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger," etc.; that is, do not lay upon me that thou hast threatened in thy law; where anger is not put for the decree nor the execution, but for the denouncing. So (Matthew 3:11, and so Hosea 11:9), "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger," that is, I will not execute my wrath as I have declared it. Again, it is said, he executes punishment on the wicked; he declares it not only, but executeth it, so anger is put for the execution of anger. Richard Stock, 1641.

Verse 1. "Neither chasten me in thine hot displeasure."

O keep up life and peace within,
If I must feel thy chastening rod!
Yet kill not me, but kill my sin,
And let me know thou art my God.
O give my soul some sweet foretaste
Of that which I shall shortly see!
Let faith and love cry to the last,
"Come, Lord, I trust myself with thee!"

Richard Baxter, 1615-1691.

Verse 2. "Have mercy upon me, O Lord." To fly and escape the anger of God, David sees no means in heaven or in earth, and therefore retires himself to God, even to him that wounded him that he might heal him. He flies not with Adam to the bush, nor with Saul to the witch, nor with Jonah to Tarshish; but he appeals from an angry and just God to a merciful God, and from himself to himself. The woman who was condemned by King Philip, appealed from Philip being drunken to Philip being sober. But David appeals from one virtue, justice, to another, mercy. There may be appellation from the tribunal of man to the justice-seat of God; but when thou art indicted before God's justice-seat, whither or to whom wilt thou go but to himself and his mercy-seat, which is the highest and last place of appellation? "I have none in heaven but thee, nor in earth besides thee." . . . . . David, under the name of mercy, includeth all
things, according to that of Jacob to his brother Esau, "I have gotten mercy, and therefore I have gotten all things." Desirest thou any thing at God's hands? Cry for mercy, out of which fountain all good things will spring to thee. Archibald Symson.

Verse 2. "For I am weak." Behold what rhetoric he useth to move God to cure him, "I am weak," an argument taken from his weakness, which indeed were a weak argument to move any man to show his favour, but is a strong argument to prevail with God. If a diseased person would come to a physician, and only lament the heaviness of his sickness, he would say, God help thee; or an oppressed person come to a lawyer, and show him the estate of his action and ask his advice, that is a golden question; or to a merchant to crave raiment, he will either have present money or a surety; or a courtier favour, you must have your reward ready in your hand. But coming before God, the most forcible argument that you can use is your necessity, poverty, tears, misery, unworthiness, and confessing them to him, it shall be an open door to furnish you with all things that he hath. . . . The tears of our misery are forcible arrows to pierce the heart of our heavenly Father, to deliver us and pity our hard case. The beggars lay open their sores to the view of the world, that the more they may move men to pity them. So let us deplore our miseries to God, that he, with the pitiful Samaritan, at the sight of our wounds, may help us in due time. Archibald Symson.

Verse 2. "Heal me," etc. David comes not to take physic upon wantonness, but because the disease is violent, because the accidents are vehement; so vehement, so violent, as that it hath pierced ad ossa, and ad animam, "My bones are vexed, and my soul is sore troubled," therefore "heal me;" which is the reason upon which he grounds this second petition, "Heal me, because my bones are vexed," etc. John Donne.

Verse 2. "My bones are vexed." The Lord can make the strongest and most insensible part of a man's body sensible of his wrath when he pleaseth to touch him, for here David's bones are vexed. David Dickson.

Verse 2. The term "bones" frequently occurs in the Psalms, and if we examine we shall find it used in three different senses. (1.) It is sometimes applied literally to our blessed Lord's human body, to the body which hung upon the cross, as, "They pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones," (2.) It has sometimes also a further reference to his mystical body the church. And then it denotes all the members of Christ's body that stand firm in the faith, that cannot be moved by persecutions, or temptations, however severe, as, "All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?" (3.) In some passages the term
bones is applied to the soul, and not to the body, to the inner man of the individual Christian. Then it implies the strength and fortitude of the soul, the determined courage which faith in God gives to the righteous. This is the sense in which it is used in the second verse of Psalm 6., "O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed." Augustine, Ambrose, and Chrysostom; quoted by F. H. Dunwell, B.A., in "Parochial Lectures on the Psalms," 1855.

Verse 3. "My soul." Yokefellows in sin are yokefellows in pain; the soul is punished for informing, the body for performing, and as both the informer and performer, the cause and the instrument, so shall the stirrer up of sin and the executor of it be punished. John Donne.

Verse 3. "O Lord, how long?" Out of this we have three things to observe; first, that there is an appointed time which God hath measured for the crosses of all his children, before which time they shall not be delivered, and for which they must patiently attend, not thinking to prescribe time to God for their delivery, or limit the Holy One of Israel. The Israelites remained in Egypt till the complete number of four hundred and thirty years were accomplished. Joseph was three years and more in the prison till the appointed time of his delivery came. The Jews remained seventy years in Babylon. So that as the physician appointeth certain times to the patient, both wherein he must fast, and be dieted, and wherein he must take recreation, so God knoweth the convenient times both of our humiliation and exaltation. Next, see the impatience of our nature in our miseries, our flesh still rebelling against the Spirit, which oftentimes forgetteth itself so far, that it will enter into reasoning with God, and quarrelling with him, as we may read in Job, Jonas, etc., and here also of David. Thirdly, albeit the Lord delay his coming to relieve his saints, yet hath he great cause if we could ponder it; for when we were in the heat of our sins, many times he cried by the mouth of his prophets and servants, "O fools, how long will you continue in your folly?" And we would not hear; and therefore when we are in the heat of our pains, thinking long, yea, every day a year till we be delivered, no wonder is it if God will not hear; let us consider with ourselves the just dealing of God with us; that as he cried and we would not hear, so now we cry, and he will not hear. A. Symson.

Verse 3. "O Lord, how long?" As the saints in heaven have their usque quo, how long, Lord, holy and true, before thou begin to execute judgment? So, the saints on earth have their usque quo. How long, Lord, before thou take off the execution of this judgment upon us? For, our deprecatory prayers are not mandatory, they are not directory, they appoint not God his ways, nor times; but as our postulatory prayers are, they also are submitted to the will of God, and have all in them that ingredient, that herb of grace, which Christ put into
his own prayer, that veruntamen, yet not my will, but thy will be fulfilled; and they have that ingredient which Christ put into our prayer, fiat voluntas, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven; in heaven there is no resisting of his will; yet in heaven there is a soliciting, a hastening, an accelerating of the judgment, and the glory of the resurrection; so though we resist not his corrections here upon the earth, we may humbly present to God the sense which we have of his displeasure, for this sense and apprehension of his corrections is one of the principal reasons why he sends them; he corrects us therefore that we might be sensible of his corrections; that when we, being humbled under his hand, have said with his prophet, "I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him" (Micah 7:9), he may be pleased to say to his correcting angel, as he did to his destroying angel, This is enough, and so burn his rod now, as he put up his sword then. John Donne.

Verse 4. "Return, O Lord, deliver my soul," etc. In this his besieging of God, he brings up his works from afar off, closer; he begins in this Psalm, at a deprecatory prayer; he asks nothing, but that God would do nothing, that he would forbear him— rebuke me not, correct me not. Now, it costs the king less to give a pardon than to give a pension, and less to give a reprieve than to give a pardon, and less to connive, not to call in question, than either reprieve, pardon, or pension; to forbear is not much. But then as the mathematician said, that he could make an engine, a screw, that should move the whole frame of the world, if he could have a place assigned him to fix that engine, that screw upon, that so it might work upon the world; so prayer, when one petition hath taken hold upon God, works upon God, moves God, prevails with God, entirely for all. David then having got this ground, this footing in God, he brings his works closer; he comes from the deprecatory to a postulatory prayer; not only that God would do nothing against him, but that he would do something for him. God hath suffered man to see Arcana imperii, the secrets of his state, how he governs—he governs by precedent; by precedents of his predecessors, he cannot, he hath none; by precedents of other gods he cannot, there are none; and yet he proceeds by precedents, by his own precedents, he does as he did before, habenti dat, to him that hath received he gives more, and is willing to be wrought and prevailed upon, and pressed with his own example. And, as though his doing good were but to learn how to do good better, still he writes after his own copy, and nulla dies sine linea. He writes something to us, that is, he doth something for us every day. And then, that which is not often seen in other masters, his copies are better than the originals; his latter mercies larger than his former; and in this postulatory prayer, larger than the deprecatory, enters our text, "Return, O Lord; deliver my soul: O save me," etc. John Donne.
Verse 5. "For in death there is no remembrance of thee, in the grave who will give thee thanks?" Lord, be thou pacified and reconciled to me. . . . for shouldest thou now proceed to take away my life, as it were a most direful condition for me to die before I have propitiated thee, so I may well demand what increase of glory or honour will it bring unto thee? Will it not be infinitely more glorious for thee to spare me, till by true contrition I may regain thy favour?—and then I may live to praise and magnify thy mercy and thy grace: thy mercy in pardoning so great a sinner, and then confess thee by vital actions of all holy obedience for the future, and so demonstrate the power of thy grace which hath wrought this change in me; neither of which will be done by destroying me, but only thy just judgments manifested in thy vengeance on sinners, Henry Hammond, D.D., 1659.

Verse 6. "I fainted in my mourning." It may seem a marvellous change in David, being a man of such magnitude of mind, to be thus dejected and cast down. Prevailed he not against Goliath, against the lion and the bear, through fortitude and magnanimity? But now he is sobbing, sighing, and weeping as a child! The answer is easy; the diverse persons with whom he hath to do occasioneth the same. When men and beasts are his opposites, then he is more than a conqueror; but when he hath to do with God against whom he sinned, then he is less than nothing.

Verse 6. "I caused my bed to swim." . . . . Showers be better than dews, yet it is sufficient if God at least hath bedewed our hearts, and hath given us some sign of a penitent heart. If we have not rivers of waters to pour forth with David, neither fountains flowing with Mary Magdalen, nor as Jeremy, desire to have a fountain in our head to weep day and night, nor with Peter weep bitterly; yet if we lament that we cannot lament, and mourn that we cannot mourn: yea, if we have the smallest sobs of sorrow and tears of compunction, if they be true and not counterfeit, they will make us acceptable to God; for as the woman with the bloody issue that touched the hem of Christ's garment, was no less welcome to Christ than Thomas, who put his fingers in the print of the nails; so, God looketh not at the quantity, but the sincerity of our repentance.

Verse 6. "My bed." The place of his sin is the place of his repentance, and so it should be; yea, when we behold the place where we have offended, we should be pricked in the heart, and there again crave him pardon. As Adam sinned in the garden, and Christ sweat bloody tears in the garden. "Examine your hearts upon your beds, and convert unto the Lord;" and whereas ye have stretched forth yourselves upon your bed to devise evil things, repent there and make them sanctuaries to God. Sanctify by your tears every place which ye have polluted by sin. And let us seek Christ Jesus on our own bed, with the spouse in
the Canticles, who saith, "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth." Archibald Symson.

Verse 6. "I water my couch with tears." Not only I wash, but also I water. The faithful sheep of the great Shepherd go up from the washing place, every one bringeth forth twins, and none barren among them. Canticles 4:2. For so Jacob's sheep, having conceived at the watering troughs, brought forth strong and party-coloured lambs. David likewise, who before had erred and strayed like a lost sheep making here his bed a washing-place, by so much the less is barren in obedience, by how much the more he is fruitful in repentance. In Solomon's temple stood the caldrons of brass, to wash the flesh of those beasts which were to be sacrificed on the altar. Solomon's father maketh a water of his tears, a caldron of his bed, an altar of his heart, a sacrifice, not of the flesh of unreasonable beasts, but of his own body, a living sacrifice, which is his reasonable serving of God. Now the Hebrew word here used signifies properly, to cause to swim, which is more than simply to wash. And thus the Geneva translation readeth it, I cause my bed every night to swim. So that as the priests used to swim in the molten sea, that they might be pure and clean, against they performed the holy rites and services of the temple, in like manner the princely prophet washeth his bed, yea, he swimmeth in his bed, or rather he causeth his bed to swim in tears, as in a sea of grief and penitent sorrow for his sin. Thomas Playfere, 1604.

Verse 6. "I water my couch with my tears." Let us water our bed every night with our tears. Do not only blow upon it with intermissive blasts, for then like fire, it will resurge and flame the more. Sin is like a stinking candle newly put out, it is soon lighted again. It may receive a wound, but like a dog it will easily lick itself whole; a little forbearance multiplies it like Hydra's heads. Therefore, whatsoever aspersion the sin of the day has brought upon us, let the tears of the night wash away. Thomas Adams.

Verses 6, 7. Soul-trouble is attended usually with great pain of body too, and so a man is wounded and distressed in every part. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger, says David, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit." Job 6:4. Sorrow of heart contracts the natural spirits, making all their motions slow and feeble; and the poor afflicted body does usually decline and waste away; and, therefore, saith Heman, "My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave." In this inward distress we find our strength decay and melt, even as wax before the fire; for sorrow darkeneth the spirits, obscures the judgment, blinds the memory, as to all pleasant things, and beclouds the lucid part of the mind, causing the lamp of life to burn weakly. In this troubled condition the person
cannot be without a countenance that is pale, and wan, and dejected, like one that is seized with strong fear and consternation; all his motions are sluggish, and no sprightliness nor activity remains. A merry heart doth good, like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones. Hence come those frequent complaints in Scripture: My moisture is turned into the drought of the summer: I am like a bottle in the smoke; my soul cleaveth unto the dust: my face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelid is the shadow of death. Job 16:16, 30:17, 18-19. "My bones are pierced in me, in the night seasons, and my sinews take no rest; by the great force of my disease is my garment changed. He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes. Many times indeed the trouble of the soul does begin from the weakness and indisposition of the body. Long affliction, without any prospect of remedy, does, in process of time, begin to distress the soul itself. David was a man often exercised with sickness and the rage of enemies; and in all the instances almost that we meet with him in the Psalms, we may observe that the outward occasions of trouble brought him under an apprehension of the wrath of God for his sin. (Psalm 6:1, 2; and the reasons given, verses 5 and 6.) All his griefs running into this most terrible thought, that God was his enemy. As little brooks lose themselves in a great river, and change their name and nature, it most frequently happens that when our pain is long and sharp, and helpless and unavoidable, we begin to question the sincerity of our estate toward God, though at its first assault we had few doubts or fears about it. Long weakness of body makes the soul more susceptible of trouble, and uneasy thoughts. Timothy Rogers on Trouble of Mind.

Verse 7. "Mine eye is consumed." Many make those eyes which God hath given them, as it were two lighted candles to let them see to go to hell; and for this God in justice requiteth them, seeing their minds are blinded by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, God, I say, sendeth sickness to debilitate their eyes which were so sharp-sighted in the devil's service, and their lust now causeth them to want the necessary sight of their body.

Verse 7. "Mine enemies." The pirates seeing an empty bark, pass by it; but if she be loaded with precious wares, then they will assault her. So, if a man have no grace within him, Satan passeth by him as not a convenient prey for him; but being loaded with graces, as the love of God, his fear, and such other spiritual virtues, let him be persuaded that according as he knows what stuff is in him, so will he not fail to rob him of them, if in any case he may, Archibald Symson.

Verse 7. That eye of his that had looked and lusted after his neighbour's wife is now dimmed and darkened with grief and indignation. He has wept himself almost blind. John Trapp.
Verse 8. "Depart from me," etc., i.e., you may now go your way; for that which you look for, namely, my death, you shall not have at this present; *for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping,* i.e., has graciously granted me that which with tears I asked of him. *Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 8. "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." May not too much familiarity with profane wretches be justly charged upon church members? I know man is a sociable creature, but that will not excuse saints as to their carelessness of the choice of their company. The very fowls of the air, and beasts of the field, love not heterogeneous company. "Birds of a feather flock together." I have been afraid that many who would be thought eminent, of a high stature in grace and godliness, yet see not the vast difference there is between nature and regeneration, sin and grace, the old and the new man, seeing all company is alike unto them. *Lewis Stuckley's "Gospel Glass"*, 1667.

Verse 8. "The voice of my weeping." Weeping hath a voice, and as music upon the water sounds farther and more harmoniously than upon the land, so prayers, joined with tears, cry louder in God's ears, and make sweeter music than when tears are absent. When Antipater had written a large letter against Alexander's mother unto Alexander, the king answered him, "One tear from my mother will wash away all her faults." So it is with God. A penitent tear is an undeniably ambassador, and never returns from the throne of grace unsatisfied. *Spencer's Things New and Old.*

Verse 8. The wicked are called, "workers of iniquity," because they are free and ready to sin, they have a strong tide and bent of spirit to do evil, and they do it not to halves but thoroughly; they do not only begin or nibble at the bait a little (as a good man often doth), but greedily swallow it down, hook and all; they are fully in it, and do it fully; they make a work of it, and so are "workers of iniquity." *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 8. Some may say, "My constitution is such that I cannot weep; I may as well go to squeeze a rock, as think to get a tear." But if thou canst not weep for sin, canst thou grieve? Intellectual mourning is best; there may be sorrow where there are no tears, the vessel may be full though it wants vent; it is not so much the weeping eye God respects as the broken heart; yet I would be loath to stop their tears who can weep. God stood looking on Hezekiah's tears (Isaiah 38:5), "I have seen thy tears." David's tears made music in God's ears, "The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping." It is a sight fit for angels to behold, tears as pearls dropping from a penitent eye. *T. Watson.*
Verse 8. "The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping." God hears the voice of our looks, God hears the voice of our tears sometimes better than the voice of our words; for it is the Spirit itself that makes intercession for us. Romans 8:26. Gemitibus inenarrabilibus, in those groans, and so in those tears, which we cannot utter; ineloquacibus, as Tertullian reads that place, devout, and simple tears, which cannot speak, speak aloud in the ears of God; nay, tears which we cannot utter; not only utter the force of the tears, but not utter the very tears themselves. As God sees the water in the spring in the veins of the earth before it bubble upon the face of the earth, so God sees tears in the heart of a man before they blubber his face; God hears the tears of that sorrowful soul, which for sorrow cannot shed tears. From this casting up of the eyes, and pouring out the sorrow of the heart at the eyes, at least opening God a window through which he may see a wet heart through a dry eye; from these overtures of repentance, which are as those imperfect sounds of words, which parents delight in, in their children, before they speak plain, a penitent sinner comes to a verbal and a more expressive prayer. To these prayers, these vocal and verbal prayers from David, God had given ear, and from this hearing of those prayers was David come to this thankful confidence, "The Lord hath heard, the Lord will hear." John Donne.

Verse 8. What a strange change is here all of a sudden! Well might Luther say, "Prayer is the leech of the soul, that sucks out the venom and swelling thereof." "Prayer," saith another, "is an exorcist with God, and an exorcist against sin and misery." Bernard saith, "How oft hath prayer found me despairing almost, but left me triumphing, and well assured of pardon!" The same in effect saith David here, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping." What a word is that to his insulting enemies! Avaunt! come out! vanish! These be words used to devils and dogs, but good enough for a Doeg or a Shimei. And the Son of David shall say the same to his enemies when he comes to judgment. John Trapp.

Verse 9. "The Lord hath heard my supplication," etc. The psalmist three times expresses his confidence of his prayers being heard and received, which may be either in reference to his having prayed so many times for help, as the apostle Paul did (2 Corinthians 12:8); and as Christ his antitype did (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44); or to express the certainty of it, the strength of his faith in it, and the exuberance of his joy on account of it. John Gill, D.D., 1697-1771.

Verse 10. "Let all mine enemies be ashamed," etc. If this were an imprecation, a malediction, yet it was medicinal, and had rationem boni, a charitable tincture and nature in it; he wished the men no harm as men. But it is rather prædictorium, a prophetical vehemence, that if they will take no knowledge of
God's declaring himself in the protection of his servants, if they would not consider that God had heard, and would hear, had rescued, and would rescue his children, but would continue their opposition against him, heavy judgments would certainly fall upon them; their punishment should be certain, but the effect should be uncertain; for God only knows whether his correction shall work upon his enemies to their mollifying, or to their obduration. . . . In the second word, "Let them be sore vexed," he wishes his enemies no worse than himself had been, for he had used the same word of himself before, *Ossa turbata, My bones are vexed;* and *Anima turbata, My soul is vexed;* and considering that David had found this vexation to be his way to God, it was no malicious imprecation to wish that enemy the same physic that he had taken, who was more sick of the same disease than he was. For this is like a troubled sea after a tempest; the danger is past, but yet the billow is great still; the danger was in the calm, in the security, or in the tempest, by misinterpreting God's correction to our obduration, and to a remorseless stupefication; but when a man is come to this holy vexation, to be troubled, to be shaken with the sense of the indignation of God, the storm is past, and the indignation of God is blown over. That soul is in a fair and near way of being restored to a calmness, and to reposed security of conscience that is come to this holy vexation. *John Donne.*

*Verse 10.* "Let all mine enemies [or all mine enemies shall] be ashamed, and sore vexed," etc. Many of the mournful Psalms end in this manner, to instruct the believer that he is continually to look forward, and solace himself with beholding that day, when his warfare shall be accomplished; when sin and sorrow shall be no more; when sudden and everlasting confusion shall cover the enemies of righteousness; when the sackcloth of the penitent shall be exchanged for a robe of glory, and every tear becomes a sparkling gem in his crown; when to sighs and groans shall succeed the songs of heaven, set to angels harps, and faith shall be resolved into the vision of the Almighty. *George Horne.*

**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

*Verse 1.* A sermon for afflicted souls.

I. God's twofold dealings.

(1) **Rebuke**, by a telling sermon, a judgment on another, a slight trial in our own person, or a solemn monition in our conscience by the Spirit.

(2) **Chastening**. This follows the other when the first is disregarded. Pain, losses, bereavements, melancholy, and other trials.

II. The evils in them to be most dreaded, anger and hot displeasure.
III. The means to avert these ills. Humiliation, confession, amendment, faith in the Lord, etc.

Verse 1. The believer's greatest dread, the anger of God. What this fact reveals in the heart? Why is it so? What removes the fear?

Verse 2. The argumentum ad misericordiam.

Verse 2. First sentence—Divine healing.
   (1) What precedes it, my bones are vexed.
   (2) How it is wrought.
   (3) What succeeds it.

Verse 3. The impatience of sorrow; its sins, mischief, and cure.

Verse 3. A fruitful topic may be found in considering the question, How long will God continue afflictions to the righteous?

Verse 4. "Return, O Lord." A prayer suggested by a sense of the Lord's absence, excited by grace, attended with heart searching and repentance, backed by pressing danger, guaranteed as to its answer, and containing a request for all mercies.

Verse 4. The praying of the deserted saint.

   1. *His state:* his soul is evidently in bondage and danger;
   2. *His hope:* it is in the Lord's return.
   3. *His plea:* mercy only.

Verse 5. The final suspension of earthly service considered in various practical aspects.

Verse 5. The duty of praising God while we live.


Verse 7. The voice of weeping. What it is.

Verse 8. The pardoned sinner forsaking his bad companions.

Verse 9. Past answers the ground of present confidence. He *hath,* he *will.*
Verse 10. The shame reserved for the wicked.

WORKS UPON THE SIXTH PSALM
A Godly and Fruitful Exposition on the Sixt Psalme, the First of the Penitentials; in a sacred Septenarie; or, a Godly and Fruitful Exposition on the Seven Psalmes of Repentance. by MR. ARCHIBALD SYMSON, late Pastor of the Church at Dalkeeth in Scotland. 1638.


On Verse 6. The Sick Man's Couch; a Sermon preached before the most noble Prince Henry, as Greenwich, Mar. 12., ann. 1604. by THOMAS PLAYFERE. &c., in Playfere's Sermons.
Psalm 7

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. "Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the word of Cush the Benjamite."—
"Shiggaion of David." As far as we can gather from the observations of learned men, and from a
comparison of this Psalm with the only other Shiggaion in the Word of God, (Habakkuk 3:1), this title
seems to mean "variable songs," with which also the idea of solace and pleasure is associated. Truly our
life-psalm is composed of variable verses; one stanza rolls along with the sublime metre of triumph, but
another limps with the broken rhythm of complaint. There is much bass in the saint's music here below.
Our experience is as variable as the weather in England.

From the title we learn the occasion of the composition of this song. It appears probable that Cush
the Benjamite had accused David to Saul of treasonable conspiracy against his royal authority. This the
king would be ready enough to credit, both from his jealousy of David, and from the relation which most
probably existed between himself, the son of Kish, and this Cush, or Kish, the Benjamite. He who is near
the throne can do more injury to a subject than an ordinary slanderer.

This may be called the SONG OF THE SLANDERED SAINT. Even this sorest of evils may furnish
occasion for a Psalm. What a blessing it would be if we could turn even the most disastrous event into a
theme for song, and so turn the tables upon our great enemy. Let us learn a lesson from Luther, who once
said, "David made Psalms; we also will make Psalms, and sing them as well as we can to the honour of our
Lord, and to spite and mock the devil."

DIVISION. In the first and second verses the danger is stated, and prayer offered. Then the Psalmist most
solemnly avows his innocence. (3, 4, 5). The Lord is pleaded with to arise to judgment (6, 7). The Lord,
sitting upon his throne, hears the renewed appeal of the Slandered Supplicant (8, 9). The Lord clears his
servant, and threatens the wicked (10, 11, 12, 13). The slanderer is seen in vision bringing a curse upon his
own head, (14, 15, 16), while David retires from trial singing a hymn of praise to his righteous God. We
have here a noble sermon upon that text: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every
tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. David appears before God to plead with him against the Accuser, who
had charged him with treason and treachery. The case is here opened with an
avowal of confidence in God. Whatever may be the emergency of our condition
we shall never find it amiss to retain our reliance upon our God. "O Lord my
God," mine by a special covenant, sealed by Jesus' blood, and ratified in my
own soul by a sense of union to thee; "in thee," and in thee only, "do I put my
trust," even now in my sore distress. I shake, but my rock moves not. It is never
right to distrust God, and never vain to trust him. And now, with both divine
relationship and holy trust to strengthen him, David utters the burden of his
desire—"save me from all them that persecute me." His pursuers were very
many, and any one of them cruel enough to devour him; he cries, therefore, for
salvation from them all. We should never think our prayers complete until we
ask for preservation from all sin, and all enemies. "And deliver me," extricate
Psalm 7

me from their snares, acquit me of their accusations, give a true and just deliverance in this trial of my injured character. See how clearly his case is stated; let us see to it, that we know what we would have when we are come to the throne of mercy. Pause a little while before you pray, that you may not offer the sacrifice of fools. Get a distinct idea of your need, and then you can pray with the more fluency of fervency.

Verse 2. "Lest he tear my soul." Here is the plea of fear co-working with the plea of faith. There was one among David's foes mightier that the rest, who had both dignity, strength, and ferocity, and was, therefore, "like a lion." From this foe he urgently seeks deliverance. Perhaps this was Saul, his royal enemy; but in our own case there is one who goes about like a lion, seeking whom he may devour, concerning whom we should ever cry, "Deliver us from the Evil One." Notice the vigour of the description—"rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver." It is a picture from the shepherd-life of David. When the fierce lion had pounced upon the defenceless lamb, and had made it his prey, he would rend the victim in pieces, break all the bones, and devour all, because no shepherd was near to protect the lamb or rescue it from the ravenous beast. This is a soul-moving portrait of a saint delivered over to the will of Satan. This will make the bowels of Jehovah yearn. A father cannot be silent when a child is in such peril. No, he will not endure the thought of his darling in the jaws of a lion, he will arise and deliver his persecuted one. Our God is very pitiful, and he will surely rescue his people from so desperate a destruction. It will be well for us here to remember that this is a description of the danger to which the Psalmist was exposed from slanderous tongues. Verily this is not an overdrawn picture, for the wounds of a sword will heal, but the wounds of the tongue cut deeper than the flesh, and are not soon cured. Slander leaves a slur, even if it be wholly disproved. Common fame, although notoriously a common liar, has very many believers. Once let an ill word get into men's mouths, and it is not easy to get it fully out again. The Italians say that good repute is like the cypress, once cut it never puts forth leaf again; this is not true if our character be cut by a stranger's hand, but even then it will not soon regain its former verdure. Oh, 'tis a meanness most detestable to stab a good man in his reputation, but diabolical hatred observes no nobility in its mode of warfare. We must be ready for this trial, for it will surely come upon us. If God was slandered in Eden, we shall surely be maligned in this land of sinners. Gird up your loins, ye children of the resurrection, for this fiery trial awaits you all.

Verses 3-5. The second part of this wandering hymn contains a protestation of innocence, and an invocation of wrath upon his own head, if he were not clear from the evil imputed to him. So far from hiding treasonable intentions in his
hands, or ungratefully requiting the peaceful deeds of a friend, he had even
suffered his enemy to escape when he had him completely in his power. Twice
had he spared Saul's life; once in the cave of Adullam, and again when he
found him sleeping in the midst of his slumbering camp: he could, therefore,
with a clear conscience, make his appeal to heaven. He needs not fear the curse
whose soul is clear of guilt. Yet is the imprecation a most solemn one, and only
justifiable through the extremity of the occasion, and the nature of the
dispensation under which the Psalmist lived. We are commanded by our Lord
Jesus to let our yea be yea, and our nay, nay: "for whatsoever is more than this
cometh of evil." If we cannot be believed on our word, we are surely not to be
trusted on our oath; for to a true Christian his simple word is as binding as
another man's oath. Especially beware, O unconverted men! of trifling with
solemn imprecations. Remember the woman at Devizes, who wished she might
die if she had not paid her share in a joint purchase, and who fell dead there and
then with the money in her hand.

Selah. David enhances the solemnity of this appeal to the dread tribunal of
God by the use of the usual pause.

From these verses we may learn that no innocence can shield a man from
the calumnies of the wicked. David had been scrupulously careful to avoid any
appearance of rebellion against Saul, whom he constantly styled "the Lord's
anointed;" but all this could not protect him from lying tongues. As the shadow
follows the substance, so envy pursues goodness. It is only at the tree laden
with fruit that men throw stones. If we would live without being slandered we
must wait till we get to heaven. Let us be very heedful not to believe the flying
rumors which are always harassing gracious men. If there are no believers in
lies there will be but a dull market in falsehood, and good men's characters will
be safe. Ill-will never spoke well. Sinners have an ill-will to saints, and
therefore, be sure they will not speak well of them.

Verse 6. We now listen to a fresh prayer, based upon the avowal which he has
just made. We cannot pray too often, and when our heart is true, we shall turn
to God in prayer as naturally as the needle to its pole.

"Arise, O Lord, in thine anger." His sorrow makes him view the Lord as a
judge who had left the judgment-seat and retired into his rest. Faith would
move the Lord to avenge the quarrel of his saints. "Lift up thyself because of the
rage of mine enemies"—a still stronger figure to express his anxiety that the
Lord would assume his authority and mount the throne. Stand up, O God, rise
thou above them all, and let thy justice tower above their villainies. "Awake for
me to the judgment that thou hast commanded." This is a bolder utterance still,
for it implies sleep as well as inactivity, and can only be applied to God in a
very limited sense. He never slumbers, yet doth he often seem to do so; for the
wicked prevail, and the saints are trodden in the dust. God's silence is the patience of longsuffering, and if wearsome to the saints, they should bear it cheerfully in the hope that sinners may thereby be led to repentance.

Verse 7. "So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about." Thy saints shall crowd to thy tribunal with their complaints, or shall surround it with their solemn homage: "for their sakes therefore return thou on high." As when a judge travels at the assizes, all men take their cases to his court that they may be heard, so will the righteous gather to their Lord. Here he fortifies himself in prayer by pleading that if the Lord will mount the throne of judgment, multitudes of the saints would be blessed as well as himself. If I be too base to be remembered, yet, "for their sakes," for the love thou bearest to thy chosen people, come forth from thy secret pavilion, and sit in the gate dispensing justice among the people. When my suit includes the desires of all the righteous it shall surely speed, for, "shall not God avenge his own elect?"

Verse 8. If I am not mistaken, David has now seen in the eye of his mind the Lord ascending to his judgment-seat, and beholding him seated there in royal state, he draws near to him to urge his suit anew. In the last two verses he besought Jehovah to arise, and now that he is arisen, he prepares to mingle with "the congregation of the people" who compass the Lord about. The royal heralds proclaim the opening of the court with the solemn words, "The Lord shall judge the people." Our petitioner rises at once, and cries with earnestness and humility, "Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me." His hand is on an honest heart, and his cry is to a righteous Judge.

Verse 9. He sees a smile of complacency upon the face of the King, and in the name of all the assembled congregation he cries aloud, "Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just." Is not this the universal longing of the whole company of the elect? When shall we be delivered from the filthy conversation of these men of Sodom? When shall we escape from the filthiness of Mesech and the blackness of the tents of Kedar?

What a solemn and weighty truth is contained in the last sentence of the ninth verse! How deep is the divine knowledge!—"He trieth." How strict, how accurate, how intimate his search!—"he trieth the hearts," the secret thoughts, "and reins," the inward affections. "All things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Verse 10. The judge has heard the cause, has cleared the guiltless, and uttered his voice against the persecutors. Let us draw near, and learn the results of the great assize. Yonder is the slandered one with his harp in hand, hymning the
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Verse 11. "God judgeth the righteous," he hath not given thee up to be condemned by the lips of persecutors. Thine enemies cannot sit on God's throne, nor blot thy name out of his book. Let them alone, then, for God will find time for his revenge.

"God is angry with the wicked every day." He not only detests sin, but is angry with those who continue to indulge in it. We have no insensible and stolid God to deal with; he can be angry, nay, he is angry to-day and every day with you, ye ungodly and impenitent sinners. The best day that ever dawns on a sinner brings a curse with it. Sinners may have many feast days, but no safe days. From the beginning of the year even to its ending, there is not an hour in which God's oven is not hot, and burning in readiness for the wicked, who shall be as stubble.

Verse 12. "If he turn not, he will whet his sword." What blows are those which will be dealt by that long uplifted arm! God's sword has been sharpening upon the revolving stone of our daily wickedness, and if we will not repent, it will speedily cut us in pieces. Turn or burn is the sinner's only alternative. "He hath bent his bow and made it ready."

Verse 13. Even now the thirsty arrow longs to wet itself with the blood of the persecutor. The bow is bent, the aim is taken, the arrow is fitted to the string, and what, O sinner, if the arrow should be let fly at thee even now! Remember, God's arrows never miss the mark, and are, every one of them, "instruments of death." Judgment may tarry, but it will not come too late. The Greek proverb saith, "The mill of God grinds late, but grinds to powder."

Verse 14. In three graphic pictures we see the slanderer's history. A woman in travail furnishes the first metaphor. "He travaileth with iniquity." He is full of it, pained until he can carry it out, he longs to work his will, he is full of pangs
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until his evil intent is executed. "He hath conceived mischief." This is the original of his base design. The devil has had doings with him, and the virus of evil is in him. And now behold the progeny of this unhallowed conception. The child is worthy of its father, his name of old was, "the father of lies," and the birth doth not belie the parent, for he brought forth falsehood. Thus, one figure is carried out to perfection; the Psalmist now illustrates his meaning by another, taken from the stratagems of the hunter.

Verse 15. "He made a pit, and digged it." He was cunning in his plans, and industrious in his labours. He stooped to the dirty work of digging. He did not fear to soil his own hands, he was willing to work in a ditch if others might fall therein. What mean things men will do to wreak revenge on the godly. They hunt for good men, as if they were brute beasts; nay, they will not give them the fair chase afforded to the hare or the fox, but must secretly entrap them, because they can neither run them down nor shoot them down. Our enemies will not meet us to the face, for they fear us as much as they pretend to despise us. But let us look on to the end of the scene. The verse says, he "is fallen into the ditch which he made." Ah! there he is, let us laugh at his disappointment. Lo! he is himself the beast, he has hunted his own soul, and the chase has brought him a goodly victim. Aha, aha, so should it ever be. Come hither and make merry with this entrapped hunter, this biter who has bitten himself. Give him no pity, for it will be wasted on such a wretch. He is but rightly and richly rewarded by being paid in his own coin. He cast forth evil from his mouth, and it has fallen into his bosom. He has set his own house on fire with the torch which he lit to burn a neighbour. He sent forth a foul bird, and it has come back to its nest.

Verse 16. The rod which he lifted on high, has smitten his own back. He shot an arrow upward, and it has "returned upon his own head." He hurled a stone at another and it has "come down upon his own pate." Curses are like young chickens, they always come home to roost. Ashes always fly back in the face of him that throws them. "As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him." (Psalm 109:17.) How often has this been the case in the histories of both ancient and modern times. Men have burned their own fingers when they were hoping to brand their neighbour. And if this does not happen now, it will hereafter. The Lord has caused dogs to lick the blood of Ahab in the midst of the vineyard of Naboth. Sooner or later the evil deeds of persecutors have always leaped back into their arms. So it will be in the last great day, when Satan's fiery darts shall all be quivered in his own heart, and all his followers shall reap the harvest which they themselves have sown.
Verse 17. We conclude with the joyful contrast. In this all these Psalms are agreed; they all exhibit the blessedness of the righteous, and make its colours the more glowing by contrast with the miseries of the wicked. The bright jewel sparkles in a black foil. *Praise* is the occupation of the godly, their eternal work, and their present pleasure. *Singing* is the fitting embodiment for praise, and therefore do the saints make melody before the Lord Most High. The slandered one is now a singer: his harp was unstrung for a very little season, and now we leave him sweeping its harmonious chords, and flying on their music to the third heaven of adoring praise.

**EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS**

*Title.* "Shiggaion," though some have attempted to fix on it a reference to the moral aspect of the world as depicted in this Psalm, is in all probability to be taken as expressing the *nature of the composition*. It conveys the idea of something *erratic* ((Heb.), to wander) in the style; something not so calm as other Psalms; and hence Ewald suggests, that it might be rendered, "a confused ode," a Dithyramb. This characteristic of excitement in the style, and a kind of disorder in the sense, suits Habakkuk 3:1, the only other place where the word occurs. *Andrew A. Bonar.*

*Whole Psalm.* Whatever might be the occasion of the Psalm, the real subject seems to be the Messiah's appeal to God against the false accusations of his enemies; and the predictions which it contains of the final conversion of the whole world, and of the future judgment, are clear and explicit. *Samuel Horsley, LL.D.*, 1733-1806.

*Verse 1.* "O Lord, my God, in thee do I put my trust." This is the first instance in the Psalms where David addresses the Almighty by the united names Jehovah and my God. No more suitable words can be placed at the beginning of any act of prayer or praise. These names show the ground of the confidence afterward expressed. They "denote at once supreme reverence and the most endearing confidence. They convey a recognition of God's infinite perfections, and of his covenanted and gracious relations." *William S. Plumer.*

*Verse 2.* "Lest he tear my soul like a lion," etc. It is reported of tigers, that they enter into a rage upon the scent of fragrant spices; so do ungodly men at the blessed savour of godliness. I have read of some barbarous nations, who, when the sun shines hot upon them, they shoot up their arrows against it; so do wicked men at the light and heat of godliness. There is a natural antipathy between the spirits of godly men and the wicked. Genesis 3:15. "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed." *Jeremiah Burroughs*, 1660.
Verse 3. "O Lord, my God, if I have done this, if there be iniquity in my hands."

In the primitive times the people of God were then a people under great reproach. What strange things does Tertullian tell us they reproached them withal; as that in their meetings they made Thyestes suppers, who invited his brother to a supper, and presented him with a dish of his own flesh. They charged them with uncleanness because they met in the night (for they durst not meet in the day,) and said, they blew out the candles when they were together, and committed filthiness. They reproached them for ignorance, saying, they were all unlearned; and therefore the heathens in Tertullian's time used to paint the God of the Christians with an ass's head, and a book in his hand to signify that though they pretended learning, yet they were an unlearned, silly people, rude and ignorant. Bishop Jewel in his sermon upon Luke 11:5, cites this out of Tertullian, and applies it to his time:—"Do not our adversaries do the like," saith he, "at this day, against all those that profess the gospel of Christ? Oh, say they, who are they that favour this way? they are none but shoemakers, tailors, weavers, and such as were never at the university;" they are the bishop's own words. He cites likewise Tertullian a little after, saying, that the Christians were accounted the public enemies of the State. And Josephus tells us of Apollinaris, speaking concerning the Jews and Christians, that they were more foolish than any barbarian. And Paulus Fagius reports a story of an Egyptian, concerning the Christians, who said, "They were a gathering together of a most filthy, lecherous people;" and for the keeping of the Sabbath, he says, "they had a disease that was upon them, and they were fain to rest the seventh day because of that disease." And so in Augustine's time, he hath this expression, "Any one that begins to be godly, presently he must prepare to suffer reproach from the tongues of adversaries;" and this was their usual manner of reproach, "What shall we have of you, an Elias? a Jeremy?" And Nazianzen, in one of his orations says, "It is ordinary to reproach, that I cannot think to go free myself." And so Athanasius, they called him Sathanasius, because he was a special instrument against the Arians. And Cyprian, they called him Coprian, one that gathers up dung, as if all the excellent things that he had gathered in his works was but dung. Jeremiah Burroughs.

Verse 3. "If I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands." I deny not but you may, and ought to be sensible of the wrong done to your name, for as "a good name is a precious ointment" (Canticles 1:3), so to have an evil name is a great judgment; and therefore you ought not to be insensible of the wrong done to your name by slanders and reproaches, saying, "Let men speak of me what they please, I care not, so long as I know mine own innocency," for though the testimony of your own innocency be a ground of comfort unto you, yet your care must be not only to approve yourselves unto God, but also unto men, to be
as careful of your good names as possibly ye can; but yet you are not to manifest any distemper or passion upon the reproachful speeches of others against you. *Thomas Gouge*, 1660.

*Verse 3.* It is a sign that there is some good in thee if a wicked world abuse thee. "*Quid mali feci?*" said Socrates, what evil have I done that this bad man commends me? The applause of the wicked usually denotes some evil, and their censure imports some good. *Thomas Watson.*

*Verse 3.* "*If there be iniquity in my hands.*" Injustice is ascribed to the hand, not because injustice as always, though usually it be, done by the hand. With the hand men take away, and with that men detain the right of others. David speaks thus (1 Chronicles 12:17), "Seeing there is no wrong in mine hands;" that is, I have done no wrong. *Joseph Caryl.*

*Verses 3, 4.* A good conscience is a flowing spring of assurance. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." 2 Corinthians 1:12. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." 1 John 3:21. A good conscience has sure confidence. He who has it sits in the midst of all combustions and distractions, Noah-like, all sincerity and serenity, uprightness and boldness. What the probationer disciple said to our Saviour, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," that a good conscience says to the believing soul; I will stand by thee; I will strengthen thee; I will uphold thee; I will be a comfort to thee in life, and a friend to thee in death. "Though all should leave thee, yet will I never forsake thee," *Thomas Brooks.*

*Verse 4.* "*Yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy.*" Meaning Saul, whose life he twice preserved, once in Engedi, and again when he slept on the plain. *John Gill.*

*Verse 4.* "*If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me.*" To do evil for good, is human corruption; to do good for good, is civil retribution; but to good for evil, is Christian perfection. Though this be not the grace of nature, yet it is the nature of grace. *William Secker.*

*Verse 4.* Then is grace victorious, and then hath a man a noble and brave spirit, not when he is overcome by evil (for that argueth weakness), but when he can overcome evil. And it is God's way to shame the party that did the wrong, and to overcome him too; it is the best way to get the victory over him. When
David had Saul at an advantage in the cave, and cut off the lap of his garment, and did forbear any act of revenge against him, Saul was melted, and said to David, "Thou art more righteous than I." 1 Samuel 24:17. Though he had such a hostile mind against him, and chased and pursued him up and down, yet when David forbear revenge when it was in his power, it overcame him, and he falls a-weeping. Thomas Manton.

**Verse 5.** "Let him tread down my life upon the earth." The allusion here is to the manner in which the vanquished were often treated in battle, when they were rode over by horses, or trampled by men in the dust. The idea of David is, that if he was guilty he would be willing that his enemy should triumph over him, should subdue him, should treat him with the utmost indignity and scorn. Albert Barnes, in loc.

**Verse 5.** "Mine honour in the dust." When Achilles dragged the body of Hector in the dust around the walls of Troy, he did but carry out the usual manners of those barbarous ages. David dares in his conscious innocence to imprecate such an ignominious fate upon himself if indeed the accusation of the black Benjamite be true. He had need have a golden character who dares to challenge such an ordeal. C. H. S.

**Verse 6.** "The judgment which thou hast ordained." In the end of the verse he shows that he asks nothing but what is according to the appointment of God. And this is the rule which ought to be observed by us in our prayers; we should in everything conform our requests to the divine will, as John also instructs us. 1 John 4:14. And, indeed, we can never pray in faith unless we attend, in the first place, to what God commands, that our minds may not rashly and at random start aside in desiring more than we are permitted to desire and pray for. David, therefore, in order to pray aright, reposes himself on the word and promise of God; and the import of his exercise is this: Lord, I am not led by ambition, or foolish headstrong passion, or depraved desire, inconsiderately to ask from thee whatever is pleasing to my flesh; but it is the clear light of thy word which directs me, and upon it I securely depend. John Calvin.

**Verse 7.** "The congregation of the people:" either, 1. A great number of all sorts of people, who shall observe thy justice, and holiness, and goodness in pleading my righteous cause against my cruel and implacable oppressor. Or rather, 2. The whole body of thy people Israel, by whom both these Hebrew words are commonly ascribed in Holy Scripture. "Compass thee about;" they will, and I, as their king and ruler in thy stead, will take care that they shall come from all parts and meet together to worship thee, which in Saul's time they have grossly neglected, and been permitted to neglect, and to offer to thee praises and
sacrifices for thy favour to me, and for the manifold benefits which they shall enjoy by my means, and under my government. "For their sakes;" or, for its sake, i.e., for the sake of thy congregation, which now is woefully dissipated and oppressed, and has in a great measure lost all administration of justice, and exercise of religion. "Return thou on high," or, return to thy high place, i.e., to thy tribunal, to sit there and judge my cause. An allusion to earthly tribunals, which generally are set up on high above the people. 1 Kings 10:19. Matthew Poole, 1624-1679.

Verse 8. Believers! let not the terror of that day dispirit you when you meditate upon it; let those who have slighted the Judge, and continue enemies to him and the way of holiness, droop and hang down their heads when they think of his coming; but lift ye up your heads with joy, for the last day will be your best day. The Judge is your Head and Husband, your Redeemer, and your Advocate. Ye must appear before the judgment-seat; but ye shall not come into condemnation. His coming will not be against you, but for you. It is otherwise with unbelievers, a neglected Saviour will be a severe Judge. Thomas Boston, 1676-1732.

Verse 9. "The righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." As common experience shows that the workings of the mind, particularly the passions of joy, grief, and fear, have a very remarkable effect on the reins or kidneys. (See Proverbs 23:16; Psalm 73:21), so from their retired situation in the body, and their being hid in fat, they are often used to denote the most secret workings and affections of the soul. And to "see or examine the reins," is to see or examine those most secret thoughts or desires of the soul. John Parkhurst, 1762.

Verse 9 (last clause). "The righteous God trieth the hearts and reins."

"I that alone am infinite, can try 
How deep within itself thine heart doth lie.
Thy seamen's plummet can but reach the ground,
I find that which thine heart itself ne'er found.

Francis Quarles, 1592-1644.


Verse 10. "My defense is of God." Literally, "My shield is upon God," like Psalm 62:8, "My salvation is upon God." The idea may be taken from the
armour-bearer, ever ready at hand to give the needed weapon to the warrior.  
Andrew A. Bonar.

Verse 11. **"God judgeth the righteous,"** etc. Many learned disputes have arisen as to the meaning of this verse; and it must be confessed that its real import is by no means easily determined: without the words written in italics, which are not in the original, it will read thus, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry every day." The question still will be, is this a good rendering? To this question it may be replied, that there is strong evidence for a contrary one. AINSWORTH translates it, "God is a just judge; and God angrily threateneth every day." With this corresponds the reading of COVERDALE'S Bible, "God is a righteous judge, and God is ever threatening." In King Edward's Bible, of 1549, the reading is the same. But there is another class of critics who adopt quite a different view of the text, and apparently with much colour of argument. BISHOP HORSLEY read the verse, "God is a righteous judge, although he is not angry every day." In this rendering he seems to have followed most of the ancient versions. The VULGATE read it, "God is a judge, righteous, strong, and patient; will he be angry every day?" The SEPTUAGINT reads it, "God is a righteous judge, strong, and longsuffering; not bringing forth his anger every day." The SYRIAC has it, "God is the judge of righteousness; he is not angry every day." In this view of the text Dr. A. Clarke agrees, and expresses it as his opinion that the text was first corrupted by the CHALDEE. This learned divine proposes to restore the text thus, "(Heb.), al, the same letters, with the point pathach, signifies not." There is by this view of the original no repetition of the divine name in the verse, so that it will simply read, as thus restored, "God is a righteous judge, and is NOT angry every day." The text at large, as is intimated in the VULGATE, SEPTUAGINT, and some other ancient versions, conveys a strong intimation of the longsuffering of God, whose hatred of sin is unchangeable, but whose anger against transgressors is marked by infinite patience, and does not burst forth in vengeance every day. John Morrison, in "An Exposition of the Book of Psalms," 1829.

Verse 11. **"God is angry."** The original expression here is very forcible. The true idea of it appears to be, to froth or foam at the mouth with indignation. Richard Mant, D.D., 1824.

Verses 11, 12. God hath set up his royal standard in defiance of all the sons and daughters of apostate Adam, who from his own mouth are proclaimed rebels and traitors to his crown and dignity; and as against such he hath taken the field, as with fire and sword, to be avenged on them. Yea, he gives the world sufficient testimony of his incensed wrath, by that of it which is revealed from
heaven daily in the judgments executed upon sinners, and those many but of a span long, before they can show what nature they have by actual sin, yet crushed to death by God's righteous foot, only for the viperous kind of which they come. At every door where sin sets its foot, there the wrath of God meets us. Every faculty of soul, and member of body, are used as a weapon of unrighteousness against God; so every one hath its portion of wrath, even to the tip of the tongue. As man is sinful all over, so is he cursed all over. Inside and outside, soul and body, is written all with woes and curses, so close and full, that there is not room for another to interline, or add to what God hath written. William Gurnall.

Verses 11-13. The idea of God's righteousness must have possessed great vigour to render such a representation possible. There are some excellent remarks upon the ground of it in Luther, who, however, too much overlooks the fact, that the psalmist presents before his eyes this form of an angry and avenging God, primarily with the view of strengthening by its consideration his own hope, and pays too little regard to the distinction between the psalmist, who only indirectly teaches what he described as part of his own inward experience, and the prophet: "The prophet takes a lesson from a coarse human similitude, in order that he might inspire terror unto the ungodly. For he speaks against stupid and hardened people, who would not apprehend the reality of a divine judgment, of which he had just spoken; but they might possibly be brought to consider this by greater earnestness on the part of man. Now, the prophet is not satisfied with thinking of the sword, but adds thereto the bow; even this does not satisfy him, but he describes how it is already stretched, and aim is taken, and the arrows are applied to it as here follows. So hard, stiff-necked and unabashed are the ungodly, that however many threatenings may be urged against them, they will still remain unmoved. But in these words he forcibly describes how God's anger presses hard upon the ungodly, though they will never understand this until they actually experience it. It is also to be remarked here, that we have had so frightful a threatening and indignation against the ungodly in no Psalm before this; neither has the Spirit of God attacked them with so many words. Then in the following verses, he also recounts their plans and purposes, shows how these shall not be in vain, but shall return again upon their own head. So that it clearly and manifestly appears that to all those who suffer wrong and reproach, as a matter of consolation, that God hates such revilers and slanderers above all other characters. E. W. Hengstenberg, in loc., 1845.

Verse 12. "If he turn not," etc. How few do believe what a quarrel God hath with wicked men? And that not only with the loose, but the formal and
hypocritical also? If we did we would tremble as much to be among them as to be in a house that is falling; we would endeavour to "save" ourselves "from this untoward generation." The apostle would not so have adjured them, so charged, so entreated them, had he not known the danger of wicked company. "God is angry with the wicked every day;" his bow is bent, the arrows are on the string; the instruments for their ruin are all prepared. And is it safe to be there where the arrows of God are ready to fly about our ears? How was the apostle afraid to be in the bath with Cerinthus! "Depart," saith God by Moses, "from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, lest ye be consumed in all their sins." How have the baskets of good figs suffered with the bad? Is it not prejudicial to the gold to be with the dross? Lot had been ruined by his neighbourhood to the Sodomites if God had not wrought wonderfully for his deliverance. Will you put God to work miracles to save you from your ungodly company? It is dangerous being in the road with thieves whilst God's hue and cry of vengeance is at their backs. "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." The very beasts may instruct you to consult better for your security: the very deer are afraid of a wounded chased deer, and therefore for their preservation thrust him out of their company. Lewis Stuckley.

Verse 12. "If he turn not, he will whet his sword," etc. The whetting of the sword is but to give a keener edge that it may cut the deeper. God is silent as long as the sinner will let him; but when the sword is whet, it is to cut; and when the bow is bent, it is to kill; and woe be to that man who is the butt. William Secker.

Verse 13. "He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." It is said that God hath ordained his arrows against the persecutors; the word signifies such as burn in anger and malice against the godly; and the word translated ordained, signifies God hath wrought his arrows; he doth not shoot them at random, but he works them against the wicked. Illiricus hath a story which may well be a commentary upon this text in both the parts of it. One Felix, Earl of Wartenberg, one of the captains of the Emperor Charles V., swore in the presence of divers at supper, that before he died he would ride up to the spurs in the blood of the Lutherans. Here was one that burned in malice, but behold how God works his arrows against him; that very night the hand of God so struck him, that he was strangled and choked in his own blood; so he rode not, but bathed himself, not up to the spurs, but up to the throat, not in the blood of the Lutherans, but in his own blood before he died. Jeremiah Burroughs.
Verse 13. "He ordaineth his arrows," This might more exactly be rendered, "He maketh his arrows burning." This image would seem to be deduced from the use of fiery arrows. *John Kitto*, 1804-1854.

Verse 14. "Behold he travaileth with iniquity," etc. The words express the conception, birth, carriage and miscarriage, of a plot against David. In which you may consider:—(1.) What his enemies did. (2.) What God did. (3.) What we all should do: his enemies' intention, God's prevention, and our duty; his enemies' intention, *he travaileth with iniquity, and conceiveveth mischief*; God's prevention, *he brought forth a lie*; our duty, Behold. . . . . Observe the aggravation of the sin, *he conceiveveth*. He was not put upon it, or forced into it: it was voluntary. The more liberty we have not to sin, makes our sin the greater. He did not this in passion, but in cold blood. The less will, less sin. *Richard Sibbs*.

Verse 14. "He travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief." All note that conceiving is before travelling, but here travelling, as a woman in labour, goeth first; the reason whereof is, that the wicked are so hotly set upon the evil which they maliciously intend, that they would be immediately acting of it if they could tell how, even before they have conceived by what means; but in fine they bring forth but a lie, that is, they find that their own hearts lied to them, when they promised good success, but they had evil. For their haste to perpetrate mischief is intimated in the word rendered "persecutors" (verse 13), which properly signifieth ardentes, burning; that is, with a desire to do mischief—and this admits of no delay. A notable common-place, both setting forth the evil case of the wicked, especially attempting anything against the righteous, to move them to repentance—for thou hast God for thine enemy warring against thee, whose force thou canst not resist—and the greedy desire of the wicked to be evil, but their conception shall all prove abortive. *J. Mayer*, *in loc*.

Verse 14. "And hath brought forth falsehood." Every sin is a lie. *Augustine*.

Verse 14.

"Earth's entertainments are like those of Jael.  
Her left hand brings me milk, her right, a nail."

*Thomas Fuller*.

Verses 14, 15. "They have digged a pit for us"—and that low, unto hell—"and are fallen into it themselves."
"No juster law can be devised or made,
Than that sin's agents fall by their own trade."

The order of hell proceeds with the same degrees; though it give a greater portion, yet still a just proportion, of torment. These wretched guests were too busy with the waters of sin; behold, now they are in the depth of a pit, "where no water is." Dives, that wasted so many tuns of wine, cannot now procure water, not a pot of water, not a handful of water, not a drop of water, to cool his tongue. Desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam. (Augustine Hom. 7) A just recompense! He would not give a crumb; he shall not have a drop. Bread hath no smaller fragment than a crumb, water no less fraction than a drop. As he denied the least comfort to Lazarus living, so Lazarus shall not bring him the least comfort dead. Thus the pain for sin answers the pleasure of sin. . . . Thus damnable sins shall have semblable punishments; and as Augustine of the tongue, so we may say of any member. . . . If it will not serve God in action, it shall serve him in passion. Thomas Adams.

Verse 15. "He made a pit, and digged it." The practice of making pitfalls was anciantly not only employed for ensnaring wild beasts, but was also a stratagem used against men by the enemy, in time of war. The idea, therefore, refers to a man who, having made such a pit, whether for man or beast, and covered it over so as completely to disguise the danger, did himself inadvertently tread on his own trap, and fall into the pit he had prepared for another. Pictorial Bible.

Verse 16. That most witty of commentators, Old Master Trapp, tells the following notable anecdote, in illustration of this verse:—That was a very remarkable instance of Dr. Story, who, escaping out of prison in Queen Elizabeth's days, got to Antwerp, and there thinking himself out of the reach of God's rod, he got commission under the Duke of Alva to search all ships coming thither for English books. But one Parker, an English merchant, trading for Antwerp, laid his snare fair (saith our chronicler), to catch this foul bird, causing secret notice to be given to Story, that in his ship were stores of heretical books, with other intelligence that might stand him in stead. The Canonist conceiving that all was quite sure, hasted to the ship, where, with looks very big upon the poor mariners, each cabin, chest, and corner above-board were searched, and some things found to draw him further on: so that the hatches must be opened, which seemed to be unwillingly done, and great signs of fear were showed by their faces. This drew on the Doctor to descend into the hold, where now in the trap the mouse might well gnaw, but could not get out, for the hatches were down, and the sails hoisted up, which, with a merry gale, were blown into England, where ere long he was arraigned, and condemned of high treason, and accordingly executed at Tyburn, as he had well deserven.
Verse 16. The story of Phalaris's bull, invented for the torment of others, and serving afterwards for himself, is notorious in heathen story. . . . . It was a voluntary judgment which Archbishop Cranmer inflicted on himself when he thrust that very hand into the fire, and burnt it, with which he had signed to the popish articles, crying out, "Oh, my unworthy right hand!" but who will deny that the hand of the Almighty was also concerned in it? William Turner in "Divine Judgments by way of Retaliation", 1697.

Verse 17. To bless God for mercies is the way to increase them; to bless him for miseries is the way to remove them: no good lives so long as that which is thankfully improved; no evil dies so soon as that which is patiently endured. William Dyer.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The necessity of faith when we address ourselves to God. Show the worthlessness of prayer without trust in the Lord.

Verses 1, 2. Viewed as a prayer for deliverance from all enemies, especially Satan the lion.

Verse 3. Self-vindication before men. When possible, judicious, or serviceable. With remarks upon the spirit in which it should be attempted.

Verse 4. "The best revenge." Evil for good is devil-like, evil for evil is beast-like, good for good is man-like, good for evil is God-like.

Verse 6. How and in what sense divine anger may become the hope of the righteous.
   Fire fought by fire, or man's anger overcome by God's anger.

Verse 7. The congregation of the people."
   1. Who they are.
   2. Why they congregate together with one another.
   3. Where they congregate.
   4. Why they choose such a person to be the centre of their congregation.

Verse 7. The gathering of the saints around the Lord Jesus.

Verse 7 (last clause). The coming of Christ to judgment for the good of his saints.
Verse 8. The character of the Judge before whom we all must stand.

Verse 9 (first clause).

(1) By changing their hearts; or
(2) by restraining their wills,
(3) or depriving them of power,
(4) or removing them.

Show the times when, the reasons why, such a prayer should be offered, and how, in the first sense, we may labour for its accomplishment.

Verse 9. This verse contains two grand prayers, and a noble proof that the Lord can grant them.


Verse 9. "Establish the just." By what means and in what sense the just are established, or, the true established church.

Verse 9 (last clause). God's trial of men's hearts.

Verse 10. "Upright in heart." Explain the character.

Verse 10. The believer's trust in God, and God's care over him. Show the action of faith in procuring defence and protection, and of that defence upon our faith by strengthening it, etc.

Verse 11. The Judge, and the two persons upon their trial.

Verse 11 (second clause). God's present, daily, constant, and vehement anger, against the wicked.

Verse 12. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 106. "Turn or Burn."

None.

Verses 14, 15, 16. Illustrate by three figures the devices and defeat of persecutors.

Verse 17. The excellent duty of praise.
Verse 17. View the verse in connection with the subject of the Psalm, and show how the deliverance of the righteous, and the destruction of the wicked are themes for song.
Psalm 8

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. "To the Chief Musician upon Gittith, a Psalm of David." We are not clear upon the meaning of the word Gittith. Some think it refers to Gath, and may refer to a tune commonly sung there, or an instrument of music there invented, or a song of Obededom the Gittite, in whose house the ark rested, or, better still, a song sung over Goliath of Gath. Others, tracing the Hebrew to its root, conceive it to mean a song for the winepress, a joyful hymn for the treader of grapes. The term Gittith is applied to two other Psalms, (81 and 84) both of which, being of a joyous character, it may be concluded, that where we find that word in the title, we may look for a hymn of delight.

We may style this Psalm the Song of the Astronomer: let us go abroad and sing it beneath the starry heavens at eventide, for it is very probable that in such a position, it first occurred to the poet's mind. Dr. Chalmers says, "There is much in the scenery of a nocturnal sky; to lift the soul to pious contemplation. That moon, and these stars, what are they? They are detached from the world, and they lift us above it. We feel withdrawn from the earth, and rise in lofty abstraction from this little theatre of human passions and human anxieties. The mind abandons itself to reverie, and is transferred in the ecstasy of its thought to distant and unexplored regions. It sees nature in the simplicity of her great elements, and it sees the God of nature invested with the high attributes of wisdom and majesty."

DIVISION. The first and last verses are a sweet song of admiration, in which the excellence of the name of God is extolled. The intermediate verses are made up of holy wonder at the Lord's greatness in creation, and at his condescension towards man. Poole, in his annotations, has well said, "It is a great question among interpreters, whether this Psalm speaks of man in general, and of the honour which God puts upon him in his creation; or only of the man Christ Jesus. Possibly both may be reconciled and put together, and the controversy if rightly stated, may be ended, for the scope and business of this Psalm seems plainly to be this: to display and celebrate the great love and kindness of God to mankind, not only in his creation, but especially in his redemption by Jesus Christ, whom, as he was man, he advanced to the honour and dominion here mentioned, that he might carry on his great and glorious work. So Christ is the principal subject of this Psalm, and it is interpreted of him, both by our Lord himself (Matthew 21:16), and by his holy apostle (1 Corinthians 15:27; Hebrews 2:6,7).

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. Unable to express the glory of God, the Psalmist utters a note of exclamation. O Jehovah our Lord! We need not wonder at this, for no heart can measure, no tongue can utter, the half of the greatness of Jehovah. The whole creation is full of his glory and radiant with the excellency of his power; his goodness and his wisdom are manifested on every hand. The countless myriads of terrestrial beings, from man the head, to the creeping worm at the foot, are all supported and nourished by the Divine bounty. The solid fabric of the universe leans upon his eternal arm. Universally is he present, and everywhere is his name excellent. God worketh ever and everywhere. There is no place where God is not. The miracles of his power await us on all sides. Traverse the silent valleys where the rocks enclose you on either side, rising like the battlements of heaven till you can see but a strip of the blue sky far overhead;
you may be the only traveler who has passed through that glen; the bird may start up affrighted, and the moss may tremble beneath the first tread of human foot; but God is there in a thousand wonders, upholding yon rocky barriers, filling the flowercups with their perfume, and refreshing the lonely pines with the breath of his mouth. Descend, if you will, into the lowest depths of the ocean. where undisturbed the water sleeps, and the very sand is motionless in unbroken quiet, but the glory of the Lord is there, revealing its excellence in the silent palace of the sea. Borrow the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, but God is there. Mount to the highest heaven, or dive into the deepest hell, and God is in both hymned in everlasting song, or justified in terrible vengeance. Everywhere, and in every place, God dwells and is manifestly at work. Nor on earth alone is Jehovah extolled, for his brightness shines forth in the firmament above the earth. His glory exceeds the glory of the starry heavens; above the region of the stars he hath set fast his everlasting throne, and there he dwells in light ineffable. Let us adore him "who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south." (Job 9:8, 9.) We can scarcely find more fitting words than those of Nehemiah, "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." Returning to the text we are led to observe that this Psalm is addressed to God, because none but the Lord himself can fully know his own glory. The believing heart is ravished with what it sees, but God only knows the glory of God. What a sweetness lies in the little word our, how much is God's glory endeared to us when we consider our interest in him as our Lord. How excellent is thy name! no words can express that excellency; and therefore it is left as a note of exclamation. The very name of Jehovah is excellent, what must his person be. Note the fact that even the heavens cannot contain his glory, it is set above the heavens, since it is and ever must be too great for the creature to express. When wandering among the Alps, we felt that the Lord was infinitely greater than all his grandest works, and under that feeling we roughly wrote these few lines:—

Yet in all these how great soe'er they be,
We see not Him. The glass is all too dense
And dark, or else our earthborn eyes too dim.

Yon Alps, that lift their heads above the clouds
And hold familiar converse with the stars,
Are dust, at which the balance trembleth not,
Compared with His divine immensity.
The snow-crown'd summits fail to set Him forth,
Psalm 8

Who dwelleth in Eternity, and bears
Alone, the name of High and Lofty One.
Depths unfathomed are too shallow to express
The wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord.
The mirror of the creatures has no space
To bear the image of the Infinite.
'Tis true the Lord hath fairly writ his name,
And set his seal upon creation's brow.
But as the skilful potter much excels
The vessel which he fashions on the wheel,
E'en so, but in proportion greater far,
Jehovah's self transcends his noblest works.
Earth's ponderous wheels would break, her axles snap,
If freighted with the load of Deity.
Space is too narrow for the Eternal's rest,
And time too short a footstool for his throne.
E'en avalanche and thunder lack a voice,
To utter the full volume of his praise.
How then can I declare him? Where are words
With which my glowing tongue may speak his name?
Silent I bow, and humbly I adore.

Verse 2. Nor only in the heavens above is the Lord seen, but the earth beneath is telling forth his majesty. In the sky, the massive orbs, rolling in their stupendous grandeur, are witnesses of his power in great things, while here below, the lisping utterances of babes are the manifestations of his strength in little ones. How often will children tell us of a God whom we have forgotten! How doth their simple prattle refute those learned fools who deny the being of God! Many men have been made to hold their tongues, while sucklings have borne witness to the glory of the God of heaven. It is singular how clearly the history of the church expounds this verse. Did not the children cry "Hosannah!" in the temple, when proud Pharisees were silent and contemptuous? and did not the Saviour quote these very words as a justification of their infantile cries? Early church history records many amazing instances of the testimony of children for the truth of God, but perhaps more modern instances will be the most interesting. Fox tells us, in the Book of Martyrs, that when Mr. Lawrence was burnt in Colchester, he was carried to the fire in a chair, because through the cruelty of the Papists, he could not stand upright, several young children came about the fire, and cried as well as they could speak, "Lord, strengthen thy servant, and keep thy promise." God answered their prayer, for Mr. Lawrence died as firmly and calmly as any one could wish to breathe his last.
When one of the Popish chaplains told Mr. Wishart, the great Scotch martyr, that he had a devil in him, a child that stood by cried out, "A devil cannot speak such words as yonder man speaketh." One more instance is still nearer to our time. In a postscript to one of his letters, in which he details his persecution when first preaching in Moorfields, Whitfield says, "I cannot help adding that several little boys and girls, who were fond of sitting round me on the pulpit while I preached, and handed to me people's notes—though they were often pelted with eggs, dirt, &c., thrown at me—never once gave way; but on the contrary, every time I was struck, turned up their little weeping eyes, and seemed to wish they could receive the blows for me. God make them, in their growing years, great and living martyrs for him who, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, perfects praise!" He who delights in the songs of angels is pleased to honour himself in the eyes of his enemies by the praises of little children. What a contrast between the glory above the heavens, and the mouths of babes and sucklings! yet by both the name of God is made excellent.

Verses 3, 4. At the close of that excellent little manual entitled "The Solar System," written by Dr. Dick, we find an eloquent passage which beautifully expounds the text:—A survey of the solar system has a tendency to moderate the pride of man and to promote humility. Pride is one of the distinguishing characteristics of puny man, and has been one of the chief causes of all the contentions, wars, devastations, systems of slavery, and ambitious projects which have desolated and demoralized our sinful world. Yet there is no disposition more incongruous to the character and circumstances of man. Perhaps there are no rational beings throughout the universe among whom pride would appear more unseemly or incompatible than in man, considering the situation in which he is placed. He is exposed to numerous degradations and calamities, to the rage of storms and tempests, the devastations of earthquakes and volcanoes, the fury of whirlwinds, and the tempestuous billows of the ocean, to the ravages of the sword, famine, pestilence, and numerous diseases; and at length he must sink into the grave, and his body must become the companion of worms! The most dignified and haughty of the sons of men are liable to these and similar degradations as well as the meanest of the human family. Yet, in such circumstances, man—that puny worm of the dust, whose knowledge is so limited, and whose follies are so numerous and glaring—has the effrontery to strut in all the haughtiness of pride, and to glory in his shame.

When other arguments and motives produce little effect on certain minds, no considerations seem likely to have a more powerful tendency to counteract this deplorable propensity in human beings, than those which are borrowed from the objects connected with astronomy. They show us what an insignificant being—what a mere atom, indeed, man appears amidst the immensity of
creation! Though he is an object of the paternal care and mercy of the Most High, yet he is but as a grain of sand to the whole earth, when compared to the countless myriads of beings that people the amplitudes of creation. What is the whole of this globe on which we dwell compared with the solar system, which contains a mass of matter ten thousand times greater? What is it in comparison of the hundred millions of suns and worlds which by the telescope have been descried throughout the starry regions? What, then, is a kingdom, a province, or a baronial territory, of which we are as proud as if we were the lords of the universe and for which we engage in so much devastation and carnage? What are they, when set in competition with the glories of the sky? Could we take our station on the lofty pinnacles of heaven, and look down on this scarcely distinguishable speck of earth, we should be ready to exclaim with Seneca, "Is it to this little spot that the great designs and vast desires of men are confined? Is it for this there is so much disturbance of nations, so much carnage, and so many ruinous wars? Oh, the folly of deceived men, to imagine great kingdoms in the compass of an atom, to raise armies to decide a point of earth with the sword!" Dr. Chalmers, in his Astronomical Discourses, very truthfully says, "We gave you but a feeble image of our comparative insignificance, when we said that the glories of an extended forest would suffer no more from the fall of a single leaf, than the glories of this extended universe would suffer though the globe we tread upon, 'and all that it inherits, should dissolve.'"

Verses 5-8. These verses may set forth man's position among the creatures before he fell; but as they are, by the apostle Paul, appropriated to man as represented by the Lord Jesus, it is best to give most weight to that meaning. In order of dignity, man stood next to the angels, and a little lower than they; in the Lord Jesus this was accomplished, for he was made a little lower than the angels by the suffering of death. Man in Eden had the full command of all creatures, and they came before him to receive their names as an act of homage to him as the viceregent of God to them. Jesus in his glory, is now Lord, not only of all living, but of all created things, and, with the exception of him who put all things under him, Jesus is Lord of all, and his elect, in him, are raised to a dominion wider than that of the first Adam, as shall be more clearly seen at his coming. Well might the Psalmist wonder at the singular exaltation of man in the scale of being, when he marked his utter nothingness in comparison with the starry universe.

_Thou madest him a little lower than the angels—_a little lower in nature, since they are immortal, and but a little, because time is short; and when that is over, saints are no longer lower than the angels. The margin reads it, "A little while inferior to." Thou crownest him. The dominion that God has bestowed on man is a great glory and honour to him; for all dominion is honour, and the
highest is that which wears the crown. A full list is given of the subjugated creatures, to show that all the dominion lost by sin is restored in Christ Jesus. Let none of us permit the possession of any earthly creature to be a snare to us, but let us remember that we are to reign over them, and not to allow them to reign over us. Under our feet we must keep the world, and we must shun that base spirit which is content to let worldly cares and pleasures sway the empire of the immortal soul.

Verse 9. Here, like a good composer, the poet returns to his key-note, falling back, as it were, into his first state of wondering adoration. What he started with as a proposition in the first verse, he closes with as a well proven conclusion, with a sort of quod erat demonstrandum. O for grace to walk worthy of that excellent name which has been named upon us, and which we are pledged to magnify!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Title. "Gittith," was probably a musical instrument used at their rejoicings after the vintage. The vintage closed the civil year of the Jews, and this Psalm directs us to the latter-day glory, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, having subdued all his enemies. It is very evident that the vintage was adopted as a figurative representation of the final destruction of all God's enemies. Isaiah 63:1-6; Revelation 19:18-20. The ancient Jewish interpreters so understood this Psalm, and apply it to the mystic vintage. We may then consider this interesting composition as a prophetic anticipation of the kingdom of Christ, to be established in glory and honour in the "world to come," the habitable world. Hebrews 2:5. We see not yet all things put under his feet, but we are sure that the Word of God shall be fulfilled, and every enemy, Satan, death, and hell, shall be for ever subdued and destroyed, and creation itself delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Romans 8:17-23. In the use of this Psalm, then, we anticipate that victory, and in the praise we thus celebrate, we go on from strength to strength, till, with him who is our glorious Head, we appear in Zion before God. W. Wilson, D.D., in loc.

Whole Psalm. Now, consider but the scope of the Psalm, as the apostle quoteth it to prove the world to come. Hebrews 2. Any one that reads the Psalm would think that the psalmist doth but set forth old Adam in his kingdom, in his paradise, made a little lower than the angels—for we have spirits wrapped up in flesh and blood, whereas they are spirits simply—a degree lower, as if they were dukes, and we marquises; one would think, I say, that this were all his meaning, and that it is applied to Christ but by way of allusion. But the truth is, the apostle bringeth it in to prove and to convince these Hebrews, to whom he
wrote, that that Psalm was meant of Christ, of that man whom they expected to be the Messiah, the Man Christ Jesus. And that he doth it, I prove by the sixth verse—it is the observation that Beza hath—"One in a certain place," quoting David. (Greek) hath testified; so we may translate it, hath testified it, etiam atque etiam, testified most expressly; he bringeth an express proof for it that it was meant of the Man Christ Jesus; therefore it is not an allusion. And indeed it was Beza that did first begin that interpretation that I read of, and himself therefore doth excuse it and make an apology for it, that he diverteth out of the common road, though since many others have followed him.

Now the scope of the Psalm is plainly this: in Romans 5:14, you read that Adam was a type of him that was to come. Now in Psalm 8, you find there Adam's world, the type of a world to come; he was the first Adam, and had a world, so the second Adam hath a world also appointed for him; there is his oxen and his sheep, and the fowls of the air, whereby are meant other things, devils perhaps, and wicked men, the prince of the air; as by the heavens there; the angels, or the apostles, that were preachers of the gospel.

To make this plain to you, that that Psalm where the phrase is used, "All things under his feet," and quoted by the apostle in Ephesians 1:22—therefore it is proper—was not meant of man in innocency, but of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore, answerably, that the world there is not this world, but a world on purpose made for this Messiah, as the other was for Adam.

First, it was not meant of man in innocency properly and principally. Why? Because in the first verse he saith, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." There were no babes in the time of Adam's innocency, he fell before there were any. Secondly, he addeth, "That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger;" the devil that is, for he shewed himself the enemy there, to be a manslayer from the beginning. God would use man to still him; alas! he overcame Adam presently. It must be meant of another therefore, one that is able to still this enemy and avenger.

Then he saith, "How excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens." Adam had but paradise, he never propagated God's name over all the earth; he did not continue so long before he fell as to beget sons; much less did he found it in the heavens.

Again, verse 4, "What is man, and the son of man?" Adam, though he was man, yet he was not the son of man; he is called indeed, "the son of God" (Luke 3:38), but he was not filius hominis. I remember Ribera urgeth that.

But take an argument the apostle himself useth to prove it. This man, saith he, must have all subject to him; all but God, saith he; he must have the angels subject to him, for he hath put all principalities and powers under his feet, saith he. This could not be Adam, is could not be the man that had this world in a state of innocency; much less had Adam all under his feet. No, my brethren, it
was too great a vassalage for Adam to have the creatures thus bow to him. But they are thus to Jesus Christ, angels and all; they are all under his feet, he is far above them.

Secondly, it is not meant of man fallen, that is as plain; the apostle himself saith so. "We see not," saith he, "all things subject unto him." Some think that it is meant as an objection that the apostle answereth; but it is indeed to prove that man fallen cannot be meant in Psalm 8. Why? Because, saith he, we do not see anything, all things at least, subject unto him; you have not any one man, or the whole race of man, to whom all things have been subject; the creatures are sometimes injurious to him. We do not see him, saith he, that is, the nature of man in general considered. Take all the monarchs in the world, they never conquered the whole world; there was never any one man that was a sinner that had all subject to him. "But we see," saith he—mark the opposition—"but we see Jesus," that Man, "crowned with glory and honour;" therefore it is this Man, and no man else; the opposition implieth it." . . . . So now it remaineth, then, that it is only Christ, God-man, that is meant in Psalm 8. And indeed, and in truth, Christ himself interpreteth the Psalm of himself; you have two witnesses to confirm it, Christ himself and the apostle. Matthew 21:16. When they cried hosanna to Christ, or "save now," and made him Saviour of the world, the Pharisees were angry, our Saviour confuteth them by this very Psalm: "Have ye not read," saith he, "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" He quoteth this very Psalm which speaks of himself; and Paul, by his warrant, and perhaps from that hint, doth thus argue out of it, and convince the Jews by it. Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 1. "How excellent is thy name in all the earth!" How illustrious is the name of Jesus throughout the world! His incarnation, birth, humble and obscure life, preaching, miracles, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, are celebrated through the whole world. His religion, the gifts and graces of his Spirit, his people—Christians, his gospel, and the preachers of it, are everywhere spoken of. No name is so universal, no power and influence so generally felt, as those of the Saviour of mankind. Amen. Adam Clarke.

Verse 1. "Above the heavens;" not in the heavens, but "above the heavens;" even greater, beyond, and higher than they; "angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject unto him." As Paul says, he hath "ascended up far above all heavens." And with this his glory above the heavens is connected, his sending forth his name upon earth through his Holy Spirit. As the apostle adds in this passage, "He hath ascended up far above all heavens; and he gave some apostles." And thus here: "Thy name excellent in all the world;" "Thy glory above the heavens." Isaac Williams.
Verse 2. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength," etc. In a prophetical manner, speaking of that which was to be done by children many hundreds of years after, for the asserting of his infinite mercy in sending his Son Jesus Christ into the world to save us from our sins. For so the Lord applieth their crying, "Hosannah to the Son of David" in the temple. And thus both Basil and other ancients, and some new writers also understand it. But Calvin will have it meant of God's wonderful providing for them, by turning their mother's blood into milk, and giving them the faculty to suck, thus nourishing and preserving them, which sufficiently convinceth all gainsayers of God's wonderful providence toward the weakest and shiftless of all creatures. John Mayer, 1653.

Verse 2. Who are these "babes and sucklings?"

1. Man in general, who springeth from so weak and poor a beginning as that of babes and sucklings, yet is at length advanced to such power as to grapple with, and overcome the enemy and the avenger.

2. David in particular, who being but a ruddy youth, God used him as an instrument to discomfit Goliath of Gath.

3. More especially our Lord Jesus Christ, who assuming our nature and all the sinless infirmities of it, and submitting to the weakness of an infant, and after dying is gone in the same nature to reign in heaven, till he hath brought all his enemies under his feet. Psalm 110:1., and 1 Corinthians 15:27. Then was our human nature exalted above all other creatures, when the Son of God was made of a woman, carried in the womb.

4. The apostles, who to outward appearance were despicable, in a manner children and sucklings in comparison of the great ones of the world; poor despised creatures, yet principal instruments of God's service and glory. Therefore 'tis notable, that when Christ glorifieth his Father for the wise and free dispensation of his saving grace (Matthew 11:25), he saith, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," so called from the meanness of their condition. . . And you shall see it was spoken when the disciples were sent abroad and had power given them over unclean spirits. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." This he acknowledged to be an act of infinite condescension in God.

5. Those children that cried Hosannah to Christ, make up part of the sense, for Christ defendeth their practise by this Scripture. . . . .

6. Not only the apostles, but all those that fight under Christ's banner, and are listed into his confederacy, may be called babes and sucklings; first,
because of their condition; secondly, their disposition.

1. Because of their condition . . . . God in the government of the world is pleased to subdue the enemies of his kingdom by weak and despised instruments.

2. Because of their disposition: they are most humbly spirited. We are told (Matthew 18:3), "Except ye be converted and become as little children," etc. As if he had said, you strive for pre-eminence and worldly greatness in my kingdom; I tell you my kingdom is a kingdom of babes, and containeth none but the humble, and such as are little in their own eyes, and are contented to be small and despised in the eyes of others, and so do not seek after great matters in the world. A young child knoweth not what striving or state meaneth, and therefore by an emblem and visible representation of a child set in the midst of them, Christ would take them off from the expectation of a carnal kingdom.

Thomas Manton, 1620-1677.

Verse 2. "That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." This very confusion and revenge upon Satan, who was the cause of man's fall, was aimed at by God at first; therefore is the first promise and preaching of the gospel to Adam brought in rather in sentencing him than in speaking to Adam, that the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head, it being in God's aim as much to confound him as to save poor man. Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 2. The work that is done in love loses half its tedium and difficulty. It is as with a stone, which in the air and on the dry ground we strain at but cannot stir. Flood the field where it lies, bury the block beneath the rising water; and now, when its head is submerged, bend to the work. Put your strength to it. Ah! it moves, rises from its bed, rolls on before your arm. So, when under the heavenly influences of grace the tide of love rises, and goes swelling over our duties and difficulties, a child can do a man's work, and a man can do a giant's. Let love be present in the heart, and "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God ordaineth strength." Thomas Guthrie, D.D.

Verse 2. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," etc. That poor martyr, Alice Driver, in the presence of many hundreds, did so silence Popish bishops, that she and all blessed God that the proudest of them could not resist the spirit in a silly woman; so I say to thee, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings" God will be honoured. Even thou, silly worm, shalt honour him, when it shall appear what God hath done for thee, what lusts he hath mortified, and what graces he hath granted thee. The Lord can yet do greater things for thee if thou wilt trust him. He can carry thee upon eagles' wings, enable thee to bear and suffer strong affliction for him, to persevere to the end, to live by faith, and to finish thy course with joy. Oh! in that he hath made thee low in heart, thy other
lowness shall be so much the more honour to thee. Do not all as much and more wonder at God's rare workmanship in the ant, the poorest bug that creeps, as in the biggest elephant? That so many parts and limbs should be united in such a little space; that so poor a creature should provide in the summer-time her winter's food? Who sees not as much of God in a bee as in a greater creature? Alas! in a great body we look for great abilities and wonder not. Therefore, to conclude, seeing God hath clothed the uncomely parts with the more honour, bless God, and bear thy baseness more equally; thy greatest glory is yet to come, that when the wise of the world have rejected the counsel of God, thou hast (with those poor publicans and soldiers), magnified the ministry of the gospel. Surely the Lord will also be admired in thee (1 Thessalonians 1), a poor silly creature, that even thou wert made wise to salvation and believest in that day. Be still poor in thine own eyes, and the Lord will make thy proudest scornful enemies to worship at thy feet, to confess God hath done much for thee, and wish thy portion when God shall visit them. Daniel Rogers, 1642.

Verse 3. "When I consider." Meditation fits for humiliation. When David had been contemplating the works of creation, their splendour, harmony, motion, influence, he lets the plumes of pride fall, and begins to have self-abasing thoughts. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" Thomas Watson.

Verse 3. "When I consider thy heavens," etc. David surveying the firmament, broke forth into this consideration: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast created, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" etc. How cometh he to mention the moon and stars, and omit the sun? the other being but his pensioners, shining with that exhibition of light which the bounty of the sun allots them. It is answered, this was David's night meditation, when the sun, departing to the other world, left the lesser lights only visible in heaven; and as the sky is best surveyed by night in the variety of the same. Night was made for man to rest in. But when I cannot sleep, may I, with the psalmist, entertain my waking with good thoughts. Not to use them as opium, to invite my corrupt nature to slumber, but to bolt out bad thoughts, which otherwise would possess my soul. Thomas Fuller, 1608 - 1661.

Verse 3. "Thy heavens." The carnal mind sees God in nothing, not even in spiritual things, his word and ordinances. The spiritual mind sees him in everything, even in natural things, in looking on the heavens and the earth and all the creatures—"THY heavens;" sees all in that notion, in their relation to God as his work, and in them his glory appearing; stands in awe, fearing to abuse his creatures and his favours to his dishonour. "The day is thine, and the
night also is thine;" therefore ought not I to forget thee through the day, nor in the night. Robert Leighton, D.D.

Verse 3. "The stars." I cannot say that it is chiefly the contemplation of their infinitude, and the immeasurable space they occupy, that enraptures me in the stars. These conditions rather tend to confuse the mind; and in this view of countless numbers and unlimited space there lies, moreover, much that belongs rather to a temporary and human than to an eternally abiding consideration. Still less do I regard them absolutely with reference to the life after this. But the mere thought they are so far beyond and above everything terrestrial—the feeling, that before them everything earthly so utterly vanishes to nothing—that the single man is so infinitely insignificant in the comparison with these worlds strewn over all space—that his destinies, his enjoyments, and sacrifices, to which he attaches such a minute importance—how all these fade like nothing before such immense objects; then, that the constellations bind together all the races of man, and all the eras of earth, that they have beheld all that has passed since the beginning of time, and will see all that passes until its end; in thoughts like these I can always lose myself with a silent delight in the view of the starry firmament. It is, in very truth, a spectacle of the highest solemnity, when, in the stillness of night, in a heaven quite clear, the stars, like a choir of worlds, arise and descend, while existence, as it were, falls asunder into two separate parts; the one, belonging to earth, grows dumb in the utter silence of night, and thereupon the other mounts upward in all its elevation, splendour, and majesty. And, when contemplated from this point of view, the starry heavens have truly a moral influence on the mind. Alexander Von Humboldt, 1850.

Verse 3. "When I consider thy heavens," etc. Could we transport ourselves above the moon, could we reach the highest star above our heads, we should instantly discover new skies, new stars, new suns, new systems, and perhaps more magnificently adorned. But even there, the vast dominions of our great Creator would not terminate; we should then find, to our astonishment, that we had only arrived at the borders of the works of God. It is but little that we can know of his works, but that little should teach us to be humble, and to admire the divine power and goodness. How great must that Being be who produced these immense globes out of nothing, who regulates their courses, and whose mighty hand directs and supports them all! What is the clod of earth which we inhabit, with all the magnificent scenes it presents to us, in comparison of those innumerable worlds? Were this earth annihilated, its absence would no more be observed than that of a grain of sand from the sea shore. What then are provinces and kingdoms when compared with those worlds? They are but atoms dancing in the air, which are discovered to us by the sunbeams. What
then am I, when reckoned among the infinite number of God's creatures? I am lost in mine own nothingness! But little as I appear in this respect, I find myself great in others. There is great beauty in this starry firmament which God has chosen for his throne! How admirable are those celestial bodies! I am dazzled with their splendour, and enchanted with their beauty! But notwithstanding this, however beautiful, and however richly adorned, yet this sky is void of intelligence. It is a stranger to its own beauty, while I, who am mere clay, moulded by a divine hand, am endowed with sense and reason. I can contemplate the beauty of these shining worlds; nay, more, I am already, to a certain degree, acquainted with their sublime Author; and by faith I see some small rays of his divine glory. O may I be more and more acquainted with his works, and make the study of them my employ, till by a glorious change I rise to dwell with him above the starry regions. Christopher Christian Sturm's "Reflections", 1750-1786.

Verse 3. "Work of God's fingers." That is most elaborate and accurate: a metaphor from embroiderers, or from them that make tapestry. John Trapp.

Verse 3. "When I consider thy heavens," etc. It is truly a most Christian exercise to extract a sentiment of piety from the works and the appearance of nature. It has the authority of the sacred writers upon its side, and even our Saviour himself gives it the weight and the solemnity of his example. "Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet your heavenly Father careth for them." He expatiates on the beauty of a single flower, and draws from it the delightful argument of confidence in God. He gives us to see that taste may be combined with piety, and that the same heart may be occupied with all that is serious in the contemplation of religion, and be at the same time alive to the charms and the loveliness of nature. The psalmist takes a still loftier flight. He leaves the world, and lifts his imagination to that mighty expanse which spreads above it and around it. He wings his way through space, and wanders in thought over its immeasurable regions. Instead of a dark and unpeopled solitude, he sees it crowded with splendour, and filled with the energy of the divine presence. Creation rises in its immensity before him, and the world, with all which it inherits, shrinks into littleness at a contemplation so vast and overpowering. He wonders that he is not overlooked amid the granduer and the variety which are on every side of him; and, passing upward from the majesty of nature to the majesty of nature's Architect, he exclaims, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldest deign to visit him?" It is not for us to say whether inspiration revealed to the psalmist the wonders of modern astronomy. But, even though the mind be a perfect stranger to the science of these enlightened times, the
heavens present a great and an elevating spectacle, an immense concave
reposing upon the circular boundary of the world, and the innumerable lights
which are suspended from on high, moving with solemn regularity along its
surface. It seems to have been at night that the piety of the psalmist was
awakened by this contemplation; when the moon and the stars were visible, and
not when the sun had risen in his strength and thrown a splendour around him,
which bore down and eclipsed all the lesser glories of the firmament. Thomas
Chalmers, D.D., 1817.

Verse 3. "Thy heavens:"

This prospect vast, what is it?—weigh'd aright,
'Tis natures system of divinity,
And every student of the night inspires.
'Tis elder Scripture, writ by God's own hand:
Scripture authentic! uncorrupt by man.

Edward Young.

Verse 3. "The stars." When I gazed into these stars, have they not looked down
on me as if with pity from their serene spaces, like eyes glistening with
heavenly tears over the little lot of man! Thomas Carlyle.

Verses 3, 4. "When I consider the heavens," etc. Draw spiritual inferences from
occasional objects. David did but wisely consider the heavens, and he breaks
out into self-abasement and humble admiration of God. Glean matter of
instruction to yourselves, and praise to your Maker from everything you see; it
will be a degree of restoration to a state of innocency, since this was Adam's
task in paradise. Dwell not upon any created object only as a virtuoso, to gratify
your rational curiosity, but as a Christian, call religion to the feast, and make a
spiritual improvement. No creature can meet our eyes but affords us lessons
worthy of our thoughts, besides the general notices of the power and wisdom of
the Creator. Thus may the sheep read us a lesson of patience, the dove of
innocence, the ant and bee raise blushes in us for our sluggishness, and the
stupid ox and dull ass correct and shame our ungrateful ignorance. . . . . He
whose eyes are open cannot want an instructor, unless he wants a heart.
Stephen Charnock.

Verse 4. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" etc. My readers must be
careful to mark the design of the psalmist, which is to enhance, by this
comparison, the infinite goodness of God; for it is, indeed, a wonderful thing
that the Creator of heaven, whose glory is so surpassingly great as to ravish us
with the highest admiration, condescends so far as graciously to take upon him
the care of the human race. That the psalmist makes this contrast must be inferred from the Hebrew word (Heb.) enosh, which we have rendered man, and which expresses the frailty of man rather than any strength or power which he possesses. . . . Almost all interpreters render (Heb.), pakad, the last word of this verse, to visit; and I am unwilling to differ from them, since this sense suits the passage very well. But as it sometimes signifies to remember, and as we will often find in the Psalms the repetition of the same thought in different words, it may here be very properly translated to remember; as if David had said, "This is a marvelous thing, that God thinks upon men, and remembers them continually." John Calvin, 1509-1564.

Verse 4. "What is man?" But, O God, what a little lord hast thou made over this great world! The least corn of sand is not so small to the whole earth, as man is to the heaven. When I see the heavens, the sun, the moon, and stars, O God, what is man? Who would think that thou shouldest make all these creatures for one, and that one well-near the least of all? Yet none but he can see what thou hast done; none but he can admire and adore thee in what he seeth: how had he need to do nothing but this, since he alone must do it! Certainly the price and value of things consist not in the quantity; one diamond is worth more than many quarries of stone; one lodestone hath more virtue than mountains of earth. It is lawful for us to praise thee in ourselves. All thy creation hath not more wonder in it than one of us: other creatures thou madest by a simple command; MAN, not without a divine consultation: others at once; man thou didst form, then inspire: others in several shapes, like to none but themselves; man, after thine own image: others with qualities fit for service; man, for dominion. Man had his name from thee; they had their names from man. How should we be consecrated to thee above all others, since thou hast bestowed more cost on us than other! Joseph Hall, D.D., Bishop of Norwich, 1574-1656.

Verse 4. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou shouldst visit him?" And (Job 7:17, 18) "What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thy heart upon him? and that thou shouldst visit him every morning?" Man, in the pride of his heart, seeth no such great matter in it; but a humble soul is filled with astonishment. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15. Oh, saith the humble soul, will the Lord have respect unto such a vile worm as I am? Will the Lord acquaint himself with such a sinful wretch as I am? Will the Lord open his arms, his bosom, his heart to me? Shall such a loathsome creature as I find favour in his eyes? In Ezekiel 16: 1 - 5, we have a
relation of the wonderful condescension of God to man, who is there resembled to a wretched infant cast out in the day of its birth, in its blood and filthiness, no eye pitying it; such loathsome creatures are we before God; and yet when he passed by, and saw us polluted in our blood, he said unto us, "Live." It is doubled because of the strength of its nature; it was "the time of love" (verse 8). This was love indeed, that God should take a filthy, wretched thing, and spread his skirts over it, and cover its nakedness and swear unto it, and enter into a covenant with it, and make it his: that is, that he should espouse this loathsome thing to himself, that he would be a husband to it; this is love unfathomable, love inconceivable, self-principle love; this is the love of God to man, for God is love. Oh, the depth of the riches of the bounty and goodness of God! How is his love wonderful, and his grace past finding out! How do you find and feel your hearts affected upon the report of these things? Do you not see matter of admiration and cause of wonder? Are you not as it were launched forth into an ocean of goodness, where you can see no shore, nor feel no bottom? Ye may make a judgment of yourselves by the motions and affections that ye feel in yourselves at the mention of this. For thus Christ judged of the faith of the centurion that said unto him, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof. When Jesus heard this, he marvelled, and said to them that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Matthew 8: 8-10. If, then, you feel not your souls mightily affected with this condescension of God, say thus unto your souls, What aileth thee, O my soul, that thou art no more affected with the goodness of God? Art thou dead, that thou canst not feel? Or art thou blind, that thou canst not see thyself compassed about with astonishing goodness? Behold the King of glory descending from the habitation of his majesty, and coming to visit thee! Hearest not thou his voice, saying, "Open to me, my sister: behold, I stand at the door and knock. Lift up yourselves, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in"? Behold, O my soul, how he waits still, while thou hast refused to open to him! Oh, the wonder of his goodness! Oh, the condescension of his love, to visit me, to sue unto me, to wait upon me, to be acquainted with me! Thus work up your souls into an astonishment at the condescension of God. James Janeway, 1674.

Verse 4. Man in Hebrew—infirm or miserable man—by which it is apparent that he speaks of man not according to the state of his creation, but as fallen into a state of sin, and misery, and mortality. Art mindful of him, i.e., carest for him, and conferrest such high favours upon him. The son of man, Hebrew, the son of Adam, that great apostate from and rebel against God; the sinful son of a sinful father—his son by likeness of disposition and manners, no less than by procreation; all which tends to magnify the divine mercy. That thou visitest,
him—not in anger, as that word is sometimes used, but with thy grace and mercy, as it is taken in Genesis 21:1; Exodus 4:31; Psalm 65:9; 106:4; 144:3.

Verse 4. "What is man?" The Scripture gives many answers to this question. Ask the prophet Isaiah, "What is man?" and he answers (Isaiah 40:6), man is "grass"—"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." Ask David, "What is man?" He answers (Psalm 62:9), man is "a lie," not a liar only, or a deceiver, but "a lie," and a deceit. All the answers the Holy Ghost gives concerning man, are to humble man: man is ready to flatter himself, and one man to flatter another, but God tells us plainly what we are. . . . It is a wonder that God should vouchsafe a gracious look upon such a creature as man; it is wonderful, considering the distance between God and man, as man is a creature and God the creator. "What is man," that God should take notice of him? Is he not a clod of earth, a piece of clay? But consider him as a sinful and an unclean creature, and we may wonder to amazement: what is an unclean creature that God should magnify him? Will the Lord indeed put value on filthiness, and fix his approving eye upon an impure thing? One step further; what is rebellious man, man an enemy to God, that God should magnify him! what admiration can answer this question? Will God prefer his enemies, and magnify those who would cast him down? Will a prince exalt a traitor, or give him honour who attempts to take away his life? The sinful nature of man is an enemy to the nature of God, and would pull God out of heaven; yet God even at that time is raising man to heaven: sin would lessen the great God, and yet God greatens sinful man. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 4. "What is man?" Oh, the granduer and littleness, the excellence and the corruption, the majesty and meanness of man! Pascal, 1623-1662.

Verse 4. "Thou visitest him." To visit is, first, to afflict, to chasten, yea, to punish; the highest judgments in Scripture come under the notions of visitations. "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (Exodus 34:7), that is, punishing them. . . . And it is a common speech with us when a house hath the plague, which is one of the highest strokes of temporal affliction, we used to say, "Such a house is visited." Observe then, afflictions are visitations. . . . Secondly, to visit, in a good sense, signifies to show mercy, and to refresh, to deliver and to bless; "Naomi heard how the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread." Ruth 1:6. "The Lord visited Sarah," etc. Genesis 21:1, 2. That greatest mercy and deliverance that ever the children of men had, is thus expressed, "The Lord hath visited and redeemed his people." Luke 1:68. Mercies are visitations; when God comes in kindness and love to do us good, he visiteth us. And these mercies are called visitations in two respects: 1. Because God comes near to us when he doth us good; mercy is a drawing
near to a soul, a drawing near to a place. As when God sends a judgment, or
afflicts, he is said to depart and go away from that place; so when he doth us
good, he comes near, and as it were applies himself in favour to our persons
and habitations. 2. They are called a visitation because of the freeness of them.
A visit is one of the freest things in the world; there is no obligation but that of
love to make a visit; because such a man is my friend and I love him, therefore
I visit him. Hence that greatest act of free grace in redeeming the world is
called a visitation, because it was as freely done as ever any friend made a visit
to see his friend, and with infinite more freedom. There was no obligation on
man's side at all, many unkindnesses and neglects there were; God in love came
to redeem man. Thirdly, to visit imports an act of care and inspection, of
tutorage and direction. The pastor's office over the flock is expressed by this act
(Zechariah 10:3; Acts 15:36); and the care we ought to have of the fatherless
and widows is expressed by visiting them. "Pure religion," saith the apostle
James, "Is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (Chapter
1:27); and in Matthew 25:34, Christ pronounceth the blessing on them who,
when he was in prison, visited him, which was not a bare seeing, or asking
'how do you,' but it was care of Christ in his imprisonment, and helpfulness and
 provision for him in his afflicted members. That sense also agrees well with
this place, Job 7:17, 18, "What is man, that thou shouldst visit him?" Joseph
Caryl.

Verse 4. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that
thou visiteth him?"

Lord, what is man that thou
So mindful art of him? Or what's the son
Of man, that thou the highest heaven didst bow,
And to his aide didst runne?

Man's but a piece of clay
That's animated by thy heavenly breath,
And when that breath thou tak'st away,
Hee's clay again by death.
He is not worthy of the least
Of all Thy mercies at the best.

Baser than clay is he,
For sin hath made him like the beasts that perish,
Though next the angels he was in degree;
Yet this beast thou dost cherish.
Hee is not worthy of the least,
Of all thy mercies, hee's a beast.

Worse than a beast is man,
Who after thine own image made at first,
Became the divel's sonne by sin. And can
A thing be more accurst?
Yet thou thy greatest mercy hast
On this accursed creature cast.

Thou didst thyself abase,
And put off all thy robes of majesty,
Taking his nature to give him thy grace,
To save his life didst dye.
He is not worthy of the least
Of all thy mercies; one's a feast.

Lo! man is made now even
With the blest angels, yea, superiour farre,
Since Christ sat down at God's right hand in heaven,
And God and man one are.
Thus all thy mercies man inherits,
Though not the least of them he merits.

Thomas Washbourne, D.D., 1654.

Verse 4. "What is man?"

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is man!
How passing wonder HE who made him such!
Who centred in our make such strange extremes!
From different natures marvelously mix'd,
Connexion exquisite of distant worlds!
Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!
Midway from nothing to the Deity!
A beam ethereal, sullied and absorb'd,
Though sullied and dishonour'd, still divine!
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!
Helpless, immortal! insect infinite!
A worm! a god! I tremble at myself,
And in myself am lost.
Edward Young, 1681-1775.

(Verses 4-8)—"What is man," etc.:

—Man is ev'ry thing,
And more: he is a tree, yet bears no fruit;
A beast, yet is, or should be more:
Reason and speech we onely bring.
Parrats may thank us, if they are not mute,
They go upon the score.

Man is all symmetric,
Full of proportions, one limbe to another,
And all to all the world besides:
Each part may call the farthest, brother.
For head with foot hath private amitie,
And both with moons and tides.

Nothing hath got so farre,
But man hath caught and kept it, as his prey.
His eyes dismount the highest starre:
He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Finde their acquaintance there.

For us the windes do blow;
The earth doth rest, heav'n move, and fountains flow.
Nothing we see, but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure:
The whole is, either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The starres have us to bed:
Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws:
Musick and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kinde
In their descent and being; to our minde
In their ascent and cause.

Each thing is full of dutie:
Waters united are our navigation;
Distinguished, our habitation;
Below, our drink; above, our meat:
Both are our cleansiness. Hath one such beautie?
Then how are all things neat!

More servants wait on man,
Than he'l take notice of; in ev'ry path
He treads down that which doth befriend him,
When sickness makes him pale and wan,
Oh, mightie love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.
George Herbert, 1593.

Verse 5. "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." Perhaps it was not so much in nature as in position that man, as first formed, was inferior to the angels. At all events, we can be sure that nothing higher could be affirmed of the angels, than that they were made in the image of God. If, then, they had originally superiority over man, it must have been in the degree of resemblance. The angel was made immortal, intellectual, holy, powerful, glorious, and in these properties lay their likeness to the Creator. But were not these properties given also to man? Was not man made immortal, intellectual, holy, powerful, glorious? And if the angel excelled the man, it was not, we may believe, in the possession of properties which had no counterpart in the man; both bore God's image, and both therefore had lineaments of the attributes which centre in Deity. Whether or not these lineaments were more strongly marked in the angels than in man, it were presumptuous to attempt to decide; but it is sufficient for our present purpose that the same properties must have been common to both, since both were modelled after the same divine image; and whatever originally the relative positions of the angel and the man, we cannot question that since the fall man had been fearfully inferior to the angels. The effect of transgression has been to debase all his powers, and so bring him down from his high rank in the scale of creation; but, however degraded and sunken, he still retains the capacities of his original formation, and since these capacities could have differed in nothing but degree from the capacities of the angel, it must be clear that they may be so purged and enlarged as to produce, if we may not say to restore, the equality. . . . Oh! it may be, we again say, that an erroneous estimate is formed, when we separate by an immense space the angel and the man, and bring down the human race to a low station in the scale of creation. If I search through the records of science, I may indeed find that, for the furtherance of magnificent purposes, God hath made man "a little lower than the angels;" and I cannot close my eyes to the melancholy fact, that as a
consequence upon apostasy there has been a weakening and a rifling of those splendid endowments which Adam might have transmitted unimpaired to his children. And yet the Bible teems with notices, that so far from being by nature higher than men, angels even now possess not an importance which belongs to our race. It is a mysterious thing, and one to which we scarcely dare allude, that there has arisen a Redeemer of fallen men, but not of fallen angels. We would build no theory on so awful and inscrutable a truth; but is it too much to say, that the interference on the behalf of man and the non-interference on the behalf of angels, gives ground for the persuasion, that men occupy at least not a lower place than angels in the love and the solicitude of their Maker? Beside, are not angels represented as "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?" And what is the idea conveyed by such a representation, if it be not that believers, being attended and waited on by angels, are as children of God marching forwards to a splendid throne, and so elevated amongst creatures, that those who have the wind in their wings, and are brilliant as a flame of fire, delight to do them honour? And, moreover, does not the repentance of a single sinner minister gladness to a whole throng of angels? And who shall say that this sending of a new wave of rapture throughout the hierarchy of heaven does not betoken such immense sympathy with men as goes far towards proving him the occupant of an immense space in the scale of existence? We may add, also, that angels learn of men; inasmuch as Paul declares to the Ephesians, that "now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." And when we further remember, that in one of those august visions with which the Evangelist John was favoured, he beheld the representatives of the church placed immediately before the eternal throne, whilst angels, standing at a greater distance, thronged the outer circle, we seem to have accumulated proof that men are not to be considered as naturally inferior to angels—that however they may have cast themselves down from eminence, and sullied the lustre and sapped the strength of their first estate, they are still capable of the very loftiest elevation, and require nothing but the being restored to their forfeited position, and the obtaining room for the development of their powers, in order to their shining forth as the illustrious ones of the creation, the breathing, burning images of the Godhead. . . . The Redeemer is represented as submitting to be humbled—"made a little lower than the angels," for the sake or with a view to the glory that was to be the recompense of his sufferings. This is a very important representation—one that should be most attentively considered; and from it may be drawn, we think, a strong and clear argument for the divinity of Christ.

We could never see how it could be humility in any creature, whatever the dignity of his condition, to assume the office of a Mediator and to work out our
reconciliation. We do not forget to how extreme degradation a Mediator must consent to be reduced, and through what suffering and ignominy he could alone achieve our redemption; but neither do we forget the unmeasured exaltation which was to be the Mediator's reward, and which, if Scripture be true, was to make him far higher than the highest of principalities and powers; and we know not where would have been the amazing humility, where the unparalleled condescension, had any mere creature consented to take the office on the prospect of such a recompense. A being who knew that he should be immeasurably elevated if he did a certain thing, can hardly be commended for the greatness of his humility in doing that thing. The nobleman who should become a slave, knowing that in consequence he should be made a king, does not seem to us to afford any pattern of condescension. He must be the king already, incapable of obtaining any accession to his greatness, ere his entering the state of slavery can furnish an example of humility. And, in like manner, we can never perceive that any being but a divine Being can justly be said to have given a model of condescension in becoming our Redeemer. . . . If he could not lay aside the perfections, he could lay aside the glories of Deity; without ceasing to be God he could appear to be man; and herein we believe was the humiliation—herein that self-emptying which Scripture identifies with out Lord's having been "made a little lower than the angels." In place of manifesting himself in the form of God, and thereby centering on himself the delighted and reverential regards of all unfallen orders of intelligence, he must conceal himself in the form of a servant, and no longer gathering that rich tribute of homage, which had flowed from every quarter of his unlimited empire, produced by his power, sustained by his providence, he had the same essential glory, the same real dignity, which he had ever had. These belonged necessarily to his nature, and could no more be parted with, even for a time, than could that nature itself. But every outward mark of majesty and of greatness might be laid aside; and Deity, in place of coming down with such dazzling manifestations of supremacy as would have compelled the world he visited to fall prostrate and adore, might so veil his splendours, and so hide himself in an ignoble form, that when men saw him there should be no "beauty that they should desire him." And this was what Christ did, in consenting to be "made a little lower than the angels;" and in doing this he emptied himself, or "made himself of no reputation." The very being who in the form of God had given its light and magnificence to heaven appeared upon earth in the form of a servant; and not merely so—for every creature is God's servant, and therefore the form of a servant would have been assumed, had he appeared as an angel or an archangel—but in the form of the lowest of these servants, being "made in the likeness of men"—of men the degraded, the apostate, the perishing. Henry Melvill, B.D., 1854.
Verses 5, 6. God magnifies man in the work of creation. The third verse shows us what it was that raised the psalmist to this admiration of the goodness of God to man: "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; Lord, what is man?" God in the work of creation made all these things serviceable and instrumental for the good of man. What is man, that he should have a sun, moon, and stars, planted in the firmament for him? What creature is this? When great preparations are made in any place, much provisions laid in, and the house adorned with richest furnitures, we say, "What is this man that comes to such a house?" When such a goodly fabric was raised up, the goodly house of the world adorned and furnished, we have reason admiringly to say, What is this man that must be the tenant or inhabitant of this house? There is yet a higher exaltation of man in the creation; man was magnified with the stamp of God's image, one part whereof the psalmist describes in the sixth verse, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet," etc. Thus man was magnified in creation. What was man that he should have the rule of the world given him? That he should be lord over the fish of the sea, and over the beasts of the field, and over the fowls of the air? Again, man was magnified in creation, in that God set him in the next degree to the angels; "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels;" there is the first part of the answer to this question, man was magnified in being made so excellent a creature, and in having so many excellent creatures made for him. All which may be understood of man as created in God's image; but since the transgression it is peculiar to Christ, as the apostle applies it (Hebrews 2:6), and if those who have their blood and dignity restored by the work of redemption, which is the next part of man's exaltation. Joseph Caryl.

Verses 5-8. Augustine having allegorized much about the wine-presses in the title of this Psalm, upon these words, "What is man, or the son of man," the one being called (Heb.), from misery, the other (Heb.), the Son of Adam, or man, saith, that by the first is meant man in the state of sin and corruption; by the other, man regenerated by grace, yet called the son of man because made more excellent by the change of his mind and life, from old corruption to newness, and from an old to a new man; whereas he that is still carnal is miserable; and then ascending from the body to the head, Christ, he extols his glory as being set over all things, even the angels, and heavens, and the whole world as is elsewhere showed that he is. Ephesians 1:21. And then leaving the highest things he descended to "sheep and oxen;" whereby we may understand sanctified men and preachers, for to sheep are the faithful often compared, and preachers to oxen. 1 Corinthians 9. "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." "The beasts of the field" set forth the voluptuous that
live at large, going in the broad way: *the fowls of the air,* the *lifted up by pride:* 
*"the fishes of the sea,"* such as through a covetous desire of riches pierce into 
the lower parts of the earth, as the fishes dive to the bottom of the sea. And 
because men pass the sea again and again for riches, he addeth, *"that passeth 
through the way of the sea,"* and to that of diving to the bottom of the waters 
may be applied (1 Timothy 6:9), *"They that will be rich, fall into many 
oisome lusts, that drown the soul in perdition."* And hereby seem to be set 
forth the three things of the world of which it is said, *"they that love them, the 
love of the Father is not in them."* *"The lust of the heart"* being sensuality; *"the 
lust of the eyes,"* covetousness; to which is added, *"the pride of life."* Above all 
these Christ was set, because without all sin; neither could any of the devil's 
three temptations, which may be referred hereunto, prevail with him. And all 
these, as well as *"sheep and oxen,"* are in the church, for which it is said, that 
into the ark came all manner of beasts, both clean and unclean, and fowls; and 
all manner of fishes, good and bad, came into the net, as it is in the parable. All 
which I have set down, as of which good use may be made by the discreet 
reader. **John Mayer.**

**Verse 6.** *"Thou hast put all things under his feet."* Hermodius, a nobleman born, 
upbraided the valiant captain Iphicrates for that he was but a shoemaker's son. 
"My blood," saith Iphicrates, *"taketh beginning at me; and thy blood, at thee 
now taketh her farewell;"* intimating that he, not honouring his house with the 
glory of his virtues, as the house had honoured him with the title of nobility, 
was but as a wooden knife put into an empty sheath to fill up the place; but for 
himself, he by his valorous achievements was now beginning to be the raiser of 
his family. Thus, in the matter of spirituality, he is the best gentleman that is the 
best Christian. The men of Berea, who received the word with all readiness, 
were more noble than those of Thessalonica. The burgesses of God's city be not 
of base lineage, but truly noble; they boast not of their generation, but their 
regeneration, which is far better; for, by their second birth they are the sons of 
God, and the church is their mother, and Christ their elder brother, the Holy 
Ghost their tutor, angels their attendants, and all other creatures their subjects, 
the whole world their inn, and heaven their home. **John Spencer's "Things New 
and Old."**

**Verse 6.** *"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands,"* etc. 
For thy help against wandering thoughts in prayer. . . . . . labour to keep thy 
distance to the world, and that sovereignty which God hath given thee over it in 
its profits and pleasures, or whatever else may prove a snare to thee. While the 
father and master know their place, and keep their distance, so long children 
and servants will keep theirs by being dutiful and officious; but when they
Psalm 8

Verses 7, 8. He who rules over the material world, is Lord also of the intellectual or spiritual creation represented thereby. The souls of the faithful, lowly and harmless, are the sheep of his pasture; those who, like oxen, are strong to labour in the church, and who, expounding the Word of Life, tread out the corn for the nourishment of the people, own him for their kind and beneficent Master; nay, tempers fierce and intractable as the beasts of the desert, are yet subject to his will; spirits of the angelic kind, that, like the birds of the air, traverse freely the superior region, move at his command; and those evil ones whose habitation is in the deep abyss, even to the great leviathan himself, all are put under the feet of King Messiah. George Horne, D.D.

Verse 8. Every dish of fish and fowl that come to our table, is an instance of this dominion man has over the works of God's hands, and it is a reason of our subjection to God our chief Lord, and to his dominion over us.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. "O Lord, our Lord." Personal appropriation of the Lord as ours. The privilege of holding such a portion.

"How excellent", etc. The excellence of the name and nature of God in all places, and under all circumstances.

Sermon or lecture upon the glory of God in creation and providence.

"In all the earth." The universal revelation of God in nature and its excellency.

"Thy glory above the heavens." The incomprehensible and infinite glory of God.

"Above the heavens." The glory of God outsoaring the intellect of angels, and the splendour of heaven.

Verse 2. Infant piety, its possibility, potency, "strength," and influence, "that thou mightest still," etc.

The strength of the gospel not the result of eloquence or wisdom in the
speaker.
  Great results from small causes when the Lord ordains to work.
  Great things which can be said and claimed by babes in grace.
  The stilling of the powers of evil by the testimony of feeble believers.
  The stilling of the Great Enemy by the conquests of grace.

Verse 4. Man's insignificance. God's mindfulness of man. Divine visits. The question, "What is man?" Each of these themes may suffice for a discourse, or they may be handled in one sermon.

Verse 5. Man's relation to the angels.
  The position Jesus assumed for our sakes.
  Manhood's crown—the glory of our nature in the person of the Lord Jesus.

Verses 5, 6, 7, 8. The universal providential dominion of our Lord Jesus.

Verse 6. Man's rights and responsibilities towards the lower animals.

Verse 6. Man's dominion over the lower animals, and how he should exercise it.

Verse 6 (second clause). The proper place for all worldly things, "under his feet."

Verse 9. The wanderer in many climes enjoying the sweetness of his Lord's name in every condition.
TITLE. To the Chief Musician upon Muth-labben, a Psalm of David. The meaning of this title is very doubtful. It may refer to the tune to which the Psalm was to be sung, so Wilcocks and others think; or it may refer to a musical instrument now unknown, but common in those days; or it may have a reference to Ben, who is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 15:18, as one of the Levitical singers. If either of these conjectures should be correct, the title of Muth-Labben has no teaching for us, except it is meant to show us how careful David was that in the worship of God, all things should be done according to due order. From a considerable company of learned witnesses we gather that the title will bear a meaning far more instructive, without being fancily forced: it signifies a Psalm concerning the death of the Son. The Chaldee has, "concerning the death of the Champion who went out between the camps," referring to Goliath of Gath, or some other Philistine, on account of whose death many suppose this Psalm to have been written in after years by David. Believing that out of a thousand guesses this is at least as consistent with the sense of the Psalm as any other, we prefer it; and the more especially so because it enables us to refer it mystically to the victory of the Son of God over the champion of evil, even to enemy of souls (verse 6). We have here before us most evidently a triumphal hymn; may it strengthen the faith of the militant believer and stimulate the courage of the timid saint, as he sees here THE CONQUEROR, on whose vesture and thigh is the name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

ORDER. Bonar remarks, "The position of the Psalms in their relation to each other is often remarkable. It is questioned whether the present arrangement of them was the order to which they were given forth to Israel, or whether some later compiler, perhaps Ezra, was inspired to attend to this matter, as well as to other points connected with the canon. Without attempting to decide this point, it is enough to remark that we have proof that the order of the Psalms is as ancient as the completing of the canon, and if so, it seems obvious that the Holy Spirit wished this book to come down to us in its present order. We make these remarks, in order to invite attention to the fact, that as the eighth caught up the last line of the seventh, this ninth Psalm opens with an apparent reference to the eighth:

"I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee. (Compare Song 1:4; Revelation 19:7) I will sing to THY NAME, O thou Most High." Verses 1, 2.

As if "The Name," so highly praised in the former Psalm, were still ringing in the ear of the sweet singer of Israel. And in verse 10, he returns to it, celebrating their confidence who "know" that "name" as if its fragrance still breathed in the atmosphere around.

DIVISION. The strain so continually changes, that it is difficult to give an outline of it methodically arranged: we give the best we can make. From verses 1 to 6 is a song of jubilant thanksgiving; from 7 to 12, there is a continued declaration of faith as to the future. Prayer closes the first great division of the Psalm in verses 13 and 14. The second portion of this triumphal ode, although much shorter, is parallel in all its parts to the first portion, and is a sort of rehearsal of it. Observe the song for past judgments, verses 15, 16; the declaration of trust in future justice, 17, 18; and the closing prayer, 19, 20. Let us celebrate the conquests of the Redeemer as we read this Psalm, and it cannot but be a delightful task if the Holy Ghost be with us.
EXPOSITION

Verse 1. With a holy resolution the songster begins his hymn: *I will praise thee, O Lord.* It sometimes needs all our determination to face the foe, and bless the Lord in the teeth of his enemies; vowing that whoever else may be silent we will bless his name; here, however, the overthrow of the foe is viewed as complete, and the song flows with sacred fulness of delight. It is our duty to praise the Lord; let us perform it as a privilege. Observe that David's praise is all given to the Lord. Praise is to be offered to God alone; we may be grateful to the intermediate agent, but our thanks must have long wings and mount aloft to heaven. *With my whole heart.* Half heart is no heart. *I will show forth.* There is true praise to the thankful telling forth to others of our heavenly Father's dealings with us; this is one of the themes upon which the godly should speak often to one another, and it will not be casting pearls before swine if we make even the ungodly hear of the loving-kindness of the Lord to us. *All thy marvellous works.* Gratitude for one mercy refreshes the memory as to thousands of others. One silver link in the chain draws up a long series of tender remembrances. Here is eternal work for us, for there can be no end to the showing forth of *all* his deeds of love. If we consider our own sinfulness and nothingness, we must feel that every work of preservation, forgiveness, conversion, deliverance, sanctification, etc., which the Lord has wrought for us, or in us is a *marvellous* work. Even in heaven, divine loving-kindness will doubtless be as much a theme of surprise as of rapture.

Verse 2. Gladness and joy are the appropriate spirit in which to praise the goodness of the Lord. Birds extol the Creator in notes of overflowing joy, the cattle low forth his praise with tumult of happiness, and the fish leap up in his worship with excess of delight. Moloch may be worshipped with shrieks of pain, and Juggernaut may be honoured by dying groans and inhuman yells, but he whose name is Love is best pleased with the holy mirth, and sanctified gladness of his people. Daily rejoicing is an ornament to the Christian character, and a suitable robe for God's choristers to wear. God loveth a *cheerful* giver, whether it be the gold of his purse or the gold of his mouth which he presents upon his altar. *I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.* Songs are the fitting expression of inward thankfulness, and it were well if we indulge ourselves and honoured our Lord with more of them. Mr. B. P. Power has well said, "The sailors give a cheery cry as they weigh anchor, the ploughman whistles in the morning as he drives his team; the milkmaid sings her rustic song as she sets about her early task; when soldiers are leaving friends behind them, they do not march out to the tune of the 'Dead March in Saul,' but to the quick notes of some lively air. A praising spirit would do for us all that their songs and music do for them; and if only we could determine to
praise the Lord, we should surmount many a difficulty which our low spirits
never would have been equal to, and we should do double the work which can
be done if the heart be languid in its beating, if we be crushed and trodden
down in soul. As the evil spirit in Saul yielded in olden time to the influence of
the harp of the son of Jesse, so would the spirit of melancholy often take flight
from us, if only we would take up the song of praise.

Verse 3. God's presence is evermore sufficient to work the defeat of our most
furious foes, and their ruin is so complete when the Lord takes them in hand,
that even flight cannot save them, they fall to rise no more when he pursues
them. We must be careful, like David, to give all the glory to him whose
presence gives the victory. If we have here the exultings of our conquering
Captain, let us make the triumphs of the Redeemer the triumphs of the
redeemed, and rejoice with him at the total discomfiture of all his foes.

Verse 4. One of our nobility has for his motto, "I will maintain it;" but the
Christian has a better and more humble one, "Thou hast maintained it." "God
and my right," are united by my faith: while God lives my right shall never be
taken from me. If we seek to maintain the cause and honour of our Lord we
may suffer reproach and misrepresentation, but it is a rich comfort to remember
that he who sits on the throne knows our hearts, and will not leave us to the
ignorant and ungenerous judgment of erring man.

Verse 5. God rebukes before he destroys, but when he once comes to blows
with the wicked he ceases not until he has dashed them in pieces so small that
their very name is forgotten, and like a noisome snuff their remembrance is put
out for ever and ever. How often the word "thou" occurs in this and the former
verse, to show us that the grateful strain mounts up directly to the Lord as doth
the smoke from the altar when the air is still. My soul send up all the music of
all thy powers to him who has been and is thy sure deliverance.

Verse 6. Here the Psalmist exults over the fallen foe. He bends as it were, over
his prostrate form, and insults his once vaunted strength. He plucks the
boaster's song out of his mouth, and sings it for him in derision. After this
fashion doth our Glorious Redeemer ask of death, "Where is thy sting?" and of
the grave, "Where is thy victory?" The spoiler is spoiled, and he who made
captive is led into captivity himself. Let the daughters of Jerusalem go forth to
meet their King, and praise him with timbrel and harp.

In the light of the past the future is not doubtful. Since the same Almighty God
fills the throne of power, we can with unhesitating confidence, exult in our
security for all time to come.
Verse 7. The enduring existence and unchanging dominion of our Jehovah, are the firm foundations of our joy. The enemy and his destructions shall come to a perpetual end, but God and his throne shall endure for ever. The eternity of divine sovereignty yields unfailing consolation. By the throne being prepared for judgment, are we not to understand the swiftness of divine justice. In heaven's court suitors are not worn out with long delays. Term-time lasts all the year round in the court of King's Bench above. Thousands may come at once to the throne of the Judge of all the earth, but neither plaintiff nor defendant shall have to complain that he is not prepared to give their cause a fair hearing.

Verse 8. Whatever earthly courts may do, heaven's throne ministers judgment in uprightness. Partiality and respect of persons are things unknown in the dealings of the Holy One of Israel. How the prospect of appearing before the impartial tribunal of the Great King should act as a check to us when tempted to sin, and as a comfort when we are slandered or oppressed.

Verse 9. He who gives no quarter to the wicked in the day of judgment, is the defence and refuge of his saints in the day of trouble. There are many forms of oppression; both from man and from Satan oppression comes to us; and for all its forms, a refuge is provided in the Lord Jehovah. There were cities of refuge under the law, God is our refuge-city under the gospel. As the ships when vexed with tempest make for harbour, so do the oppressed hasten to the wings of a just and gracious God. He is a high tower so impregnable, that the hosts of hell cannot carry it by storm, and from its lofty heights faith looks down with scorn upon her enemies.

Verse 10. Ignorance is worst when it amounts to ignorance of God, and knowledge is best when it exercises itself upon the name of God. This most excellent knowledge leads to the most excellent grace of faith. O, to learn more of the attributes and character of God. Unbelief, that hooting nightbird, cannot live in the light of divine knowledge, it flies before the sun of God's great and gracious name. If we read this verse literally, there is, no doubt, a glorious fulness of assurance in the names of God. We have recounted them in the "Hints for Preachers," and would direct the reader's attention to them. By knowing his name is also meant an experimental acquaintance with the attributes of God, which are every one of them anchors to hold the soul from drifting in seasons of peril. The Lord may hide his face for a season from his people, but he never has utterly, finally, really, or angrily forsaken them that seek him. Let the poor seekers draw comfort from this fact, and let the finders rejoice yet more exceedingly, for what must be the Lord's faithfulness to those who find if he is so gracious to those who seek.
"O hope of every contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall how kind thou art,
How good to those who seek.

"But what to those who find, ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show
The love of Jesus what it is,
None but his loved ones know."

Verse 11. Being full of gratitude himself, our inspired author is eager to excite others to join the strain, and praise God in the same manner as he himself vowed to do in the first and second verses. The heavenly spirit of praise is gloriously contagious, and he that hath it is never content unless he can excite all who surround him to unite in his sweet employ. Singing and preaching, as means of glorifying God, are here joined together, and it is remarkable that, connected with all revivals of gospel ministry, there has been a sudden outburst of the spirit of song. Luther's Psalms and Hymns were in all men's mouths, and in the modern revival under Wesley and Whitefield, the strains of Charles Wesley, Cennick, Berridge, Toplady, Hart, Newton, and many others, were the outgrowth of restored piety. The singing of the birds of praise fitly accompanies the return of the gracious spring of divine visitation through the proclamation of the truth. Sing on brethren, and preach on, and these shall both be a token that the Lord still dwelleth in Zion. It will be well for us when coming up to Zion, to remember that the Lord dwells among his saints, and is to be had in peculiar reverence of all those that are about him.

Verse 12. When an inquest is held concerning the blood of the oppressed, the martyred saints will have the first remembrance; he will avenge his own elect. Those saints who are living shall also be heard; they shall be exonerated from blame, and kept from destruction, even when the Lord's most terrible work is going on; the man with the inkhorn by his side shall mark them all for safety, before the slaihmen are permitted to smite the Lord's enemies. The humble cry of the poorest saints shall neither be drowned by the voice of the thundering justice nor by the shrieks of the condemned.

Verse 13. Memories of the past and confidences concerning the future conducted the man of God to the mercy seat to plead for the needs of the present. Between praising and praying he divided all his time. How could he have spent it more profitably? His first prayer is one suitable for all persons and occasions, it breathes a humble spirit, indicates self-knowledge, appeals to the proper attributes, and to the fitting person. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord.* Just
as Luther used to call some texts little bibles, so we may call this sentence a little prayer-book; for it has in it the soul and marrow of prayer. It is multum in parvo, and like the angelic sword turns every way. The ladder looks to be short, but it reaches from earth to heaven.

What a noble title is here given to the Most High. *Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death!* What a glorious lift! In sickness, in sin, in despair, in temptation, we have been brought very low, and the gloomy portal has seemed as if it would open to imprison us, but, underneath us were the everlasting arms, and, therefore, we have been uplifted even to the gates of heaven. Trapp quaintly says, "He commonly reserveth his hand for a dead lift, and rescueth those who were even talking of their graves."

Verse 14. We must not overlook David's object in desiring mercy, it is God's glory: "*that I may show forth all thy praise.*" Saints are not so selfish as to look only to self; they desire mercy's diamond that they may let others see it flash and sparkle, and may admire Him who gives such priceless gems to his beloved. The contrast between the gates of death and the gates of the New Jerusalem is very striking; let our songs be excited to the highest and most rapturous pitch by the double consideration of whence we are taken, and to what we have been advanced, and let our prayers for mercy be made more energetic and agonizing by a sense of the grace which such a salvation implies. When David speaks of his showing forth *all* God's praise, he means that, in his deliverance grace in all its heights and depths would be magnified. Just as our hymn puts it:—

"O the length and breadth of love!  
Jesus, Saviour, can it be?  
All thy mercy's height I prove,  
All the depth is seen in me.

Here ends the first part of this instructive Psalm, and in pausing awhile we feel bound to confess that our exposition has only flitted over its surface and has not dugged into the depths. The verses are singularly full of teaching, and if the Holy Spirit shall bless the reader, he may go over this Psalm, as the writer has done scores of times, and see on each occasion fresh beauties.

Verse 15. In considering this terrible picture of the Lord's overwhelming judgments of his enemies, we are called upon to ponder and meditate upon it with deep seriousness by the two untranslated words, Higgaion, Selah. Meditate, pause. Consider, and tune your instrument. Bethink yourselves and solemnly adjust your hearts to the solemnity which is so well becoming the
subject. Let us in a humble spirit approach these verses, and notice, first, that the character of God requires the punishment of sin.

Verse 16. *Jehovah is known by the judgment which he executeth;* his holiness and abhorrence of sin is thus displayed. A ruler who winked at evil would soon be known by all his subjects to be evil himself, and he, on the other hand, who is severely just in judgment reveals his own nature thereby. So long as our God is God, he will not, he cannot spare the guilty; except through that one glorious way in which he is just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. We must notice, secondly, that the manner of his judgment is singularly wise, and indisputably just. He makes the wicked become their own executioners. "The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made," etc. Like cunning hunters they prepared a pitfall for the godly and fell into it themselves: the foot of the victim escaped their crafty snares, but the toils surrounded themselves: the cruel snare was laboriously manufactured, and it proved its efficacy by snaring its own maker. Persecutors and oppressors are often ruined by their own malicious projects. "Drunkards kill themselves; prodigals beggar themselves;" the contentious are involved in ruinous costs; the vicious are devoured with fierce diseases; the envious eat their own hearts; and blasphemers curse their own souls. Thus, men may read their sin in their punishment. They sowed the seed of sin, and the ripe fruit of damnation is the natural result.

Verse 17. The justice which has punished the wicked, and preserved the righteous, remains the same, and therefore in days to come, retribution will surely be meted out. How solemn is the seventeenth verse, especially in its warning to forgetters of God. The moral who are not devout, the honest who are not prayerful, the benevolent who are not believing, the amiable who are not converted, these must all have their own portion with the openly wicked in the hell which is prepared for the devil and his angels. There are whole nations of such; the forgetters of God are far more numerous than the profane or profligate, and according to the very forceful expression of the Hebrew, the nethermost hell will be the place into which all of them shall be hurled headlong. Forgetfulness seems a small sin, but it brings eternal wrath upon the man who lives and dies in it.

Verse 18. Mercy is as ready to her work as ever justice can be. Needy souls fear that they are forgotten; well, if it be so, let them rejoice that they *shall not alway* be so. Satan tells poor tremblers that their hope shall perish, but they have here the divine assurance that *their expectation shall not perish for ever.* "The Lord's people are a humbled people, afflicted, emptied, sensible of need, driven to a daily attendance on God, daily begging of him, and living upon the
hope of what is promised;" such persons may have to wait, but they shall find that they do not wait in vain.

Verse 19. Prayers are the believer's weapons of war. When the battle is too hard for us, we call in our great ally, who, as it were, lies in ambush until faith gives the signal by crying out, "Arise, O Lord." Although our cause be all but lost, it shall be soon won again, if the Almighty doth but bestir himself. He will not suffer man to prevail over God, but with swift judgments will confound their gloryings. In the very sight of God the wicked will be punished, and he who is now all tenderness will have no bowels of compassion for them, since they had no tears of repentance while their day of grace endured.

Verse 20. One would think that men would not grow so vain as to deny themselves to be but men, but it appears to be a lesson which only a divine schoolmaster can teach to some proud spirits. Crowns leave their wearers but men, degrees of eminent learning make their owners not more than men, valour and conquest cannot elevate beyond the dead level of "but men;" and all the wealth of Croesus, the wisdom of Solon, the power of Alexander, the eloquence of Demosthenes, if added together, would leave the possessor but a man. May we ever remember this lest like those in the text, we should be put in fear.

Before leaving this Psalm, it will be very profitable if the student will peruse it again as the triumphal hymn of the Redeemer, as he devoutly brings the glory of his victories and lays it down at his Father's feet. Let us joy in his joy, and our joy shall be full.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. We are to consider this song of praise, as I conceive, to be the language of our great Advocate and Mediator, "in the midst of the church giving thanks unto God," and teaching us to anticipate by faith his great and final victory over all the adversaries of our peace temporal and spiritual, with especial reference to his assertion of his royal dignity on Zion, his holy mountain. The victory over the enemy, we find by the fourth verse, is again ascribed to the decision of divine justice, and the award of a righteous judge, who has at length resumed his tribunal. This renders it certain, that the claim preferred to the throne of the Almighty, could proceed from the lips of none but our MELCHIZEDEC. John Fry, B.A., 1842.

Verse 1. "I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart." As a vessel by the scent thereof tells what liquour is in it, so should our mouths smell continually of
that mercy wherewith our hearts have been refreshed: for we are called vessels of mercy. William Cowper, 1612.

Verse 1. "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, I will shew forth all thy marvellous works." The words "With my whole heart," serve at once to show the greatness of the deliverance wrought for the psalmist, and to distinguish him from the hypocrites—the coarser, who praise the Lord for his goodness merely with the lips; and the more refined, who praise him with just half their heart, while they secretly ascribe the deliverance more to themselves than to him. "All thy wonders," the marvellous tokens of thy grace. The psalmist shows by this term, he recognized them in all their greatness. Where this is done, there the Lord is also praised with the whole heart. Half-heartedness, and the depreciation of divine grace, go hand in hand. The (Heb.) is the (Heb.) instrum. The heart is the instrument of praise, the mouth only its organ. E. W. Hengstenberg.

Verse 1 (second clause). When we have received any special good thing from the Lord, it is well, according as we have opportunities, to tell others of it. When the woman who had lost one of her ten pieces of silver, found the missing portion of her money, she gathered her neighbours and her friends together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost." We may do the same; we may tell friends and relations that we have received such-and-such a blessing, and that we trace it directly to the hand of God. Why have we not already done this? Is there a lurking unbelief as to whether it really came from God; or are we ashamed to own it before those who are perhaps accustomed to laugh at such things? Who knows so much of the marvellous works of God as his own people; if they be silent, how can we expect the world to see what he has done? Let us not be ashamed to glorify God, by telling what we know and feel he has done; let us watch our opportunity to bring out distinctly the fact of his acting; let us feel delighted at having an opportunity, from our own experience, of telling what must turn to his praise; and them that honour God, God will honour in turn; if we be willing to talk of his deeds, he will give us enough to talk about. P. B. Power, in 'I Wills' of the Psalms.

Verses 1, 2. "I will confess unto thee, O Lord, with my whole heart," etc. Behold with what a flood of the most sweet affections he says that he "will confess," "show forth," "rejoice," "be glad," and "sing," being filled with ecstasy! He does not simply say, "I will confess," but, "with my heart," and "with my whole heart." Nor does he propose to speak simply of "works," but of the "marvellous works" of God, and of "all" those "works." Thus his spirit (like John in the womb) exults and rejoices in God his Saviour, who has done great things for him, and those marvellous things which follow. In which words are
open the subject of this Psalm: that is, that he therein sings the marvellous works of God. And these works are wonderful, because he converts, by those who are nothing, those who have all things, and, by the ALMUTH who live in hidden faith, and are dead to the world, he humbles those who flourish in glory, and are looked upon in the world. Thus accomplishing such mighty things without force, without arms, without labour, by the cross only and blood. But how will his saying, that he will show forth "all" his marvellous works, agree with that of Job 9:10, "which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number"? For, who can show forth all the marvellous works of God? We may say, therefore, that these things are spoken in that excess of feeling in which he said, (Psalm 6:6), "I will water my couch with my tears." That is, he hath such an ardent desire to speak of the wonderful works of God, that, as far as his wishes are concerned, he would set the "all" forth, though he could not do it, for love has neither bounds nor end: and, as Paul saith (1 Corinthians 13:7), "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things;" hence it can do all things, and does do all things, for God looketh at the heart and spirit. Martin Luther.

Verse 3. "When mine enemies are turned back," etc. Were turned back, repulsed, and put to flight. To render this in the present time, as our translators did, is certainly improper; it destroys the coherence, and introduces obscurity. Ainsworth saw this, and rendered in the past, "When mine enemies turned backward." "At thy presence." That is, by thine anger. For as God's presence or face denotes his favour to such as fear and serve him, so it denotes his anger towards the wicked. "The face of Jehovah is against them that do evil." B. Boothroyd, 1824.

Verse 3. "They shall fall and perish." It refers to those that either faint in a march, or are wounded in a battle, or especially that in flight meet with galling haps in their way, and so are galled and lamed, rendered unable to go forward, and so fall, and become liable to all the chances of pursuits, and as here, are overtaken and perish in the fall. Henry Hammond, D.D.

Verse 5. "Thou hast rebuked the heathen," etc.— Augustine applieth all this mystically, as is intimated (verse 1) that it should be applied, for, "I will speak," saith he, "of all thy wonderful works;" and what so wonderful as the turning of the spiritual enemy backward, whether the devil, as when he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan;" or the old man, which is turned backward when he is put off, and the new man put on? John Mayer.

Verse 8. "He shall judge the world in righteousness." 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 nor one idle word (not repented of in the 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, or
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. "He shall judge the world in righteousness." Even Paul, in his great
address on Mars' Hill, a thousand years after, could find no better words in
which to teach the Athenians the doctrine of the judgment-day than the
Septuagint rendering of this clause. William S. Plumer.

Verse 8. The guilty conscience cannot abide this day. The silly sheep, when she
is taken, will not bleat, but you may carry her and do what you will with her,
and she will be subject; but the swine, if she be once taken, she will roar and
cry, and thinks she is never taken but to be slain. So of all things the guilty
conscience cannot abide to hear of this day, for they know that when they hear
of it, they hear of their own condemnation. I think if there were a general
collection made through the whole world that there might be no judgment-day,
then God would be so rich that the world would go a-begging and be a waste
wilderness. Then the covetous judge would bring forth his bribes; then the
crafty lawyer would fetch out his bags; the usurer would give his gain, and a
double thereof. But all the money in the world will not serve for our sin, but the
judge must answer his bribes, he that hath money must answer how he came by
it, and just condemnation must come upon every soul of them; then shall the
sinner be ever dying and never dead, like the salamander, that is ever in the fire
and never consumed. Henry Smith.

Verse 9. It is reported of the Egyptians that, living in the fens, and being vexed
with gnats, they used to sleep in high towers, whereby, those creatures not
being able to soar so high, they are delivered from the biting of them: so would
it be with us when bitten with cares and fear, did we but run to God for refuge,
and rest confident of his help. John Trapp.

Verse 10. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." Faith is an
intelligent grace; though there can be knowledge without faith, yet there can be
no faith without knowledge. One calls it quicksighted faith. Knowledge must
carry the torch before faith. 2 Timothy 1:12. "For I know whom I have believed." As in Paul's conversion a light from heaven "Shined round about him" (Acts 9:3), so before faith be wrought, God shines in with a light upon the understanding. A blind faith is as bad as a dead faith: that eye may as well be said to be a good eye which is without sight, as that faith is good without knowledge. Devout ignorance damns; which condemns the church of Rome, that thinks it a piece of their religion to be kept in ignorance; these set up an altar to an unknown God. They say ignorance is the mother of devotion; but sure where the sun is set in the understanding, it must needs be night in the affections. So necessary is knowledge to the being of faith, that the Scriptures do sometimes baptise faith with the name of knowledge. Isaiah 53:11. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Knowledge is put there for faith. Thomas Watson.

Verse 10. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for, thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." The mother of unbelief is ignorance of God, his faithfulness, mercy, and power. They that know thee, will trust in thee. This confirmed Paul, Abraham, Sarah, in the faith. "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." 2 Timothy 1:12. "He is faithful that promised," and "able also to perform." Hebrews 10:23, and 11:11; Romans 4:21. The free promises of the Lord are all certain, his commandments right and good, the recompense of reward inestimably to be valued above thousands of gold and silver; trust therefore in the Lord, O my soul, and follow hard after him. Thou hast his free promise, who never failed, who hath promised more than possibly thou couldst ask or think, who hath done more for thee than ever he promised, who is good and bountiful to the wicked and ungodly; thou dost his work, who is able and assuredly will bear thee out. There is a crown of glory proposed to thee above all conceit of merit; stick fast unto his word, and suffer nothing to divide thee from it. Rest upon his promises though he seem to kill thee; cleave unto his statutes though the flesh lust, the world allure, the devil tempt, by flatteries or threatenings to the contrary. John Ball, 1632.

Verse 10. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." They can do no otherwise who savingly know God's sweet attributes, and noble acts for his people. We never trust a man till we know him, and bad men are better known than trusted. Not so the Lord; for where his name is ointment poured forth, the virgins love him, fear him, rejoice in him, and repose upon him. John Trapp.

Verse 12. "When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them." There is a time when God will make inquisition for innocent blood. The Hebrew word doresh, from darash, that is here rendered inquisition, signifies not barely to
seek, to search, and enquire with all diligence and care imaginable. Oh, there is a time a-coming when the Lord will make a very diligent and careful search and enquiry after all the innocent blood of his afflicted and persecuted people, which persecutors and tyrants have spilt as water upon the ground; and woe to persecutors when God shall make a more strict, critical, and careful enquiry after the blood of his people than ever was made in the inquisition of Spain, where all things are carried with the greatest diligence, subtlety, secrecy, and severity. O persecutors, there is a time a-coming, when God will make a strict enquiry after the blood of Hooper, Bradford, Latimer, Taylor, Ridley, etc. There is a time a-coming, wherein God will enquire who silenced and suspended such-and-such ministers, and who stopped the mouths of such-and-such, and who imprisoned, confined, and banished such-and-such, who were once burning and shining lights, and who were willing to spend and be spent that sinners might be saved, and that Christ might be glorified. There is a time when the Lord will make a very narrow enquiry into all the actions and practices of ecclesiastical courts, high commissions, committees, assizes, etc., and deal with persecutors as they have dealt with his people. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 12. "When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them." There is vox sanguinis, a voice of blood; and "he that planted the ear, shall he not hear?" It covered the old world with waters. The earth is filled with cruelty; it was vox sanguinis that cried, and the heavens heard the earth, and the windows of heaven opened to let fall judgment and vengeance upon it. Edward Marbury, 1649.

Verse 12. "When he maketh inquisition for blood," etc. Though God may seem to wink for a time at the cruelty of violent men, yet will call them at last to a strict account for all the innocent blood they have shed, and for their unjust and unmerciful usage of meek and humble persons; whose cry he never forgets (though he doth not presently answer it), but takes a fit time to be avenged of their oppressors. Symon Patrick, D.D., 1626-1707.

Verse 12. "He maketh inquisition for blood." He is so stirred at this sin, that he will up, search out the authors, contrivers, and commissioners of this scarlet sin, he will avenge for blood. William Greenhill.

Verse 12. "He forgetteth not the cry of the humble." Prayer is a haven to the shipwrecked man, an anchor to them that are sinking in the waves, a staff to the limbs that totter, a mine of jewels to the poor, a healer of diseases, and a guardian of health. Prayer at once secures the continuance of our blessings, and dissipates the clouds of our calamities. O blessed prayer! thou art the unwearied
conqueror of human woes, the firm foundation of human happiness, the source of ever-enduring joy, the mother of philosophy. The man who can pray truly, though languishing in extremest indigence, is richer than all beside, whilst the wretch who never bowed the knee, though proudly sitting as monarch of all nations, is of all men most destitute. Chrysostom.

Verse 14. "That I may show forth all thy praise," etc. To show forth all God's praise is to enter largely into the work. An occasional "God, I thank thee," is no fit return for a perpetual stream of rich benefits. William S. Plumer.

Verse 15. "The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made," etc. Whilst they are digging pits for others, there is a pit a-digging and a grave a-making for themselves. They have a measure to make up, and a treasure to fill, which at length will be broken open, which, methinks, should take off them which are set upon mischief from pleasing themselves in their plots. Alas! they are but plotting their own ruin, and building a Babel which will fall upon their own heads. If there were any commendation in plotting, then that great plotter of plotters, that great engineer, Satan, would go beyond us all, and take all the credit from us. But let us not envy Satan and his in their glory. They had need of something to comfort them. Let them please themselves with their trade. The day is coming wherein the daughter of Sion shall laugh them to scorn. There will be a time wherein it shall be said, "Arise, Sion, and thresh." Micah 4:13. And usually the delivery of God's children is joined with the destruction of his enemies; Saul's death, and David's deliverance; the Israelites' deliverance, and the Egyptians drowning. The church and her opposites are like the scales of a balance; when one goes up, the other goes down. Richard Sibbs.

Verses 15-17. It will much increase the torment of the damned, in that their torments will be as large and strong as their understandings and affections, which will cause those violent passions to be still working. Were their loss never so great, and their sense of it never so passionate, yet if they could but lose the use of their memory, those passions would die, and that loss being forgotten, would little trouble them. But as they cannot lay by their life and being, though then they would account annihilation a singular mercy, so neither can they lay aside any part of their being. Understanding, conscience, affections, memory, must all live to torment them, which should have helped to their happiness. And as by these they should have fed upon the love of God, and drawn forth perpetually the joys of his presence, so by these must they now feed upon the wrath of God, and draw forth continually the dolours of his absence. Therefore, never think, that when I say the hardness of their hearts, and their blindness, dulness, and forgetfulness shall be removed, that therefore they are more holy and happy than before: no, but morally more vile, and
hereby far more miserable. Oh, how many times did God by his messengers here call upon them, "Sinners, consider whither you are going. Do but make a stand awhile, and think where your way will end, what is the offered glory that you so carelessly reject: will not this be bitterness in the end?" And yet, these men would never be brought to consider. But in the latter days, saith the Lord, they shall perfectly consider it, when they are ensnared in the work of their own hands, when God hath arrested them, and judgment is passed upon them, and vengeance is poured out upon them to the full, then they cannot choose but consider it, whether they will or no. Now they have no leisure to consider, nor any room in their memories for the things of another life. Ah! but then they shall have leisure enough, they shall be where they shall have nothing else to do but consider it: their memories shall have no other employment to hinder them; it shall even be engraven upon the tables of their hearts. God would have the doctrine of their eternal state to have been written on the posts of their doors, on their houses, on their hands, and on their hearts: he would have had them mind it and mention it, as they rise and lie down, and as they walk abroad, that so it might have gone well with them at their latter end. And seeing they rejected this counsel of the Lord, therefore shall it be written always before them in the place of their thraldom, that which way soever they look they may still behold it. Richard Baxter.

Verse 16. "The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth." Now if the Lord be known by the judgment which he executeth; then, the judgment which he executeth must be known; it must be an open judgment; and such are very many of the judgments of God, they are acted as upon a stage. And I may give you an account in three particulars why the Lord will sometimes do justice in the place of beholders, or in the open sight of others. First, that there may be witnesses enough of what he doth, and so a record of it be kept, at least in the minds and memories of faithful men for the generations to come. Secondly, the Lord doth it not only that he may have witnesses of his justice, but also that his justice and the proceedings of it, may have an effect and a fruit upon those who did not feel it, nor fall under it. This was the reason why the Lord threatened to punish Jerusalem in the sight of the nations. Ezekiel 5:6, 7, 8, 14, 15. . . . . . . God would execute judgment in Jerusalem, a city placed in the midst of the nations, that as the nations had taken notice of the extraordinary favours, benefits, deliverances, and salvations which God wrought for Jerusalem, so they might also take notice of his judgments and sore displeasure against them. Jerusalem was not seated in some nook, corner, or by-place of the world, but in the midst of the nations, that both the goodness and severity of God toward them might be conspicuous. . . . . . . God lets some sinners suffer, or punisheth them openly, both because he would have all others take notice that he dislikes
what they have done, as also because he would not have others do the like, lest they be made like them, both in the matter and manner of their sufferings. "Tis a favour as well as our duty, to be taught by other men's harms, and to be instructed by their strokes, to prevent our own . . . . Thirdly, God strikes some wicked men in open view, or in the place of beholders for the comfort of his own people, and for their encouragement. Psalm 58:10, 11. "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 an evidence of his own holiness. . . . . It is said (Exodus 14:30, 31), that God having overwhelmed the Egyptians in the Red Sea, the Israelites saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore: God did not suffer the carcases of the Egyptians to sink to the bottom of the sea, but caused them to lie upon the shore, that the Israelites might see them; and when Israel saw that dreadful stroke of the Lord upon the Egyptians, it is said, "The people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses." Thus they were confirmed in their faith by God's open judgments upon the Egyptians. They were smitten in the place of the beholders, or in the open sight of others. Condensed from Joseph Caryl.

Verse 16. "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth;" when he lays his hand upon sinners, saints tremble, consider his power, majesty, greatness, the nature of his judgments, and so judge themselves, and remove out of the way whatever may provoke. . . . . As fire begets a splendour round about where it is, so do the judgments of God set out to the world his glory, justice, holiness. William Greenhill.

Verse 16. "Snared in the work of his own hands." The wages that sin bargains with the sinner are life, pleasure, and profit; but the wages it pays him with are death, torment, and destruction. He that would understand the falsehood and deceit of sin, must compare its promises and its payment together. Robert South, D.D., 1633-1716.

Verse 16. "Higgaion, Selah," that is, as Ainsworth renders it, "Meditation, Selah:" showing this ought to be seriously considered of. The word "Higgaion" is again had (Psalm 92:3); being mentioned among other musical instruments, whereby we may gather it to be one of them; for there is psaltery, nable, higgaion, and harp, John Mayer.

Verse 16. "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." Not only do we read it in the word of God, but all history, all experience, records the same righteous justice of God, in snaring the wicked in the work of their own hands.
Perhaps the most striking instance on record, next to Haman on his own gallows, is one connected with the horrors of the French Revolution, in which we are told that, "within nine months of the death of the queen Marie Antoinette by the guillotine, every one implicated in her untimely end, her accusers, the judges, the jury, the prosecutors, the witnesses, all, every one at least whose fate is known, perished by the same instrument as their innocent victim." "In the net which they had laid for her was their own foot taken—into the pit which they digged for her did they themselves fall. Barton Bouchier, 1855.

Verse 17. The ungodly at death must undergo God's fury and indignation. "The wicked shall be turned into hell." I have read of a lodestone in Ethiopia which hath two corners, with one it draws the iron to it, with the other it puts the iron from it: so God hath two hands, of mercy and justice; with the one he will draw the godly to heaven, with the other he will thrust the sinner to hell; and oh, how dreadful is that place! It is called a fiery lake (Revelation 20:15); a lake, to denote the plenty of torments in hell; a fiery lake, to show the fierceness of them: fire is the most torturing element. Strabo in his geography mentions a lake in Galilee of such a pestiferous nature that it scal'deth off the skin of whatsoever is cast into it; but, alas! that lake is cool compared with this fiery lake into which the damned are thrown. To demonstrate this fire terrible, there are two most pernicious qualities in it. 1. It is sulphurous, it is mixed with brimstone (Revelation 21:8), which is unsavoury and suffocating. 2. It is inextinguishable; though the wicked shall be choked in the flames, yet not consumed (Revelation 20:10); "And the devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." Behold the deplorable condition of all ungodly ones in the other world, they shall have a life that always dies, and a death that always lives: may not this affright men out of their sins, and make them become godly? unless they are resolved to try how hot the hell-fire is. Thomas Watson.

Verse 17. "The wicked shall be turned into hell," etc. By "the wicked" here we must understand unregenerate persons, whoever they are that are in a state of unregeneracy. . . . That person is here spoken of as a "wicked" man that "forgets God," who does not think of him frequently, and with affection, with fear and delight, and those affections that are suitable to serious thoughts of God. . . . To forget God and to be a wicked person is all one. And these two things will abundantly evince the truth of this assertion: namely, that this forgetfulness of God excludes the prime and main essentials of religion, and also includes in it the highest and most heinous pieces of wickedness, and
therefore must needs denominate the subject, a wicked person. . . . . .
Forgetfulness of God excludes the principal and essential parts of religion. It implies that a man doth neither esteem nor value the all-sufficiency and holiness of God, as his happiness and portion, as his strength and support; nor doth he fear him, nor live in subjection to his laws and commands, as his rule; nor doth he aim at the glory of God as his end: therefore every one who thus forgets God, must certainly be a wicked person. . . . . . To exclude God out of our thoughts and not to let him have a place there, not to mind, nor think upon God, is the greatest wickedness of the thoughts that can be. And, therefore, though you cannot say of such a one, he will be drunk, or he will swear, cozen, or oppress; yet if you can say he will forget God, or that he lives all his days never minding nor thinking upon God, you say enough to speak him under wrath, and to turn him into hell without remedy. John Howe, 1630 - 1705.

Verse 17. "The wicked shall be turned into hell." (Heb.); Lisholah—headlong into hell, down into hell. The original is very emphatic. Adam Clarke.

Verse 17. All wickedness came originally with the wicked one from hell; thither it will again be remitted, and they who hold on its side must accompany it on its return to that place of torment, there to be shut up for ever. The true state of "nations," and the individuals of which they are composed, is to be estimated from one single circumstance; namely, whether in their doings they remember, or "forget God." Remembrance of him is the well-spring of virtue; forgetfulness of him, the fountain of vice. George Horne, D.D.

Verse 17.

*Hell,* their fit habitation, fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.

*John Milton,* 1608-1674.

Verse 17.

Will without power, the element of *hell,*
Abortive all its acts returning still
Upon itself; . . . Oh, anguish terrible!
Meet guerdon of self-love, its proper ill!
Malice would scowl upon the foe he fears;
And he with lip of scorn would seek to kill;
But neither sees the other, neither hears—
For darkness each in his own dungeon bars,
Lust pines for dearth, and grief drinks its own tears—
Each in its solitude apart. Hate wars
Against himself, and feeds upon his chain,
Whose iron penetrates the soul it scars,
A dreadful solitude each mind insane,
Each its own place, its prison all alone,
And finds no sympathy to soften pain.

*J. A. Heraud.*

**Verse 18.** "*For the needy shall not alway be forgotten,*" etc. This is a sweet promise for a thousand occasions, and when pleaded before the throne in his name who comprehends in himself every promise, and is indeed himself the great promise of the Bible, it would be found like all others, yea and amen.


**Verse 18.** "*The expectation of the poor shall not perish.*" A heathen could say, when a bird, scared by a hawk, flew into his bosom, I will not betray thee unto thy enemy, seeing thou comest for sanctuary unto me. How much less will God yield up a soul unto its enemy, when it takes sanctuary in his name, saying, Lord, I am hunted with such a temptation, dogged with such a lust; either thou must pardon it, or I am damned; mortify it, or I shall be a slave to it; take me into the bosom of thy love for Christ's sake; castle me in the arms of thy everlasting strength; it is in thy power to save me from, or give me up into the hands of my enemy; I have no confidence in myself or any other: into thy hands I commit my cause myself, and rely on thee. This dependence of a soul undoubtedly will awaken the almighty power of God for such a one's defence. He hath sworn the greatest oath that can come out of his blessed lips, even by himself, that such as thus fly for refuge to hope in him, shall have strong consolation. *Hebrews 6:17.* This indeed may give the saint the greater boldness of faith to expect kind entertainment when he repairs to God for refuge, because he cannot come before he is looked for; God having set up his name and promises as a strong tower, both calls his people into these chambers and expects they should betake themselves thither. *William Gurnall.*

**Verse 18.** As sometimes God is said to hear us in not hearing us, so we may say he should sometimes deny us if he did not delay us, It is (saith Chrysostom) like money, which lying long in the bank, comes home at last with a duck in its mouth, with use upon use; when money is out a great time, it makes a great return: we can stay thus upon men, and cannot we, shall not we, stay upon the Lord, and for the Lord, for a large return? God causeth us by delay to make the more prayers; and the more we pray, the longer we stay, the more comfort we shall have, and the more sure we are that we shall have it in the latter end. Distinguish between denying and delaying. . . In God our Father are all
dimensions of love, and that in an infinite degree; infinitely infinite: what if he defer us? so do we our children, albeit we mean no other but to give them their own asking, yet we love to see them wait, that so they may have from us the best things, when they are at the best, in the best time, and in the best manner: if a mother should forget her only boy, yet God hath an infinite memory, he nor can, nor will forget us; the expectation of the waiter shall not fail for ever, that is, never. Richard Capel.

*Verse 19.* "Arise, O Lord," etc. What does this mean? Are we to consider the psalmist as praying for the destruction of his enemies, as pronouncing a malediction, a curse upon them? No; these are not the words of one who is wishing that mischief may happen to his enemies; they are the words of a prophet, of one who is foretelling, in Scripture language, the evil that must befall them on account of their sins. Augustine.

*Verse 20.* "Put them in fear, O Lord," etc. We should otherwise think ourselves gods. We are so inclined to sin that we need strong restraints, and so swelled with a natural pride against God, that we need thorns in the flesh to let out the corrupt matter. The constant hanging the rod over us makes us lick the dust, and acknowledge ourselves to be altogether at the Lord's mercy. Though God hath pardoned us, he will make us wear the halter about our necks to humble us. Stephen Charnock.

*Verse 20.* "That the nations may know themselves to be but men." The original word is (Heb.), enosh; and therefore it is a prayer that they may know themselves to be but miserable, frail, and dying men. The word is in the singular number, but it is used collectively. John Calvin.

**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

I. The only object of our praise—"thine, O Lord."
II. The abundant themes of praise—"all thy marvellous works."
III. The proper nature of praise—"with my whole heart." B. Davies.

*Verse 1.* "I will show forth." Endless employment and enjoyment.

*Verse 1.* "Thy marvellous works." Creation, Providence, Redemption, are all marvellous, as exhibiting the attributes of God in such a degree as to excite the wonder of all God's universe. A very suggestive topic.

*Verse 2.* Sacred song: its connection with holy gladness.
Verse 4.

(1) The rights of the righteous are sure to be assailed,
(2) but equally sure to be defended.

Verse 6.

I. The great enemy.
   II. The destruction he has caused.
   III. The means of his overthrow.
   IV. The rest which shall ensue.

Verse 7 (first clause). The eternity of God—the comfort of saints, the terror of sinners.

Verse 8. The justice of God's moral government, especially in relation to the last great day.

Verse 9. Needy people, needy times, all-sufficient provision.

Verse 10.

I. All-important knowledge—"know thy name."
   II. Blessed result—"will put their trust in thee."
   III. Sufficient reason—"for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." T. W. Medhurst.

Knowledge, Faith, Experience, the connection of the three.

Verse 10. The names of God inspire trust. JEHOVAH Jireh, Tsidkenu, Rophi, Shammah, Nissi, ELOHIM, SHADDAI, ADONAI, etc.

Verse 11.

I. Zion, what is it?
   II. Her glorious inhabitant, what doth he?
   III. The twofold occupation of her sons—"sing praises," "declare among the people his doings."
   IV. Arguments from the first part of the subject to encourage us in the double duty.

Verse 12.
I. God on awful business.
   II. Remembers his people; to spare, honour, bless, and avenge them.
   III. Fulfils their cries, in their own salvation, and overthrow of enemies. A consolatory sermon for times of war or pestilence.

Verse 13. "Have mercy upon me, O Lord." The publican's prayer expounded, commended, presented, and fulfilled.


Verse 14. "I will rejoice in thy salvation." Especially because it is thine, O God, and therefore honours thee. In its freeness, fulness, suitability, certainty, everlastingness. Who can rejoice in this? Reasons why they should always do so.

Verse 15. Lex talionis. Memorable instances.

Verse 16. Awful knowledge; a tremendous alternative as compared with verse 10.

Verse 17. A warning to forgetters of God.

Verse 18. Delays in deliverance.
   I. Unbelief's estimate of the—"forgotten," "perish."
   II. God's promise—"not always."
   III. Faith's duty—wait.


Verse 20. A needful lesson, and how it is taught.
Psalm 10

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

Since this Psalm has no title of its own, it is supposed by some to be a fragment of Psalm 9. We prefer, however, since it is complete in itself, to consider it as a separate composition. We have had instances already of Psalms which seem meant to form a pair (Psalm 1 and 2, Psalm 3 and 4) and this, with the ninth, is another specimen of the double Psalm.

The prevailing theme seems to be the oppression and persecution of the wicked, we will, therefore, for our own guidance, entitle it, THE CRY OF THE OPPRESSED.

DIVISION. The first verse, in an exclamation of surprise, explains the intent of the Psalm, viz., to invoke the interposition of God for the deliverance of his poor and persecuted people. From verse 2 to 11, the character of the oppressor is described in powerful language. In verse 12, the cry of the first verse bursts forth again, but with a clearer utterance. In the next place (verses 13-15), God's eye is clearly beheld as regarding all the cruel deeds of the wicked; and as a consequence of divine omniscience, the ultimate judgment of the oppressed is joyously anticipated (verses 16-18). To the Church of God during times of persecution, and to individual saints who are smarting under the hand of the proud sinner, this Psalm furnishes suitable language both for prayer and praise.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. To the tearful eye of the sufferer the Lord seemed to stand still, as if he calmly looked on, and did not sympathize with his afflicted one. Nay, more, the Lord appeared to be afar off, no longer "a very present help in trouble," but an inaccessible mountain, into which no man would be able to climb. The presence of God is the joy of his people, but any suspicion of his absence is distracting beyond measure. Let us, then, ever remember that the Lord is nigh us. The refiner is never far from the mouth of the furnace when his gold is in the fire, and the Son of God is always walking in the midst of the flames when his holy children are cast into them. Yet he that knows the frailty of man will little wonder that when we are sharply exercised, we find it hard to bear the apparent neglect of the Lord when he forbears to work our deliverance.

"Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" It is not the trouble, but the hiding of our Father's face, which cuts us to the quick. When trial and desertion come together, we are in as perilous a plight as Paul, when his ship fell into a place where two seas met (Acts 27:41). It is but little wonder if we are like the vessel which ran aground, and the fore-part stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, while the hinder part was broken by the violence of the waves. When our sun is eclipsed, it is dark indeed. If we need an answer to the question, "Why hidest thou thyself?" it is to be found in the fact that there is a "needs-be," not only for trial, but for heaviness of heart under trial (1 Peter
1:6); but how could this be the case, if the Lord should shine upon us while he is afflicting us? Should the parent comfort his child while he is correcting him, where would be the use of the chastening? A smiling face and a rod are not fit companions. God bares the back that the blow may be felt; for it is only felt affliction which can become blest affliction. If we were carried in the arms of God over every stream, where would be the trial, and where the experience, which trouble is meant to teach us?

Verse 2. The second verse contains the formal indictment against the wicked: "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor." The accusation divides itself into two distinct charges,—pride and tyranny; the one the root and cause of the other. The second sentence is the humble petition of the oppressed: "Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined." The prayer is reasonable, just, and natural. Even our enemies themselves being judges, it is but right that men should be done by as they wished to do to others. We only weigh you in your own scales, and measure your corn with your own bushel. Terrible shall be thy day, O persecuting Babylon! when thou shalt be made to drink of the winecup which thou thyself hast filled to the brim with the blood of saints. There are none who will dispute the justice of God, when he shall hang every Haman on his own gallows, and cast all the enemies of his Daniels into their own den of lions.

Verse 3. The indictment being read, and the petition presented, the evidence is now heard upon the first count. The evidence is very full and conclusive upon the matter of pride, and no jury could hesitate to give a verdict against the prisoner at the bar. Let us, however, hear the witnesses one by one. The first testifies that he is a boaster. "For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire." He is a very silly boaster, for he glories in a mere desire: a very brazen-faced boaster, for that desire is villainy; and a most abandoned sinner, to boast of that which is his shame. Bragging sinners are the worst and most contemptible of men, especially when their filthy desires,—too filthy to be carried into act,—become the theme of their boastings. When Mr. Hate-Good and Mr. Heady are joined in partnership, they drive a brisk trade in the devil's wares. This one proof is enough to condemn the prisoner at the bar. Take him away, jailor! But stay, another witness desires to be sworn and heard. This time, the impudence of the proud rebel is even more apparent; for he "blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." This is insolence, which is pride unmasked. He is haughty enough to differ from the Judge of all the earth, and bless the men whom God hath cursed. So did the sinful generation in the days of Malachi, who called the proud happy, and set up those that worked wickedness (Malachi 3:15). These base pretenders would dispute with their Maker; they would—
"Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the god of God."

How often have we heard the wicked man speaking in terms of honour of the covetous, the grinder of the poor, and the sharp dealer! Our old proverb hath it,—

"I wot well how the world wags;
He is most loved that hath most bags."

Pride meets covetousness, and compliments it as wise, thrifty, and prudent. We say it with sorrow, there are many professors of religion who esteem a rich man, and flatter him, even though they know that he has fattened himself upon the flesh and blood of the poor. The only sinners who are received as respectable are covetous men. If a man is a fornicator, or a drunkard, we put him out of the church; but who ever read of church discipline against that idolatrous wretch,—the covetous man? Let us tremble, lest we be found to be partakers of this atrocious sin of pride, "blessing the covetous, whom Jehovah abhorreth."

Verse 4. The proud boastings and lewd blessings of the wicked have been received in evidence against him, and now his own face confirms the accusation, and his empty closet cries aloud against him. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God." Proud hearts breed proud looks and stiff knees. It is an admirable arrangement that the heart is often written on the countenance, just as the motion of the wheels of a clock find their record on its face. A brazen face and a broken heart never go together. We are not quite sure that the Athenians were wise when they ordained that men should be tried in the dark lest their countenances should weigh with the judges; for there is much more to be learned from the motions of the muscles of the face than from the words of the lips. Honesty shines in the face, but villainy peeps out at the eyes.

See the effect of pride; it kept the man from seeking God. It is hard to pray with a stiff neck and an unbending knee. "God is not in all his thoughts:" he thought much, but he had no thoughts for God. Amid heaps of chaff there was not a grain of wheat. The only place where God is not is in the thoughts of the wicked. This is a damning accusation; for where the God of heaven is not, the Lord of hell is reigning and raging; and if God be not in our thoughts, our thoughts will bring us to perdition.

Verse 5. "His ways are always grievous." To himself they are hard. Men go a rough road when they go to hell. God has hedged-up the way of sin: O what
Psalm 10

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folly to leap these hedges and fall among the thorns! To others, also, his ways cause much sorrow and vexation; but what cares he? He sits like the idol god upon his monstrous car, utterly regardless of the crowds who are crushed as he rolls along. "Thy judgments are far above out of his sight:" he looks high, but not high enough. As God is forgotten, so are his judgments. He is not able to comprehend the things of God; a swine may sooner look through a telescope at the stars than this man study the Word of God to understand the righteousness of the Lord. "As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them." He defies and domineers; and when men resist his injurious behaviour, he sneers at them, and threatens to annihilate them with a puff. In most languages there is a word of contempt borrowed from the action of puffing with the lips, and in English we should express the idea by saying, "He cries, 'Pooh! Pooh!' at his enemies." Ah! there is one enemy who will not thus be puffed at. Death will puff at the candle of his life and blow it out, and the wicked boaster will find it grim work to brag in the tomb.

Verse 6. The testimony of the sixth verse concludes the evidence against the prisoner upon the first charge of pride, and certainly it is conclusive in the highest degree. The present witness has been prying into the secret chambers of the heart, and has come to tell us what he has heard. "He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity." O impertinence runs to seed! The man thinks himself immutable, and omnipotent too, for he is never to be in adversity. He counts himself a privileged man. He sits alone, and shall see no sorrow. His nest is in the stars, and he dreams not of a hand that shall pluck him thence. But let us remember that this man's house is built upon the sand, upon a foundation no more substantial than the rolling waves of the sea. He that is too secure is never safe. Boastings are not buttresses, and self-confidence is a sorry bulwark. This is the ruin of fools, that when they succeed they become too big, and swell with self-conceit, as if their summer would last for ever, and their flowers bloom on eternally. Be humble, O man! for thou art mortal, and thy lot is mutable.

The second crime is now to be proved. The fact that the man is proud and arrogant may go a long way to prove that he is vindicative and cruel. Haman's pride was the father of a cruel design to murder all the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar builds an idol; in pride he commands all men to bow before it; and then cruelly stands ready to heat the furnace seven times hotter for those who will not yield to his imperious will. Every proud thought is twin brother to a cruel thought. He who exalts himself will despise others, and one step further will make him a tyrant.
Verse 7. Let us now hear the witnesses in court. Let the wretch speak for himself, for out of his own mouth he will be condemned. "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud." There is not only a little evil there, but his mouth is full of it. A three-headed serpent hath stowed away its coils and venom within the den of its black mouth. There is cursing which he spits against both God and men, deceit with which he entraps the unwary, and fraud by which, even in his common dealings, he robs his neighbours. Beware of such a man: have no sort of dealing with him: none but the silliest of geese would go to the fox's sermon, and none but the most foolish will put themselves into the society of knaves. But we must proceed. Let us look under this man's tongue as well as in his mouth; "under his tongue is mischief and vanity." Deep in his throat are the unborn words which shall come forth as mischief and iniquity.

Verse 8. Despite the bragging of this base wretch, it seems that he is as cowardly as he is cruel. "He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor." He acts the part of the highwayman, who springs upon the unsuspecting traveller in some desolate part of the road. There are always bad men lying in wait for the saints. This is a land of robbers and thieves; let us travel well armed, for every bush conceals an enemy. Everywhere there are traps laid for us, and foes thirsting for our blood. There are enemies at our table as well as across the sea. We are never safe, save when the Lord is with us.

Verse 9. The picture becomes blacker, for here is the cunning of the lion, and of the huntsman, as well as the stealthiness of the robber. Surely there are some men who come up to the very letter of this description. With watching, perversion, slander, whispering, and false swearing, they ruin the character of the righteous, and murder the innocent; or, with legal quibbles, mortgages, bonds, writs, and the like, they catch the poor, and draw them into a net. Chrysostom was peculiarly severe upon this last phase of cruelty, but assuredly not more so than was richly merited. Take care, brethren, for there are other traps besides these. Hungry lions are crouching in every den, and fowlers spread their nets in every field.

Quarles well pictures our danger in those memorable lines,—

"The close pursuers' busy hands do plant
Snares in thy substance; snares attend thy wants;
Snares in thy credit; snares in thy disgrace;
Snares in thy high estate; snares in thy base;
Snares tuck thy bed; and snares surround thy board;
Snares watch thy thoughts; and snares attack thy word;
Snares in thy quiet; snares in thy commotion;
Snares in thy diet; snares in thy devotion;
Snares lurk in thy resolves; snares in thy doubt;
Snares lie within thy heart; and snares without;
Snares are above thy head, and snares beneath;
Snares in thy sickness; snares are in thy death.

O Lord! keep thy servants, and defend us from all our enemies!

Verse 10. "He croucheth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones." Seeming humility is often armour-bearer to malice. The lion crouches that he may leap with the greater force, and bring down his strong limbs upon his prey. When a wolf was old, and had tasted human blood, the old Saxon cried, "Ware, wolf!" and we may cry, "Ware fox!" They who crouch to our feet are longing to make us fall. Be very careful of fawners; for friendship and flattery are deadly enemies.

Verse 11. As upon the former count, so upon this one; a witness is forthcoming, who has been listening at the keyhole of the heart. Speak up, friend, and let us hear your story. "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it." This cruel man comforts himself with the idea that God is blind, or, at least, forgetful: a fond and foolish fancy, indeed. Men doubt Omniscience when they persecute the saints. If we had a sense of God's presence with us, it would be impossible for us to ill-treat his children. In fact, there can scarcely be a greater preservation from sin than the constant thought of "Thou, God, seest me."

Thus has the trial proceeded. The case has been fully stated; and now it is but little wonder that the oppressed petitioner lifts up the cry for judgment, which we find in the following verse:—

Verse 12. With what bold language will faith address its God! and yet what unbelief is mingled with our strongest confidence. Fearlessly the Lord is stirred up to arise and lift up his hand, yet timidly he is begged not to forget the humble; as if Jehovah could ever be forgetful of his saints. This verse is the incessant cry of the Church, and she will never refrain therefrom until her Lord shall come in his glory to avenge her of all her adversaries.

Verse 13. In these verses the description of the wicked is condensed, and the evil of his character traced to its source, viz., atheistical ideas with regard to the government of the world. We may at once perceive that this is intended to be another urgent plea with the Lord to show his power, and reveal his justice. When the wicked call God's righteousness in question, we may well beg him to
teach them terrible things in righteousness. In verse 13, the hope of the infidel and his heart-wishes are laid bare. He despises the Lord, because he will not believe that sin will meet with punishment: "he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it." If there were no hell for other men, there ought to be one for those who question the justice of it.

Verse 14. This vile suggestion receives its answer in verse 14. "Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand." God is all-eye to see, and all-hand to punish his enemies. From Divine oversight there is no hiding, and from Divine justice there is no fleeing. Wanton mischief shall meet with woeful misery, and those who harbour spite shall inherit sorrow. Verily there is a God which judgeth in the earth. Nor is this the only instance of the presence of God in the world; for while he chastises the oppressor, he befriends the oppressed. "The poor committeth himself unto thee." They give themselves up entirely into the Lord's hands. Resigning their judgment to his enlightenment, and their wills to his supremacy, they rest assured that he will order all things for the best. Nor does he deceive their hope. He preserves them in times of need, and causes them to rejoice in his goodness. "Thou art the helper of the fatherless." God is the parent of all orphans. When the earthly father sleeps beneath the sod, a heavenly Father smiles from above. By some means or other, orphan children are fed, and well they may when they have such a Father.

Verse 15. In this verse we hear again the burden of the psalmist's prayer: "Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man." Let the sinner lose his power to sin; stop the tyrant, arrest the oppressor, weaken the loins of the mighty, and dash in pieces the terrible. They deny thy justice: let them feel it to the full. Indeed, they shall feel it; for God shall hunt the sinner for ever: so long as there is a grain of sin in him it shall be sought out and punished. It is not a little worthy of note, that very few great persecutors have ever died in their beds: the curse has manifestly pursued them, and their fearful sufferings have made them own that divine justice at which they could at one time launch defiance. God permits tyrants to arise as thorn-hedges to protect his church from the intrusion of hypocrites, and that he may teach his backsliding children by them, as Gideon did the men of Succoth with the briers of the wilderness; but he soon cuts up these Herods, like the thorns, and casts them into the fire. Thales, the Milesian, one of the wise men of Greece, being asked what he thought to be the greatest rarity in the world, replied, "To see a tyrant live to be an old man." See how the Lord breaks, not only the arm, but the neck of proud oppressors! To the men who had neither justice nor mercy for the saints, there shall be rendered justice to the full, but not a grain of mercy.
Verses 16, 17, 18. The Psalm ends with a song of thanksgiving to the great and everlasting King, because he has granted the desire of his humble and oppressed people, has defended the fatherless, and punished the heathen who trampled upon his poor and afflicted children. Let us learn that we are sure to speed well, if we carry our complaint to the King of kings. Rights will be vindicated, and wrongs redressed, at his throne. His government neglects not the interests of the needy, nor does it tolerate oppression in the mighty. Great God, we leave ourselves in thine hand; to thee we commit thy church afresh. Arise, O God, and let the man of the earth—the creature of a day—be broken before the majesty of thy power. Come, Lord Jesus, and glorify thy people. Amen and Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS
Whole Psalm. There is not, in my judgment, a Psalm which describes the mind, the manners, the works, the words, the feelings, and the fate of the ungodly with so much propriety, fulness, and light, as this Psalm. So that, if in any respect there has not been enough said heretofore, or if there shall be anything wanting in the Psalms that shall follow, we may here find a perfect image and representation of iniquity. This Psalm, therefore, is a type, form, and description of that man, who, though he may be in the sight of himself and of men more excellent than Peter himself, is detestable in the eyes of God; and this it was that moved Augustine, and those who followed him, to understand the Psalm of ANTICHRIST. But as the Psalm is without a title, let us embrace the most general and common understanding of it (as I said), and let us look at the picture of ungodliness which it sets before us. Not that we would deny the propriety of the acceptation in which others receive it, nay, we will, in our general acceptation of the Psalm, include also its reference to ANTICHRIST. And, indeed, it will not be at all absurd if we join this Psalm with the preceding, in its order thus. That David, in the preceding, spoke of the ungodly converted, and prayed for those who were to be converted. But that here he is speaking of the ungodly that are still left so, and in power prevailing over the weak ALMUTH, concerning whom he has no hope, or is in a great uncertainty of mind, whether they ever will be converted or not. Martin Luther.

Verse 1. "Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" The answer to this is not far to seek, for if the Lord did not hide himself it would not be a time of trouble at all. As well ask why the sun does not shine at night, when for certain there could be no night if he did. It is essential to our thorough chastisement that the Father should withdraw his smile: there is a needs be not only for manifold temptations, but that we be in heaviness through them. The design of the rod is
only answered by making us smart. If there be no pain, there will be no profit. If there be no hiding of God, there will be no bitterness, and consequently no purging efficacy in his chastisements. C. H. S.

Verse 1. (last clause). "Times of trouble" should be times of confidence; fixedness of heart on God would prevent fears of heart. Psalm 112:7. "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed." How? "Trusting in the Lord. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid." Otherwise without it we shall be as light as a weather-cock, moved with every blast of evil tidings, our hopes will swim or sink according to the news we hear. Providence would seem to sleep unless faith and prayer awaken it. The disciples had but little faith in their Master's accounts, yet that little faith awakened him in a storm, and he relieved them. Unbelief doth only discourage God from showing his power in taking our parts. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 2. "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor." THE OPPRESSOR'S PLEA. I seek but what is my own by law; it was his own free act and deed—the execution lies for goods and body; and goods or body I will have, or else my money. What if his beggardly children pine, or his proud wife perish? they perish at their own charge, not mine; and what is that to me? I must be paid, or he lie by it until I have my utmost farthing, or his bones. The law is just and good; and, being ruled by that, how can my fair proceedings be unjust? What is thirty in the hundred to a man of trade? Are we born to thrum caps or pick straws? and sell our livelihood for a few tears, and a whining face? I thank God they move me not so much as a howling dog at midnight. I'll give no day if heaven itself would be security. I must have present money, or his bones. . . . Fifteen shillings in the pound composition! I'll hang first. Come, tell me not of a good conscience: a good conscience is no parcel in my trade; it hath made more bankrupts than all the loose wives in the universal city. My conscience is no fool: it tells me my own is my own, and that a well crammed bag is no deceitful friend, but will stick close to me when all my friends forsake me. If to gain a good estate out of nothing, and to regain a desperate debt which is as good as nothing, be the fruits and signs of a bad conscience, God help the good. Come, tell me not of griping and oppression. The world is hard, and he that hopes to thrive must gripe as hard. What I give I give, and what I lend I lend. If the way to heaven be to turn beggar upon earth, let them take it that like it. I know not what you call oppression, the law is my direction; but of the two, it is more profitable to oppress than to be oppressed. If debtors would be honest and discharge, our hands were bound: but when their failing offends my bags, they touch the apple of my eye, and I must right them. Francis Quarles.
Verse 2. That famous persecutor, Domitian, like others of the Roman emperors, assumed divine honours, and heated the furnace seven times hotter against Christians because they refused to worship his image. In like manner, when the popes of Rome became decorated with the blasphemous titles of Masters of the World, and, Universal Fathers, they let loose their blood-hounds upon the faithful. Pride is the egg of persecution. C. H. S.

Verse 2. "Pride," is a vice which cleaveth so fast unto the hearts of men, that if we were to strip ourselves of all faults one by one, we should undoubtedly find it the very last and hardest to put off. Richard Hooker, 1554-1600.

Verse 3. "The wicked boasteth," etc. He braggeth of his evil life, whereof he maketh open profession; or he boasteth that he will accomplish his wicked designs; or glorieth that he hath already accomplished them. Or it may be understood that he commendeth others who are according to the desires of his own soul; that is, he respecteth or honoureth none but such as are like him, and them only he esteemeth. Psalm 36:4, and 49:18; Romans 1:32. John Diodati, 1648.

Verse 3. "The wicked . . . . . . blesseth the covetous." Like will to like, as the common proverb is. Such as altogether neglect the Lord's commandments not only commit divers gross sins, but commend those who in sinning are like themselves. For in their affections they allow them, in their speeches they flatter and extol them, and in their deeds they join with them and maintain them. Peter Muffet, 1594.

Verse 3. "The covetous." Covetousness is the desire of possessing that which we have not, and attaining unto great riches and worldly possessions. And whether this be not the character of trade and merchandise and traffic of every kind, the great source of those evils of over-trading which are everywhere complained of, I refer to the judgment of the men around me, who are engaged in the commerce and business of life. Compared with the regular and quiet diligence of our fathers, and their contentment with small but sure returns, the wild and wide-spread speculation for great gains, the rash and hasty adventures which are daily made, and the desperate gamester-like risks which are run, do reveal full surely that a spirit of covetousness hath been poured out upon men within the last thirty or forty years. And the providence of God corresponding thereto, by wonderful and unexpected revolutions, by numerous inventions for manufacturing the productions of the earth, in order to lead men into temptation, hath impressed upon the whole face of human affairs, a stamp of earnest worldliness not known to our fathers: insomuch that our youth do enter life no longer with the ambition of providing things honest in the sight of men,
keeping their credit, bringing up their family, and realising a competency, if the
Lord prosper them, but with the ambition of making a fortune, retiring to their
ease, and enjoying the luxuries of the present life. Against which crying sin of
covetousness, dearly beloved brethren, I do most earnestly call upon you to
wage a good warfare. This place is its seat, its stronghold, even this
metropolitan city of Christian Britain; and ye who are called by the grace of
God out of the great thoroughfare of Mammon, are so elected for the express
purpose of testifying against this and all other backslidings of the church
planted here; and especially against this, as being in my opinion, one of the
most evident and the most common of them all. For who hath not been snared

Verse 3. "The covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." Christ knew what he spake
when he said, "No man can serve two masters." Matthew 6:24. Meaning God
and the world, because each would have all. As the angel and the devil strove
for the body of Moses (Jude 9), not who should have a part, but who should
have the whole, so they strive still for our souls, who shall have all. Therefore,
the apostle saith, "The love of this world is enmity to God (James 4:4),
signifying such emulation between these two, that God cannot abide the world
should have a part, and the world cannot abide that God should have a part.
Therefore, the love of the world must needs be enmity to God, and therefore the
lovers of the world must needs be enemies to God, and so no covetous man is
God's servant, but God's enemy. For this cause covetousness is called idolatry
(Ephesians 5:5), which is the most contrary sin to God, because as treason sets
up another king in the king's place, so idolatry sets up another god in God's
place. Henry Smith.

Verse 4. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after
God." He is judged a proud man (without a jury sitting on him), who when
condemned will not submit, will not stoop so low as to accept of a pardon. I
must indeed correct myself, men are willing to be justified, but they would
have their duties to purchase their peace and the favour of God. Thousands will
die and be damned rather than they will have a pardon upon the sole account of
Christ's merits and obedience. Oh, the cursed pride of the heart! When will men
cease to be wiser than God? To limit God? When will men be contented with
God's way of saving them by the blood of the everlasting covenant? How dare
men thus to prescribe to the infinitely wise God? Is it not enough for thee that
thy destruction is of thyself? But must thy salvation be of thyself too? Is it not
enough that thou hast wounded thyself, but wilt thou die for ever, rather than be
beholden to a plaister of free grace? Wilt be damned unless thou mayest be
thine own Saviour? God is willing ("God so loved the world that he gave his
only Son"), art thou so proud as that thou wilt not be beholden to God? Thou wilt deserve, or have nothing. What shall I say? Poor thou art, and yet proud; thou hast nothing but wretchedness and misery, and yet thou art talking of a purchase. This is a provocation. "God resisteth the proud," especially the spiritually proud. He that is proud of his clothes and parentage, is not so contemptible in God's eyes as he that is proud of his abilities, and so scorns to submit to God's methods for his salvation by Christ, and by his righteousness alone. Lewis Stuckley.

Verse 4. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God." The pride of the wicked is the principal reason why they will not seek after the knowledge of God. This knowledge it prevents them from seeking in various ways. In the first place, it renders God a disagreeable object of contemplation to the wicked, and a knowledge of him as undesirable. Pride consists in an unduly exalted opinion of one's self. It is, therefore, impatient of a rival, hates a superior, and cannot endure a master. In proportion as it prevails in the heart, it makes us wish to see nothing above us, to acknowledge no law but our own wills, to follow no rule but our own inclinations. Thus it led Satan to rebel against his Creator, and our first parents to desire to be as gods. Since such are the effects of pride, it is evident that nothing can be more painful to a proud heart than the thoughts of such a being as God; one who is infinitely powerful, just, and holy; who can neither be resisted, deceived, nor deluded; who disposes, according to his own sovereign pleasure, of all creatures and events; and who, in an especial manner, hates pride, and is determined to abase and punish it. Such a being pride can contemplate only with feelings of dread, aversion, and abhorrence. It must look upon him as its natural enemy, the great enemy, whom it has to fear. But the knowledge of God directly tends to bring this infinite, irresistible, irreconcilable enemy full to the view of the proud man. It teaches him that he has a superior, a master, from whose authority he cannot escape, whose power he cannot resist, and whose will he must obey, or be crushed before him, and be rendered miserable for ever. It shows him what he hates to see, that, in despite of his opposition, God's counsel shall stand, that he will do all his pleasure, and that in all things wherein men deal proudly, God is above them. These truths torture the proud unhumbled hearts of the wicked, and hence they hate that knowledge of God which teaches these truths, and will not seek it. On the contrary, they wish to remain ignorant of such a being, and to banish all thoughts of him from their minds. With this view, they neglect, pervert, or explain away those passages of revelation which describe God's true character, and endeavour to believe that he is altogether such a one as themselves.

How foolish, how absurd, how ruinous, how blindly destructive of its own
object, does pride appear! By attempting to soar, it only plunges itself in the mire, and while endeavouring to erect for itself a throne, it undermines the ground on which it stands and digs its own grave. It plunged Satan from heaven into hell; it banished our first parents from paradise; and it will, in a similar manner, ruin all who indulge in it. It keeps us in ignorance of God, shuts us out from his favour, prevents us from resembling him, deprives us in this world of all the honour and happiness which communion with him would confer; and in the next, unless previously hated, repented of, and renounced, will bar for ever against us the door of heaven, and close upon us the gates of hell. O then, my friends, beware, above all things, beware of pride! Beware, lest you indulge it imperceptibly, for it is perhaps, of all sins, the most secret, subtle, and insinuating. Edward Payson, D.D., 1783-1827.

Verse 4. David speaks in Psalm 10 of great and potent oppressors and politicians, who see none on earth greater than themselves, none higher than they, and think therefore that they may impune prey upon the smaller, as beasts use to do; and in the fourth verse this is made the root and ground of all, that God is not in all his thoughts. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." The words are diversely read, and all make for this sense. Some read it, "No God in all his crafty presumptuous purposes;" others, "All his thoughts are, there is no God." The meaning whereof is not only that among the swarm and crowd of thoughts that fill his mind, the thought of God is seldom to be found, and comes not in among the rest, which yet is enough for the purpose in hand; but further, that in all his projects and plots, and consultations of his heart (the first reading of the words intends), whereby he contrives and lays the plot, form, and draught of all his actions, he never takes God or his will into consideration or consultation, to square and frame all accordingly, but proceeds and goes on in all, and carries on as if there were no God to be consulted with. He takes not him along with him, no more than if he were no God; the thoughts of him and his will sway him not. As you use to say, when a combination of men leave out someone they should advise with, that such a one is not of their counsel, is not in the plot; so nor is God in their purposes and advisings, they do all without him. But this is not all the meaning, but farther, all their thought is, that there is no God. This is there made the bottom, the foundation, the groundwork and reason of all their wicked plots and injurious projects, and deceitful carriages and proceedings, that seeing there is no God or power above them to take notice of it, to regard or requite them, therefore they may be bold to go on. Thomas Goodwin.
Verse 4. "Of his countenance." Which pride he carrieth engraven in his very countenance and forehead, and makes it known in all his carriages and gestures. "Will not seek," namely, he contemneth all divine and human laws, he feareth not, respecteth not God's judgments; he careth for nothing, so he may fulfil his desires; enquires after, nor examines nothing; all things are indifferent to him. *John Diodati.*

Verse 4. "All his thoughts are, there is no God;" thus some read the passage. Seneca says, there are no atheists, though there would be some; if any say there is no God, they lie; though they say it in the day time, yet in the night when they are alone they deny it; howsoever some desperately harden themselves, yet if God doth but show himself terrible to them, they confess him. Many of the heathens and others have denied that there is a God, yet when they were in distress, they did fall down and confess him, as Diagoras, that grand atheist, when he was troubled with the strangullion, acknowledged a deity which he had denied. These kind of atheists I leave to the tender mercies of God, of which I doubt it whether there be any for them. *Richard Stock.*

Verse 4. "God is not in all his thoughts." It is the black work of an ungodly man or an atheist, that God is not in all his thoughts. What comfort can be had in the being of God without thinking of him with reverence and delight? A God forgotten is as good as no God to us. *Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 4. Trifles possess us, but "God is not in all our thoughts," seldom the sole object of them. We have durable thoughts of transitory things, and flitting thoughts of a durable and eternal good. The covenant of grace engageth the whole heart to God, and bars anything else from engrossing it; but what strangers are God and the souls of most men! Though we have the knowledge of him by creation, yet he is for the most part an unknown God in the relations wherein he stands to us, because a God undelighted in. Hence it is, as one observes, that because we observe not the ways of God's wisdom, conceive not of him in his vast perfections, nor are stricken with an admiration of his goodness, that we have fewer good sacred poems than of any other kind. The wits of men hang the wing when they come to exercise their reasons and fancies about God. Parts and strength are given us, as well as corn and wine to the Israelites, for the service of God, but those are consecrated to some cursed Baal, Hosea 2:8. like Venus in the poet, we forsake heaven to follow after some Adonis. *Stephen Charnock.*

Verses 4, 5. The world hath a spiritual fascination and witchcraft, by which, where it hath once prevailed, men are enchanted to an utter forgetfulness of themselves and God, and being drunk with pleasures, they are easily engaged to
a madness and height of folly. Some, like foolish children, are made to keep a
great stir in the world for very trifles, for a vain show; they think themselves
great, honourable, excellent, and for this make a great bustle, when the world
hath not added one cubic to their stature of real worth. Others are by this Circe
transformed into savage creatures, and act the part of lions and tigers. Others,
like swine, wallow in the lusts of uncleanness. Others are unmanned, putting
off all natural affections, care not who they ride over, so they may rule over or
be made great. Others are taken with ridiculous frenzies, so that a man that
stands in the cool shade of a sedate composure would judge them out of their
wits. It would make a man admire to read of the frisks of Caius Caligula,
Xerxes, Alexander, and many others, who because they were above many men,
thought themselves above human nature. They forgot they were born and must
die, and did such things as would have made them, but that their greatness
overawed it, a laughing-stock and common scorn to children. Neither must we
think that these were but some few or rare instances of worldly intoxication,
when the Scripture notes it as a general distemper of all that bow down to
worship this idol. They live "without God in the world," saith the apostle, that
is, they so carry it as if there were no God to take notice of them to check them
for their madness. "God is not in all his thoughts." Verse 4. "The judgments of
God are far above out of his sight;" he puffeth at his enemies (verse 5), and saith
in his heart, he "shall never be moved," Verse 6. The whole Psalm describes the
worldling as a man that hath lost all his understanding, and is acting the part of
a frantic bedlam. What then can be a more fit engine for the devil to work with
than the pleasures of the world? Richard Gilpin.

Verse 5. "Grievous," or troublesome; that is, all his endeavours and actions aim
at nothing but at hurting others. "Are far above," for he is altogether carnal, he
hath not any disposition nor correspondence with the justice of thy law, which
is altogether spiritual; and therefore cannot lively represent unto himself thy
judgments, and the issue of the wicked according to the said law. Romans 7:14;
1 Corinthians 2:14. "He puffeth;" he doth most arrogantly despise them, and is
confident he can overthrow them with a puff. John Diodati.

Verse 5. "Thy judgments are far above out of his sight." Because God does not
immediately visit every sin with punishment, ungodly men do not see that in
due time he judges all the earth. Human tribunals must of necessity, by
promptness and publicity, commend themselves to the common judgment, but
the Lord's modes of dealing with sin are sublimer and apparently more tardy,
hence the bat's eyes of godless men cannot see them, and the grovelling wits of
men cannot comprehend them. If God sat in the gate of every village and held
his court there, even fools might discern his righteousness, but they are not
capable of perceiving that for a matter to be settled in the highest court, even in heaven itself, is a far more solemn matter. Let believers take heed lest they fall in a degree into the same error, and begin to criticise the actions of The Great Supreme, when they are too elevated for human reason to comprehend them. C. H. S.

Verse 5. "The judgments of God are far above out of his sight." Out of his sight, as an eagle at her highest towering so lessens herself to view, that he sees not the talons, nor fears the grip. Thus man presumes till he hath sinned, and then despairs as fast afterwards. At first, "Tush, doth God see it?" At last, "Alas! will God forgive it?" But if a man will not know his sins, his sins will know him; the eyes which presumption shuts, commonly despair opens. Thomas Adams.

Verse 5. "As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them." David describeth a proud man, puffing at his enemies: he is puffed up and swelled with high conceits of himself, as if he had some great matter in him, and he puffs at others as if he could do some great matter against them, forgetting that himself is but, as to his being in this world, a puff of wind which passeth away. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 5. "As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them;" literally, "He whistles at them." He is given over to the dominion of gloomy indifference, and he cares as little for others as for himself. Whosoever may be imagined by him to be an enemy he cares not. Contempt and ridicule are his only weapons; and he has forgotten how to use others of a more sacred character. His mental habits are marked by scorn; and he treats with contempt the judgments, opinions, and practices of the wisest of men. John Morison.

Verse 6. "He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity." Carnal security opens the door for all impiety to enter into the soul. Pompey, when he had in vain assaulted a city, and could not take it by force, devised this stratagem in way of agreement; he told them he would leave the siege and make peace with them, upon condition that they would let in a few weak, sick, and wounded soldiers among them to be cured. They let in the soldiers, and when the city was secure, the soldiers let in Pompey's army. A carnal settled security will let in a whole army of lusts into the soul. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 6. "He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity." To consider religion always on the comfortable side; to congratulate one's self for having obtained the end before we have made use of the means; to stretch the hands to receive the crown of righteousness before they have been employed to fight the battle; to be content with a false peace, and to use no
effort to obtain the graces to which true consolation is annexed: this is a dreadful calm, like that which some voyagers describe, and which is a very singular forerunner of a very terrible event. All on a sudden, in the wide ocean, the sea becomes calm, the surface of the water clear as a crystal, smooth as glass—the air serene; the unskilled passenger becomes tranquil and happy, but the old mariner trembles. In an instant the waves froth, the winds murmur, the heavens kindle, a thousand gulfs open, a frightful light inflames the air, and every wave threatens sudden death. This is an image of many men's assurance of salvation. James Saurin, 1677-1730.

**Verse 7.** "Under his tongue is mischief and vanity." The striking allusion of this expression is to certain venomous reptiles, which are said to carry bags of poison under their teeth, and, with great subtlety to inflict the most deadly injuries upon those who come within their reach. How affectingly does this represent the sad havoc which minds tainted with infidelity inflict on the community! By their perversions of truth, and by their immoral sentiments and practices, they are as injurious to the mind as the deadliest poison can be to the body. John Morison.

**Verse 7.** Cursing men are cursed men. John Trapp.

**Verses 7, 9.** In Anne Askew's account of her examination by Bishop Bonner, we have an instance of the cruel craft of persecutors: "On the morrow after, my lord of London sent for me at one of the clock, his hour being appointed at three. And as I came before him, he said he was very sorry of my trouble, and desired to know my opinion in such matters as were laid against me. He required me also boldly in any wise to utter the secrets of my heart; bidding me not to fear in any point, for whatsoever I did say within his house, no man should hurt me for it. I answered, 'For so much as your lordship hath appointed three of the clock, and my friends shall not come till that hour, I desire you to pardon me of giving answer till they come.'" Upon this Bale remarks: "In this preventing of the hour may the diligent perceive the greediness of this Babylon bishop, or bloodthirsty wolf, concerning his prey. 'Swift are their feet,' saith David, 'in the effusion of innocent blood, which have fraud in their tongues, venom in their lips, and most cruel vengeance in their mouths.' David much marvelleth in the spirit that, taking upon them the spiritual governance of the people, they can fall into such frenzy or forgetfulness of themselves, as to believe it lawful thus to oppress the faithful, and to devour them with as little compassion as he that greedily devoureth a piece of bread. If such have read anything of God, they have little minded their true duty therein. 'More swift,' saith Jeremy, 'are our cruel persecutors than the eagles of the air. They follow upon us over the mountains, and lay privy wait for us in the wilderness.' He that
will know the crafty hawking of bishops to bring in their prey, let them learn it here. Judas, I think, had never the tenth part of their cunning workmanship."


Verse 8. "He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages," etc. The Arab robber lurks like a wolf among these sand heaps, and often springs out suddenly upon the solitary traveller, robs him in a trice, and then plunges again into the wilderness of sand-hills and reedy downs, where pursuit is fruitless. Our friends are careful not to allow us to straggle about, or lag behind, and yet it seems absurd to fear a surprise here—Kaifa before, Acre in the rear, and travellers in sight on both sides. Robberies, however, do often occur, just where we now are. Strange country! and it has always been so. There are a hundred allusions to just such things in the history, the Psalms, and the prophets of Israel. A whole class of imagery is based upon them. Thus, in Psalm 10:8-10, "He sits in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: he lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net; he croucheth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones." And a thousand rascals, the living originals of this picture, are this day crouching and lying in wait all over the country to catch poor helpless travellers. You observe that all these people we meet or pass are armed; nor would they venture to go from Acre to Kaifa without their musket, although the cannon of the castles seem to command every foot of the way. Strange, most strange land! but it tallies wonderfully with its ancient story. W. M. Thompson, D.D., in "The Land and the Book," 1859.

Verse 8. My companions asked me if I knew the danger I had escaped. "No," I replied; "What danger?" They then told me that, just after they started, they saw a wild Arab skulking after me, crouching to the ground, with a musket in his hand; and that, as soon as he had reached within what appeared to them musket-shot of me, he raised his gun; but, looking wildly around him, as a man will do who is about to perpetrate some desperate act, he caught sight of them and disappeared. Jeremiah knew something of the ways of these Arabs when he wrote (chapter 3:2) "In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness;" and the simile is used in Psalm 10:9, 10, for the Arabs wait and watch for their prey with the greatest eagerness and perseverance. John Gadsby, in "My Wanderings," 1860.

Verse 8. "He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor." All this strength of metaphor and imagery is intended to mark the assiduity, the
cunning, the low artifice, to which the enemies of truth and righteousness will often resort in order to accomplish their corrupt and vicious designs. The extirpation of true religion is their great object; and there is nothing to which they will not stoop in order to effect that object. The great powers which have oppressed the church of Christ, in different ages, have answered to this description. Both heathen and papistical authorities have thus condescended in infamy. They have sat, as it were, in ambush for the poor of Christ's flock; they have adopted every stratagem that infernal skill could invent; they have associated themselves with princes in their palaces, and with beggars on their dunghill; they have resorted to the village, and they have mingled in the gay and populous city; and all for the vain purpose of attempting to blot out a "name which shall endure for ever, and which shall be continued as long as the sun." John Morison.

Verse 9 "He doth catch the poor." The poor man is the beast they hunt, who must rise early, rest late, eat the bread of sorrow, sit with many a hungry meal, perhaps his children crying for food, while all the fruit of his pains is served into Nimrod's table. Complain of this while you will, yet, as the orator said of Verres, pecuniosus nescit damnari. Indeed, a money-man may not be damned, but he may be damned. For this is a crying sin, and the wakened ears of the Lord will hear it, neither shall his provoked hands forbear it. Si tacuerint pauperes loquentur lapides. If the poor should hold their peace, the very stones would speak. The fines, rackings, enclosures, oppressions, vexations, will cry to God for vengeance. "The stone will cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." Habakkuk 2:11. You see the beasts they hunt. Not foxes, not wolves, nor boars, bulls, nor tigers. It is a certain observation, no beast hunts its own kind to devour it. Now, if these should prosecute wolves, foxes, &c., they should then hunt their own kind; for they are these themselves, or rather worse than these, because here homo homini lupus. But though they are men they hunt, and by nature of the same kind, they are not so by quality, for they are lambs they persecute. In them there is blood, and flesh, and fleece to be had; and therefore on these do they gorge themselves. In them there is weak armour of defence against their cruelties; therefore over these they may domineer. I will speak it boldly: there is not a mighty Nimrod in this land that dares hunt his equal; but over his inferior lamb he insults like a young Nero. Let him be graced by high ones, and he must not be saluted under twelve score off. In the country he proves a termagant; his very scowl is a prodigy, and breeds an earthquake. He would be a Caesar, and tax all. It is well if he prove not a cannibal! Only Macro salutes Sejanus so long as he is in Tiberius's favour; cast him from that pinnacle, and the dog is ready to devour him. Thomas Adams.
Verse 9. "He draweth him into his net." "They hunt with a net." Micah 7:2. They have their politic gins to catch men; gaudy wares and dark shops (and would you have them love the light that live by darkness, as many shopkeepers?) draw and tole customers in, where the crafty leeches can soon feel their pulses: if they must buy they shall pay for their necessity. And though they plead, We compel none to buy our ware, *caveat emptor*; yet with fine voluble phrases, damnable protestations, they will cast a mist of error before an eye of simple truth, and with cunning devices hunt them in. So some among us have feathered their nests, not by open violence, but politic circumvention. They have sought the golden fleece, not by Jason's merit, but by Medea's subtlety, by Medea's sorcery. If I should intend to discover these hunter's plots, and to deal punctually with them, I should afford you more matter than you would afford me time. But I limit myself and answer all their plans with Augustine. Their tricks may hold *in jure fori*, but not *in jure poli*—in the common-pleas of earth, not before the king's bench in heaven. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 9. Oppression turns princes into roaring lions, and judges into ravening wolves. It is an unnatural sin, against the light of nature. No creatures do oppress them of their own kind. Look upon the birds of prey, as upon eagles, vultures, hawks, and you shall never find them preying upon their own kind. Look upon the beasts of the forest, as upon the lion, the tiger, the wolf, the bear, and you shall ever find them favourable to their own kind; and yet men unnaturally prey upon one another, like the fish in the sea, the great swallowing up the small. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 10. "He croucheth, and humbleth himself," etc. There is nothing too mean or servile for them, in the attempt to achieve their sinister ends. You shall see his holiness the Pope washing the pilgrims' feet, if such a stratagem be necessary to act in the minds of the deluded multitude; or you shall see him sitting on a throne of purple, if he wishes to awe and control the kings of the earth. *John Morison.*

Verse 10 If you take a wolf in a lambskin, hang him up; for he is the worst of the generation. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 11. "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten." Is it not a senseless thing to be careless of sins committed long ago? The old sins forgotten by men, stick fast in an infinite understanding. Time cannot raze out that which hath been known from eternity. Why should they be forgotten many years after they were acted, since they were foreknown in an eternity before they were committed, or the criminal capable to practice them? Amalek must pay their arrears of their ancient unkindness to Israel in the time of Saul, though the
generation that committed them were rotten in their graves. 1 Samuel 15:2. Old sins are written in a book, which lies always before God; and not only our own sins, but the sins of our fathers, to be requited upon their posterity. "Behold it is written." Isaiah 65:6. What a vanity is it then to be regardless of the sins of an age that went before us; because they are in some measure out of our knowledge, are they therefore blotted out of God's remembrance? Sins are bound up with him, as men do bonds, till they resolve to sue for the debt. "The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up." Hosea 13:12. As his foreknowledge extends to all acts that shall be done, so his remembrance extends to all acts that have been done. We may as well say, God foreknows nothing that shall be done to the end of the world, as that he forgets anything that hath been done from the beginning of the world. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 11. "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it." Many say in their hearts, "God seeth them not," while with their tongues they confess he is an all-seeing God. The heart hath a tongue in it as well as the head, and these two tongues seldom speak the same language. While the head tongue saith, "We cannot hide ourselves from the sight of God," the heart-tongue of wicked men will say, "God will hide himself from us, he will not see." But if their heart speak not thus, then as the prophet saith (Isaiah 29:15), "They dig deep to hide their counsel from the Lord," surely they have a hope to hide their counsels, else they would not dig deep to hide them. Their digging is not proper, but tropical; as men dig deep to hide what they would not have in the earth, so they by their wits, plots, and devices, do their best to hide their counsels from God, and they say, "Who seeth, who knoweth? We, surely, are not seen either by God or man." Joseph Caryl.

Verse 11. The Scripture everywhere places sin upon this root. "God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it." He hath turned his back upon the world. This was the ground of the oppression of the poor by the wicked, which he mentions, verses 9, 10. There is no sin but receives both its birth and nourishment from this bitter root. Let the notion of providence be once thrown out, or the belief of it faint, how will ambition, covetousness, neglect of God, distrust, impatience, and all other bitter gourds, grow up in a night! It is from this topic all iniquity will draw arguments to encourage itself; for nothing so much discountenances those rising corruptions, and puts them out of heart, as an actuated belief that God takes care of human affairs. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 11. "He hath said in his heart," etc. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11. God forbears punishing, therefore men
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forbear repenting. He doth not smite upon their back by correction, therefore they do not smite upon their thigh by humiliation. Jeremiah 31:19. The sinner thinks thus; "God hath spared me all this while, he hath eeked out patience into longsuffering; surely he will not punish." "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten." God sometimes in infinite patience adjourns his judgments and puts off the sessions a while longer, he is not willing to punish. 2 Peter 3:9. The bee naturally gives honey, but stings only when it is angered. The Lord would have men make their peace with him. Isaiah 27:5. God is not like a hasty creditor that requires the debt, and will give no time for the payment; he is not only gracious, but "waits to be gracious" (Isaiah 30:18); but God by his patience would bribe sinners to repentance; but alas! how is this patience abused. God's longsuffering hardens: because God stops the vials of his wrath, sinners stop the conduit of tears. Thomas Watson.

Verse 11. "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it." Because the Lord continues to spare them, therefore they go on to provoke him. As he adds to their lives, so they add to their lusts. What is this, but as if a man should break all his bones because there is a surgeon who is able to set them again? . . . . . Because justice seems to wink, men suppose her blind; because she delays punishment, they imagine she denies to punish them; because she does not always reprove them for their sins, they suppose she always approves of their sins, But let such know, that the silent arrow can destroy as well as the roaring cannon. Though the patience of God be lasting, yet it is not everlasting. William Secker.

Verses 11, 12, 13. The atheist denies God's ordering of sublunary matters. "Tush, doth the Lord see, or is there knowledge in the Most High?" making him a maimed Deity, without an eye of providence, or an arm of power, and at most restraining him only to matters above the clouds. But he that dares to confine the King of heaven, will soon after endeavour to depose him, and fall at last flatly to deny him. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 13. "He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it." As when the desperate pirate, ransacking and rifling a bottom was told by the master, that though no law could touch him for the present, he should answer it at the day of judgment, replied, "If I may stay so long ere I come to it, I will take thee and thy vessel too." A conceit wherewith too many land-thieves and oppressors flatter themselves in their hearts, though they dare not utter it with their lips. Thomas Adams.

Verses 13, 14. What, do you think that God doth not remember our sins which we do not regard? for while we sin the score runs on, and the Judge setteth
down all in the table of remembrance, and his scroll reacheth up to heaven. Item, for lending to usury; item, for racking of rents; item, for starching thy ruffs; item, for curling thy hair; item, for painting thy face; item, for selling of benefices; item, for starving of souls; item, for playing at cards; item, for sleeping in the church; item, for profaning the Sabbath-day, with a number more hath God to call to account, for everyone must answer for himself. The fornicator, for taking of filthy pleasure; the careless prelate, for murthering so many thousand souls; the landlord, for getting money from his poor tenants by racking of his rents; see the rest, all they shall come like very sheep when the trumpet shall sound and the heaven and the earth shall come to judgment against them; when the heavens shall vanish like a scroll, and the earth shall consume like fire, and all the creatures standing against them; the rocks shall cleave asunder, and the mountains shake, and the foundation of the earth shall tremble, and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us, fall upon us, and hide us from the presence of his anger and wrath whom we have not cared to offend. But they shall not be covered and hid; but then shall they go the back way, to the snakes and serpents, to be tormented of devils for ever.

Henry Smith.

Verse 14. "Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hands," etc. This should be a terror to the wicked, to think that whatsoever they do, they do it in the sight of him that shall judge them, and call them to a strict account for every thought conceived against his majesty; and therefore, it should make them afraid to sin; because that when they burn with lust, and toil with hatred, when they scorn the just and wrong the innocent, they do all this, not only in conspectu Dei, within the compass of God's sight, but also in sinu divinitatis, in the bosom of that Deity, who, though he suffered them for a time to run on, like "a wild ass used to in the wilderness," yet he will find them out at the last, and then cut them off and destroy them. And as this is terror unto the wicked, so it may be a comfort unto the godly to think that he who should hear their prayers and send them help, is so near unto them; and it should move them to rely still upon him, because we are sure of his presence wherever we are. G. Williams, 1636.

Verse 14. "The poor committeth himself unto thee." The awkwardness of our hearts to suffer comes much from distrust. An unbelieving soul treads upon the promise as a man upon ice; at first going upon it he is full of fears and tumultuous thoughts lest it should crack. Now, daily resignation of thy heart, as it will give thee an occasion of conversing more with the thoughts of God's power, faithfulness, and other of his attributes (for want of familiarity with which, jealousies arise in our hearts when put to any great plunge), so also it will furnish thee with many experiences of the reality both of his attributes and
promises; which, though they need not any testimony from sense, to gain them
credit with us, yet so much are we made of sense, so childish and weak is our
faith, that we find our hearts much helped by those experiences we have had, to
rely on him for the future. Look, therefore, carefully to this; every morning
leave thyself and ways in God's hand, as the phrase is. Psalm 10:14. And at
night look again how well God hath looked to his trust, and sleep not till thou
hast affected thy heart with his faithfulness, and laid a stronger charge on thy
heart to trust itself again in God's keeping in the night. And when any breach is
made, and seeming loss befalls thee in any enjoyment, which thou hast by faith
insured of thy God, observe how God fills up that breach, and makes up that
loss to thee; and rest not till thou hast fully vindicated the good name of God to
thy own heart. Be sure thou lettest no discontent or dissatisfaction lie upon thy
spirit at God's dealings; but chide thy heart for it, as David did his. Psalm 42.
And thus doing, with God's blessing, thou shalt keep thy faith in breath for a
longer race, when called to run it. William Gurnall.

Verse 14. "Thou art the helper of the fatherless." God doth exercise a more
special province over men, as clothed with miserable circumstances; and
therefore among his other titles this is one, to be a "helper of the fatherless." It
is the argument the church used to express her return to God; Hosea 14:3, "For
in thee the fatherless find mercy." Now what greater comfort is there than this,
that there is one presides in the world who is so wise he cannot be mistaken, so
faithful he cannot deceive, so pitiful he cannot neglect his people, and so
powerful that he can make stones even to be turned into bread if he please! . . . .
. . God doth not govern the world only by his will as an absolute monarch, but
by his wisdom and goodness as a tender father. It is not his greatest pleasure to
show his sovereign power, or his inconceivable wisdom, but his immense
goodness, to which he makes the other attributes subservient. Stephen
Charnock.

Verse 14. "Thou hast seen it," etc. If God did not see our ways, we might sin
and go unpunished; but foreasmuch as he seeth them with purer eyes than to
behold iniquity and approve it, he is engaged both in justice and honour to
punish all that iniquity of our ways which he seeth or beholdeth. David makes
this the very design of God's superintendency over the ways of men: "Thou
hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand:
the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless."
Thus the psalmist represents the Lord as having taken a view or survey of the
ways of men. "Thou hast seen." What hath God seen? Even all that wickedness
and oppression of the poor spoken of in the former part of the Psalm, as also
the blasphemy of the wicked against himself (verse 13), "Wherefore doth the
wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it." What saith the psalmist concerning God, to this vain, confident man? "Thou," saith he, "beholdest mischief and spite;" but to what purpose? the next words tell us that— "to requite it with thy hand." As thou hast seen what mischief they have done spitefully, so in due time thou wilt requite it righteously. The Lord is not a bare spectator, he is both a rewarer and an avenger. Therefore, from the ground of this truth, that the Lord seeth all our ways, and counteth all our steps, we, as the prophet exhorts (Isaiah 3:10, 11), may "say to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." We may also say, "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Only idols which have eyes and see not, have hands and strike not. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 14. "Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless." Let the poor know that their God doth take care of them, to visit their sins with rods who spoil them, seeing they have forgotten that we are members one of another, and have invaded the goods of their brethren; God will arm them against themselves, and beat them with their own staves; either their own compassing and over-reaching wits shall consume their store, or their unthrifty posterity shall put wings upon their riches to make them fly; or God shall not give them the blessing to take use of their wealth, but they shall leave to such as shall be merciful to the poor. Therefore let them follow the wise man's counsel (Ecclesiastes 10:20), "Curse not the rich, no, not in thy bedchamber;" let no railing and unchristian bitterness wrong a good cause; let it be comfort enough to them that God is both their supporter and avenger. Is it not sufficient to lay all the storms of discontent against their oppressors, that God sees their affliction, and cometh down to deliver and avenge them?
Edward Marbury.

Verse 14. "Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand," etc. God considers all your works and ways, and will not you consider the works, the ways of God? Of this be sure, whether you consider the ways of God, his word-ways, or work-ways, of this be sure, God will consider your ways, certainly he will; those ways of yours which in themselves are not worth the considering or looking upon, your sinful ways, though they are so vile, so abominable, that if yourselves did but look upon them and consider them, you would be utterly ashamed of them; yea, though they are an abomination to God while he beholds them, yet he will behold and consider them. The Lord who is of purer eyes than to behold any the least iniquity, to approve it, will yet behold the greatest of your iniquities, and your impurest
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ways to consider them. "Thou," saith David, "beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it:" God beholdeth the foulest, dirtiest ways of men, their ways of oppression and unrighteousness, their ways of intemperance and lasciviousness, their ways of wrath and maliciousness, at once to detest, detect, and requite them. If God thus considereth the ways of men, even those filthy and crooked ways of men, should not men consider the holy, just, and righteous ways of God? Joseph Caryl.

Verses 14-18. "God delights to help the poor." He loves to take part with the best, though the weakest side. Contrary to the course of most, who when a controversy arises use to stand in a kind of indifferency or neutrality, till they see which part is strongest, not which is justest. Now if there be any consideration (besides the cause) that draws or engages God, it is the weakness of the side. He joins with many, because they are weak, not with any, because they are strong; therefore he is called the helper of the friendless, and with him the fatherless, (the orphans) find mercy. By fatherless we are not to understand such only whose parents are dead, but any one that is in distress; as Christ promised his disciples; "I will not leave you orphans," that is, helpless, and (as we translate) comfortless; though ye are as children without a father, yet I will be a father to you. Men are often like those clouds which dissolve into the sea; they send presents to the rich, and assist the strong; but God sends his rain upon the dry land, and lends his strength to those who are weak. . . . The prophet makes this report to God of himself (Isaiah 30:4): "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm," etc. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 16. "The Lord is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land." Such confidence and faith must appear to the world strange and unaccountable. It is like what his fellow citizens may be supposed to have felt (if the story be true) toward that man of whom it is recorded, that his powers of vision were so extraordinary, that he could distinctly see the fleet of the Carthaginians entering the harbour of Carthage, while he stood himself at Lilyboem, in Sicily. A man seeing across an ocean, and able to tell of objects so far off! he could feast his vision on what others saw not. Even thus does faith now stand at its Lilyboem, and see the long tossed fleet entering safely the desired haven, enjoying the bliss of that still distant day, as if it were already come. Andrew A. Bonar.

Verse 17. There is a humbling act of faith put forth in prayer. Others style it praying in humility; give me leave to style it praying in faith. In faith which sets the soul in the presence of that mighty God, and by the sight of him, which faith gives us, it is that we see our own vileness, sinfulness, and abhor
ourselves, and profess ourselves unworthy of any, much less of those mercies we are to seek for. Thus the sight of God had wrought in the prophet (Isaiah 6:5), "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." And holy Job speaks thus (Job 42:5, 6), "Now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This is as great a requisite to prayer as any other act; I may say of it alone, as the apostle (James 1:7), that without it we shall receive nothing at the hands of God! God loves to fill empty vessels, he looks to broken hearts. In the Psalms how often do we read that God hears the prayers of the humble; which always involves and includes faith in it. Psalm 9:12, "He forgetteth not the cry of the humble," and Psalm 10:17, "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." To be deeply humbled is to have the heart prepared and fitted for God to hear the prayer; and therefore you find the psalmist pleading sub forma pauperis, often repeating, "I am poor and needy." And this prevents our thinking much if God do not grant the particular thing we do desire. Thus also Christ himself in his great distress (Psalm 22), doth treat God (verse 2), "O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season am not silent. Our fathers trusted in thee. They cried unto thee, and were delivered. But I am a worm, and no man; reproached of men, and despised of the people; (verse 6)" and he was "heard" in the end "in what he feared." And these deep humblings of ourselves, being joined with vehement implorations upon the mercy of God to obtain, is reckoned into the account of praying by faith, both by God and Christ. Matthew 8. Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 17. "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble." A spiritual prayer is a humble prayer. Prayer is the asking of an alms, which requires humility. "The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13. God's incomprehensible glory may even amaze us and strike a holy consternation into us when we approach nigh unto him: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee." Ezra 9:6. It is comely to see a poor nothing lie prostrate at the feet of its Maker. "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." Genesis 18:27. The lower the heart descends, the higher the prayer ascends. Thomas Watson.

Verse 17. "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble," etc. How pleasant is it, that these benefits, which are of so great a value both on their own account, and that of the divine benignity from whence they come, should be delivered into our hands, marked, as it were, with this grateful inscription, that they have been obtained by prayer! Robert Leighton.
Verse 17. "The desire of the humble." Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God in the name of Christ, for such things as are agreeable to his will. It is an offering of our desires. Desires are the soul and life of prayer; words are but the body; now as the body without the soul is dead, so are prayers unless they are animated with our desires: "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble." God heareth not words, but desires. Thomas Watson.


Verse 17. He that sits nearest the dust, sits nearest heaven. Andrew Gray, of Glasgow, 1616.

Verse 17. There is a kind of omnipotency in prayer, as having an interest and prevalency with God's omnipotency. It hath loosed iron chains (Acts 16:25, 26); it hath opened iron gates (Acts 12:5-10); it hath unlocked the windows of heaven (1 Kings 18:41); it hath broken the bars of death (John 11:40, 43). Satan hath three titles given in the Scriptures, setting forth his malignity against the church of God: a dragon, to note his malice; a serpent, to note his subtlety; and a lion, to note his strength. But none of all these can stand before prayer. The greatest malice of Haman sinks under the prayer of Esther; the deepest policy, the counsel of Ahithophel, withers before the prayer of David; the largest army, a host of a thousand Ethiopians, run away like cowards before the prayer of Asa. Edward Reynolds, 1599-1676.

Verse 18. "To judge the fatherless and the oppressed," etc. The tears of the poor fall down upon their cheeks, et ascendunt ad coelum, and go up to heaven and cry for vengeance before God, the judge of widows, the father of widows and orphans. Poor people be oppressed even by laws. Woe worth to them that make evil laws against the poor, what shall be to them that hinder and mar good laws? What will ye do in the day of great vengeance when God shall visit you? he saith he will hear the tears of the poor women, when he goeth on visitation. For their sake he will hurt the judge, be he never so high, he will for widows' sakes change realms, bring them into temptation, pluck the judges' skins over their heads. Cambyses was a great emperor, such another as our master is, he had many lord deputies, lord presidents, and lieutenants under him. It is a great while ago since I read the history. It chanced he had under him in one of his dominions a briber, a gift-taker, a gratifier of rich men; he followed gifts as fast as he that followed the pudding; a handmaker in his office, to make his son a great man, as the old saying is, "Happy is the child whose father goeth to the devil." The cry of the poor widow came to the emperor's ear, and caused him to slay the judge quick, and laid his skin in his chair of judgment, that all judges that should give judgment afterward, should sit in the same skin. Surely it was a
goodly sign, a goodly monument, the sign of the judges skin. I pray God we may once see the sign of the skin in England. Ye will say, peradventure, that this is cruelly and uncharitably spoken. No, no; I do it charitably, for a love I bear to my country. God saith, "I will visit." God hath two visitations; the first is when he revealeth his word by preachers; and where the first is accepted, the second cometh not. The second visitation is vengeance. He went to visitation when he brought the judges skin over his ears. If this word be despised, he cometh with the second visitation with vengeance. Hugh Latimer, 1480 - 1555.

Verse 18. "Man of the earth," etc. In the eighth Psalm (which is a circular Psalm, ending as it did begin, "O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the world!" That whithersoever we turn our eyes, upwards or downwards, we may see ourselves beset with his glory round about), how doth the prophet base and discountenance the nature and whole race of man; as may appear by his disdainful and derogatory interrogation, "What is man that thou art mindful of him; and the Son of Man, that thou regardest him?" In the ninth Psalm, "Rise, Lord; let not man have the upper hand; let the nations be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O Lord, that the heathen may know themselves to be but men." Further, in the tenth Psalm, "Thou judgest the fatherless and the poor, that the man of the earth do no more violence."

The Psalms, as they go in order, so, methinks they grow in strength, and each hath a weightier force to throw down our presumption. 1. We are "men," and the "sons of men," to show our descent and propagation. 2. "Men in our own knowledge," to show that conscience and experience of infirmity doth convict us. 3. "Men of the earth," to show our original matter whereof we are framed. In the twenty-second Psalm, he addeth more disgrace; for either in his own name, regarding the misery and contempt wherein he was held, or in the person of Christ, whose figure he was, as if it were robbery for him to take upon him the nature of man, he falleth to a lower style, at ego sum vermis et non vir; but I am a worm, and no man. For as corruption is the father of all flesh, so are the worms his brethren and sisters according to the old verse—

"First man, next worms, then stench and loathsomeness, Thus man to no man alters by changes."

Abraham, the father of the faithful (Genesis 18), sifteth himself into the coarsest man that can be, and resolveth his nature into the elements whereof it first rose: "Behold I have begun to speak to my Lord, being dust and ashes." And if any of the children of Abraham, who succeed him in the faith, or any of the children of Adam, who succeed him in the flesh, thinketh otherwise, let him know that there is a threefold cord twisted by the finger of God, that shall tie him to his first original, though he contend till his heart break. "O earth, earth,
earth, hear the word of the Lord" (Jeremiah 22); that is, earth by creation, earth by continuance, earth by resolution. Thou camest earth, thou remainest earth, and to earth thou must return. John King.


HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The answer to these questions furnishes a noble topic for an experimental sermon. Let me suggest that the question is not to be answered in the same manner in all cases. Past sin, trials of graces, strengthening of faith, discovery of depravity, instruction, etc., etc., are varied reasons for the hiding of our Father's face.

Verse 2. Religious persecution in all its phases based on pride.


Verse 4. Pride the barrier in the way of conversion.

Verse 4 (last clause). Thoughts in which God is not, weighed and condemned.

Verse 5. "Thy judgments are far above out of his sight." Moral inability of men to appreciate the character and acts of God.

Verse 6. The vain confidence of sinners.

Verse 8. Dangers of godly men, or the snares in the way of believers.


Verse 9 (last clause). The Satanic fisherman, his art, diligence, success, etc.

Verse 10. Designing humility unmasked.


Verse 12. "Arise, O Lord." A prayer needful, allowable, seasonable, etc.

Verse 13 (first clause). An astounding fact, and a reasonable enquiry.
   I. By whom indulged: "the wicked."
   II. Where fostered: "in his heart."
   III. For what purpose: quieting of conscience, etc.
   IV. With what practical tendency: "contemn God." He who disbelieves
   hell, distrusts heaven.

   I. Who doubt it? and why?
   II. Who believe it? and what does this faith cause them to do?

Verse 14 (last clause). A plea for orphans.


Verse 17 (first clause).
   I. The Christian's character—"humble."
   II. An attribute of the Christian's whole life—"desire:" he desires more
   holiness, communion, knowledge, grace, and usefulness; and then he desires
   glory.
   III. The Christian's great blessedness—"Lord, thou hast heard the desire of
   the humble."

Verse 17 (whole verse).
   I. Consider the nature of gracious desires.
   II. Their origin.
   III. Their result.
   The three sentences readily suggest these divisions, and the subject may be
   very profitable.
Psalm 11

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

SUBJECT. Charles Simeon gives an excellent summary of this Psalm in the following sentences:—"The Psalms are a rich repository of experimental knowledge. David, at the different periods of his life, was placed in almost every situation in which a believer, whether rich or poor, can be placed; in these heavenly compositions he delineates all the workings of the heart. He introduces, too, the sentiments and conduct of the various persons who were accessory either to his troubles or his joys; and thus sets before us a compendium of all that is passing in the hearts of men throughout the world. When he penned this Psalm he was under persecution from Saul, who sought his life, and hunted him 'as a partridge upon the mountains.' His timid friends were alarmed for his safety, and recommended him to flee to some mountain where he had a hiding-place, and thus to conceal himself from the rage of Saul. But David, being strong in faith, spurned the idea of resorting to any such pusillanimous expedients, and determined confidently to repose his trust in God."

To assist us to remember this short, but sweet Psalm, we will give it the name of "THE SONG OF THE STEADFAST."

DIVISION. From 1 to 3, David describes the temptation with which he was assailed, and from 4 to 7, the arguments by which his courage was sustained.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. These verses contain an account of a temptation to distrust God, with which David was, upon some unmentioned occasion, greatly exercised. It may be, that in the days when he was in Saul's court, he was advised to flee at a time when this flight would have been charged against him as a breach of duty to the king, or a proof of personal cowardice. His case was like that of Nehemiah, when his enemies, under the garb of friendship, hoped to entrap him by advising him to escape for his life. Had he done so, they could then have found a ground of accusation. Nehemiah bravely replied, "Shall such a man as I flee?" and David, in a like spirit, refuses to retreat, exclaiming, "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" When Satan cannot overthrow us by presumption, how craftily will he seek to ruin us by distrust! He will employ our dearest friends to argue us out of our confidence, and he will use such plausible logic, that unless we once for all assert our immovable trust in Jehovah, he will make us like the timid bird which flies to the mountain whenever danger presents itself.

Verse 2. How forcibly the case is put! The bow is bent, the arrow is fitted to the string: "Flee, flee, thou defenceless bird, thy safety lies in flight; begone, for thine enemies will send their shafts into thy heart; haste, haste, for soon wilt thou be destroyed!" David seems to have felt the force of the advice, for it
came home _to his soul_: but yet he would not yield, but would rather dare the danger than exhibit a distrust in the Lord his God. Doubtless the perils which encompassed David were great and imminent; it was quite true that his enemies were _ready_ to _shoot privily_ at him.

Verse 3. It was equally correct that the very _foundations_ of law and justice were _destroyed_ under Saul's unrighteous government: but what were all these things to the man whose trust was in God alone? He could brave the dangers, could escape the enemies, and defy the injustice which surrounded him. His answer to the question, "What can the righteous do?" would be the counter-question, "What cannot they do?" When prayer engages God on our side, and when faith secures the fulfillment of the promise, what cause can there be for flight, however cruel and mighty our enemies? With a sling and a stone, David had smitten a giant before whom the whole hosts of Israel were trembling, and the Lord, who delivered him from the uncircumcised Philistine, could surely deliver him from King Saul and his myrmidons. There is no such word as "impossibility" in the language of faith; that martial grace knows how to fight and conquer, but she knows not how to flee.

Verse 4. David here declares the great source of his unflinching courage. He borrows his light from heaven—from the great central orb of deity. The God of the believer is never far from him; he is not merely the God of the mountain fastnesses, but of the dangerous valleys and battle plains.

"_Jehovah is in his holy temple._" The heavens are above our heads in all regions of the earth, and so is the Lord ever near to us in every state and condition. This is a very strong reason why we should not adopt the vile suggestions of distrust. There is one who pleads his precious blood in our behalf in the temple above, and there is one upon the throne who is never deaf to the intercession of his Son. Why, then, should we fear? What plots can men devise which Jesus will not discover? Satan has doubtless desired to have us, that he may sift us as wheat, but Jesus is in the temple praying for us, and how can our faith fail? What attempts can the wicked make which Jehovah shall not behold? And since he is in his holy temple, delighting in the sacrifice of his Son, will he not defeat every device, and send us a sure deliverance?

"_Jehovah's throne is in the heavens;_" he reigns supreme. Nothing can be done in heaven, or earth, or hell, which he doth not ordain and over-rule. He is the world's great Emperor. Wherefore, then, should we flee? If we trust this King of kings, is not this enough? Cannot he deliver us without our cowardly retreat? Yes, blessed be the Lord our God, we can salute him as Jehovah-nissi; in his name we set up our banners, and instead of flight, we once more raise the shout of war.
"His eyes behold." The eternal Watcher never slumbers; his eyes never know a sleep. "His eyelids try the children of men:" he narrowly inspects their actions, words, and thoughts. As men, when intently and narrowly inspecting some very minute object, almost close their eyelids to exclude every other object, so will the Lord look all men through and through. God sees each man as much and as perfectly as if there were no other creature in the universe. He sees us always; he never removes his eye from us; he sees us entirely, reading the recesses of the soul as readily as the glancings of the eye. Is not this a sufficient ground of confidence, and an abundant answer to the solicitations of despondency? My danger is not hid from him; he knows my extremity, and I may rest assured that he will not suffer me to perish while I rely alone on him. Wherefore, then, should I take wings of a timid bird, and flee from the dangers which beset me?

Verse 5. "The Lord trieth the righteous:" he doth not hate them, but only tries them. They are precious to him, and therefore he refines them with afflictions. None of the Lord's children may hope to escape from trial, nor, indeed, in our right minds, would any of us desire to do so, for trial is the channel of many blessings.

"Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross;
But the Saviour's power to know,
Sanctifying every loss.

* * * * * * * *

Trials make the promise sweet;
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring me to his feet—
Lay me low, and keep me there.

Did I meet no trials here—
No chastisement by the way—
Might I not, with reason, fear
I should prove a cast-away?

Bastards may escape the rod,
Sunk in earthly vain delight;
But the true-born child of God
Must not—would not, if he might."
Is not this a very cogent reason why we should not distrustfully endeavour to shun a trial?—for in so doing we are seeking to avoid a blessing.

Verse 6. "But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth:" why, then, shall I flee from these wicked men? If God hateth them, I will not fear them. Haman was very great in the palace until he lost favour, but when the king abhorred him, how bold were the meanest attendants to suggest the gallows for the man at whom they had often trembled! Look at the black mark upon the faces of our persecutors, and we shall not run away from them. If God is in the quarrel as well as ourselves, it would be foolish to question the result, or avoid the conflict. Sodom and Gomorrah perished by a fiery hail, and by a brimstone shower from heaven; so shall all the ungodly. They may gather together like Gog and Magog to battle, but the Lord will rain upon them "an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone:" Ezekiel 38:22. Some expositors think that in the term "horrible tempest," there is in the Hebrew an allusion to that burning, suffocating wind, which blows across the Arabian deserts, and is known by the name of Simoom. "A burning storm," Lowth calls it, while another great commentator reads it "wrathwind;" in either version the language is full of terrors. What a tempest will that be which shall overwhelm the despisers of God! Oh! what a shower will that be which shall pour out itself for ever upon the defenceless heads of impenitent sinners in hell! Repent, ye rebels, or this fiery deluge shall soon surround you. Hell's horrors shall be your inheritance, your entailed estate, "the portion of your cup." The dregs of that cup you shall wring out, and drink for ever. A drop of hell is terrible, but what must a full cup of torment be? Think of it—a cup of misery, but not a drop of mercy. O people of God, how foolish is it to fear the faces of men who shall soon be faggots in the fire of hell! Think of their end, their fearful end, and all fear of them must be changed into contempt of their threatenings, and pity for their miserable estate.

Verse 7. The delightful contrast of the last verse is well worthy of our observation, and it affords another overwhelming reason why we should be stedfast, unmoveable, not carried away with fear, or led to adopt carnal expedients in order to avoid trial. "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness." It is not only his office to defend it, but his nature to love it. He would deny himself if he did not defend the just. It is essential to the very being of God that he should be just; fear not, then, the end of all your trials, but "be just, and fear not." God approves, and, if men oppose, what matters it? "His countenance doth behold the upright." We need never be out of countenance, for God countenances us. He observes, he approves, he delights in the upright.
He sees his own image in them, an image of his own fashioning, and therefore with complacency he regards them. Shall we dare to put forth our hand unto iniquity in order to escape affliction? Let us have done with by-ways and short turnings, and let us keep to that fair path of right along which Jehovah's smile shall light us. Are we tempted to put our light under a bushel, to conceal our religion from our neighbours? Is it suggested to us that there are ways of avoiding the cross, and shunning the reproach of Christ? Let us not hearken to the voice of the charmer, but seek an increase of faith, that we may wrestle with principalities and powers, and follow the Lord, fully going without the camp, bearing his reproach. Mammon, the flesh, the devil, will all whisper in our ear, "Flee as a bird to your mountain;" but let us come forth and defy them all. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." There is no room or reason for retreat. Advance! Let the vanguard push on! To the front! all ye powers and passions of our soul. On! on! in God's name, on! for "the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. The most probable account of the occasion of this Psalm is that given by Amyraldus. He thinks it was composed by David while he was in the court of Saul, at a time when the hostility of the king was beginning to show itself, and before it had broken out into open persecution. David's friends, or those professing to be so, advised him to flee to his native mountains for a time, and remain in retirement, till the king should show himself more favourable. David does not at that time accept the counsel, though afterwards he seems to have followed it. This Psalm applies itself to the establishment of the church against the calumnies of the world and the compromising counsel of man, in that confidence which is to be placed in God the Judge of all. W. Wilson, D.D., in loc., 1860.

Whole Psalm. If one may offer to make a modest conjecture, it is not improbable this Psalm might be composed on the sad murder of the priests by Saul (1 Samuel 22:19), when after the slaughter of Abimelech, the high priest, Doeg, the Edomite, by command from Saul, "slew in one day fourscore and five persons which wore a linen ephod." I am not so carnal as to build the spiritual church of the Jews on the material walls of the priests' city at Nob (which then by Doeg was smitten with the edge of the sword), but this is most true, that "knowledge must preserve the people;" and (Malachi 2:7), "The priests' lips shall preserve knowledge;" and then it is easy to conclude, what an earthquake this massacre might make in the foundations of religion. Thomas Fuller.
Whole Psalm. Notice how remarkably the whole Psalm corresponds with the deliverance of Lot from Sodom. This verse, with the angel's exhortation, "Escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed," and Lot's reply, "I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil take me and I die." Genesis 19:17-19. And again, "The Lord's seat is in heaven, and upon the ungodly he shall rain snares, fire, brimstone, storm and tempest," with "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven:" and again "His countenance will behold the thing that is just," with "Delivered just Lot . . . for that righteous man vexed his righteous soul with their ungodly deeds." 2 Peter 2: 7, 8. Cassidorus (A.D., 560) in John Mason Neal's "Commentary on the Psalms, from Primitive and Mediaeval Writers," 1860.

Whole Psalm. The combatants at the Lake Thrasyymene are said to have been so engrossed with the conflict that neither party perceived the convulsions of nature that shook the ground—

"An earthquake reeled unheedingly away,
None felt stern nature rocking at his feet."

From a nobler cause, it is thus with the soldiers of the Lamb. They believe, and, therefore, make no haste; nay, they can scarcely be said to feel earth's convulsions as other men, because their eager hope presses forward to the issue at the advent of the Lord. Andrew A. Bonar.

Verse 1. "I trust in the Lord: how do ye say to my soul, Swerve on to your mountain like a bird?" (others, "O thou bird.") Saul and his adherents mocked and jeered David with such taunting speeches, as conceiving that he knew no other shift or refuge, but so betaking himself unto wandering and lurking on the mountains; hopping, as it were, from one place to another like a silly bird; but they thought to ensnare and take him well enough for all that, not considering God who was David's comfort, rest and refuge. Theodore Haak's "Translation of the Dutch Annotations, as ordered by the Synod of Dort, in 1618." London, 1657.

Verse 1. "With Jehovah I have taken shelter; how say ye to my soul, Flee, sparrows, to your hill?" "Your hill," that hill from which you say your help cometh: a sneer. Repair to that boasted hill, which may indeed give you the help which it gives the sparrow: a shelter against the inclemencies of a stormy sky, no defence against our power. Samuel Horsley, in loc.

Verse 1. "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" The holy confidence of the saints in the hour of great trial is
beautifully illustrated by the following ballad which Anne Askew, who was burned at Smithfield in 1546, made and sang when she was in Newgate:—

Like as the armed knight,
   Appointed to the field,
   With this world will I fight,
   And Christ shall be my shield.

Faith is that weapon strong,
   Which will not fail at need:
   My foes, therefore, among,
   Therewith will I proceed.

   As it is had in strength
   And force of Christe's way,
   It will prevail at length,
   Though all the devils say nay.

   Faith in the fathers old
   Obtained righteousness;
   Which makes me very bold
   To fear no world's distress.

I now rejoice in heart,
   And hope bids me do so;
   For Christ will take my part,
   And ease me of my woe.

Thou say'st Lord, whoso knock,
   To them wilt thou attend:
   Undo therefore the lock,
   And thy strong power send.

More enemies now I have
   Than hairs upon my head:
   Let them not me deprave,
   But fight thou in my stead.

On thee my care I cast,
   For all their cruel spite:
   I set not by their haste;
   For thou art my delight.
I am not she that list
My anchor to let fall
For every drizzling mist,
My ship substantial.

Not oft use I to write,
In prose, nor yet in rhyme;
Yet will I shew one sight
That I saw in my time.

I saw a royal throne,
Where justice should have sit,
But in her stead was one
Of moody, cruel wit.

Absorbed was righteousness,
As of the raging flood:
Satan, in his excess,
Sucked up the guiltless blood.

Then thought I, Jesus Lord,
When thou shall judge us all,
Hard it is to record
On these men what will fall.

Yet, Lord, I thee desire,
For that they do to me,
Let them not taste the hire
Of their iniquity.

Verse 1. "How say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" We may observe, that David is much pleased with the metaphor in frequently comparing himself to a bird, and that of several sorts: first, to an eagle (Psalm 103:5), "My youth is renewed like the eagle's;" sometimes to an owl (Psalm 102:6), "I am like an owl in the desert;" sometimes to a pelican, in the same verse, "Like a pelican in the wilderness;" sometimes to a sparrow (Psalm 102:7), "I watch, and am as a sparrow;" sometimes to a partridge, "As when one doth hunt a partridge." I cannot say that he doth compare himself to a dove, but he would compare himself (Psalm 55:6), "O that I had the wings of a dove, for then I would flee away and be at rest." Some will say, How is it possible that birds of so different a feather should all so fly together as to meet in the character of David? To whom we answer, That no two men can more differ one from
another, that the same servant of God at several times differeth from himself. David in prosperity, when commanding, was like an eagle; in adversity, when contemned, like an owl; in devotion, when retired, like a pelican; in solitariness, when having no company, (of Saul), like a partridge. This general metaphor of a bird, which David so often used on himself, his enemies in the first verse of this Psalm used on him, though not particularising the kind thereof: "Flee as a bird to your mountain;" that is, speedily betake thyself to thy God, in whom thou hopest for succour and security.

Seeing this counsel was both good in itself, and good at this time, why doth David seem so angry and displeased thereat? Those his words, "Why say you to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" import some passion, at leastwise, a disgust of the advice. It is answered, David was not offended with the counsel, but with the manner of the propounding thereof. His enemies did it ironically in a gibing, jeering way, as if his flying thither were to no purpose, and he unlikely to find there the safety he sought for. However, David was not hereby put out of conceit with the counsel, beginning this Psalm with this his firm resolution, "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye then to my soul," etc. Learn we from hence, when men give us good counsel in a jeering way, let us take the counsel, and practice it; and leave them the jeer to be punished for it. Indeed, corporal cordials may be envenomed by being wrapped up in poisoned papers; not so good spiritual advice where the good matter receives no infection from the ill manner of the delivery thereof. Thus, when the chief priests mocked our Saviour (Matthew 27:43), "He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him." Christ trusted in God never a whit the less for the fleere and flout which their profaneness was pleased to bestow upon him. Otherwise, if men's mocks should make us to undervalue good counsel, we might in this age be mocked out of our God, and Christ, and Scripture, and heaven; the apostle Jude, verse 18, having foretold that in the last times there should be mockers, walking after their own lusts. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 1. It is as great an offence to make a new, as to deny the true God. "In the Lord put I my trust;" how then "say ye unto my soul" (ye seducers of souls), "that she should fly unto the mountains as a bird;" to seek unnecessary and foreign helps, as if the Lord alone were not sufficient? "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and he that delivereth me, my God, and my strength; in him will I trust: my shield, the horn of my salvation, and my refuge. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be safe from mine enemies." "Whom have I in heaven but thee," amongst those thousands of angels and saints, what Michael or Gabriel, what Moses or Samuel, what Peter, what Paul? "and there is none in earth that I desire in comparison of thee." John King, 1608.
Verse 1. In temptations of inward trouble and terror, it is not convenient to dispute the matter with Satan. David in Psalm 42:11, seems to correct himself for his mistake; his soul was cast down within him, and for the cure of that temptation, he had prepared himself by arguments for a dispute; but perceiving himself in a wrong course, he calls off his soul from disquiet to an immediate application to God and the promises, "Trust still in God, for I shall yet praise him;" but here he is more aforehand with his work; for while his enemies were acted by Satan to discourage him, he rejects the temptation at first, before it settled upon his thoughts, and chaseth it away as a thing that he would not give ear to. "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" And there are weighty reasons that should dissuade us from entering the lists with Satan in temptation of inward trouble. Richard Gilpin.

Verse 1. The shadow will not cool except in it. What good to have the shadow though of a mighty rock, when we sit in the open sun? To have almighty power engaged for us, and we to throw ourselves out of it, by bold sallies in the mouth of temptation! The saints' falls have been when they have run out of their trench and stronghold; for, like the conies, they are a weak people in themselves, and their strength lies in the rock of God's almightiness, which is their habitation. William Gurnall.

Verse 1. The saints of old would not accept deliverances on base terms. They scorned to fly away for the enjoyment of rest except it were with the wings of a dove, covered with silver innocence. As willing were many of the martyrs to die as to dine. The tormentors were tired in torturing Blandina. "We are ashamed, O Emperor! The Christians laugh at your cruelty, and grow the more resolute," said one of Julian's nobles. This the heathen counted obstinacy; but they knew not the power of the Spirit, nor the secret armour of proof, which saints wear about their hearts. John Trapp.

Verse 2. "For, lo, the wicked bend their bow," etc. This verse presents an unequal combat betwixt armed power, advantaged with policy, on the one side; and naked innocence on the other. First, armed power: "They bend their bows, and make ready their arrows," being all the artillery of that age; secondly, advantaged with policy: "that they may privily shoot," to surprise them with an ambush unawares, probably pretending amity and friendship unto them; thirdly, naked innocence: if innocence may be termed naked, which is its own armour; "at the upright in heart." Thomas Fuller.

Verse 2. "For, lo, the ungodly bend their bow, and make ready their arrows within the quiver: that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart." The plottings of the chief priests and Pharisees that they might take Jesus by
subtlety and kill him. They bent their bow, when they hired Judas Iscariot for
the betrayal of his Master; they made ready their arrows within the quiver when
they sought "false witnesses against Jesus to put him to death." Matthew 26:59.
"Them which are true of heart." Not alone the Lord himself, the only true and
righteous, but his apostles, and the long line of those who should faithfully
cleave to him from that time to this. And as with the Master, so with the
servants: witness the calumnies and the revilings that from the time of Joseph's
accusation by his mistress till the present day, have been the lot of God's

*Verse 2.* "That they may secretly shoot at them which are upright in heart."
They bear not their bows and arrows as scarecrows in a garden of cucumbers,
to fray, but *to shoot*, not at stakes, but men; their arrows are *jacula mortifera*
(Psalm 7), deadly arrows, and lest they should fail to hit, they take advantage of
the dark, of privacy and secrecy; they shoot *privily*. Now this is the covenant of
hell itself. For what created power in the earth is able to dissolve that work
which *cruelty* and *subtlety*, like Simeon and Levi, brothers in evil, are
combined and confederate to bring to pass? Where subtlety is ingenious,
insidious to invent, cruelty barbarous to execute, subtlety giveth counsel,
cruelty giveth the stroke. Subtlety ordereth the time, the place, the means,
accomodateth, concinnateth circumstances; cruelty undertaketh the act: subtlety
hideth the knife, cruelty cutteth the throat: subtlety with a cunning head layeth
the ambush, plotteth the train, the stratagem; and cruelty with as savage a heart,
sticketh not at the dreadfulllest, direfulllest objects, ready to wade up to the
ankles, the neck, in a whole red sea of human, yea, country blood: how fearful
is their plight that are thus assaulted! *John King.*

*Verse 3.* "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" But now
we are met with a giant objection, which with Goliath must be removed, or else
it will obstruct our present proceedings. Is it possible that the *foundations of
religion* should be destroyed? Can God be in so long a sleep, yea, so long a
lethargy, as patiently to permit the ruins thereof? If he looks on, and yet doth
not see these *foundations* when destroyed, where then is his *omnisciency*? If he
seeth it, and cannot help it, where then is his *omnipotency*? If he seeth it, can
help it, and will not, where then is his *goodness* and *mercy*? Martha said to
Jesus (John 11:21), "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."
But many will say, Were God effectually present in the world with his
aforesaid attributes, surely the *foundations* had not *died*, had not been
*destroyed*. We answer negatively, that it is impossible that the *foundations* of
religion should ever be *totally* and *finally destroyed*, either in relation to the
church in general, or in reference to every true and lively member thereof. For
the first, we have an express promise of Christ. Matthew 16:18. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." *Fundamenta tamen stant inconcussa Sionis.*

And as for every particular Christian (2 Timothy 2:19), "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." However, though for the reasons aforementioned in the objections (the inconsistency thereof with the attributes of God's omnipotency, omnisciency, and goodness), the *foundations* can never totally and finally, yet may they partially be destroyed, *quoad gradum,* in a fourfold degree, as followeth. First, *in the desires and utmost endeavours of wicked men,*

They bring their—

1. *Hoc velle,*
2. *Hoc agere,*

If they *destroy* not the foundations, it is no thanks to them, seeing all the world will bear them witness they have done *their best* (that is, *their worst*), what their might and malice could perform. Secondly, *in their own vainglorious imaginations:* they may not only vainly boast, but also verily believe that they have *destroyed the foundations.* Applicable to this purpose, is that high rant of the Roman emperor (Luke 2:1): "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." All the world! whereas he had, though much, not all in Europe, little in Asia, less in Africa, none in America, which was so far from being conquered, it was not so much as known to the Romans. But *hyperbole* is not a figure, but the ordinary language of pride; because indeed Augustus had very much he proclaimeth himself to have all the world. . . . Thirdly, *the foundations may be destroyed* as to all outward visible illustrious apparition. The church in persecution is like unto a ship in a tempest; down go all their masts, yea, sometimes for the more speed they are forced to cut them down: not a piece of canvas to play with the winds, no sails to be seen; they lie close knotted to the very keel, that the tempest may have the less power upon them, though when the storm is over, they can hoist up their sails as high, and spread their canvas as broad as ever before. So the church in the time of persecution *feared,* but especially *felt,* loseth all gayness and gallantry which may attract and allure the eyes of beholders, and contenteth itself with its own secrecy. In a word, on the work-days of affliction she weareth her worst clothes, whilst her best are laid up in her wardrobe, in sure and certain hope that God will give her a *holy* and *happy day,* when with joy she shall wear her best garments. Lastly, they may be *destroyed in the jealous apprehensions* of the best saints and servants of God, especially in their melancholy fits. I will instance in no puny, but in a star of the
first magnitude and greatest eminency, even Elijah himself complaining (1 Kings 19:10): "And I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3. "If." It is the only word of comfort in the text, that what is said is not positive, but suppositive; not thetical, but hypothetical. And yet this comfort which is but a spark (at which we would willingly kindle our hopes), is quickly sadded with a double consideration. First, impossible suppositions produce impossible consequences, "As is the mother, so is the daughter." Therefore, surely God's Holy Spirit would not suppose such a thing but what was feasible and possible, but what either had, did, or might come to pass. Secondly, the Hebrew word is not the conditional *im, si, si forte*, but *chi, quia, quoniam*, because, and (although here it be favourably rendered *if*), seemeth to import, more therein, that the sad case had already happened in David's days. I see, therefore, that this *if*; our only hope in the text, is likely to prove with Job's friends, but a miserable comforter. Well, it is good to know the worst of things, that we may provide ourselves accordingly; and therefore let us behold this doleful case, not as doubtful, but as done; not as feared, but felt; not as suspected, but at this time really come to pass. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3. "If the foundations," etc. My text is an answer to a tacit objection which some may raise; namely, that the righteous are wanting to themselves, and by their own easiness and inactivity (not daring and doing so much as they might and ought), betray themselves to that bad condition. In whose defence David shows, that if God in his wise will and pleasure seeth it fitting, for reasons best known to himself, to suffer religion to be reduced to terms of extremity, it is not placed in the power of the best man alive to remedy and redress the same. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" My text is hung about with mourning, as for a funeral sermon, and contains: First, a sad case supposed, "If the foundations be destroyed." Secondly, a sad question propounded, "What can the righteous do?" Thirdly, a sad answer implied, namely, that they can do just nothing, as to that point of re-establishing the destroyed foundation. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3. "If the foundations be destroyed," etc. The civil foundation of a nation or people, is their laws and constitutions. The order and power that's among them, that's the foundation of a people; and when once this foundation is destroyed, "What can the righteous do?" What can the best, the wisest in the world, do in such a case? What can any man do, if there be not a foundation of government left among men? There is no help nor answer in such a case but that which follows in the fourth verse of the Psalm, "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the
children of men;" as if he had said, in the midst of these confusions, when as it is said (Psalm 82:5), "All the foundations of the earth are out of course;" yet God keeps his course still, he is where he was and as he was, without variableness or shadow of turning. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 3. "The righteous." The righteous indefinitely, equivalent to the righteous universally; not only the righteous as a single arrow, but in the whole sheaf; not only the righteous in their personal, but in their diffusive capacity. Were they all collected into one body, were all the righteous living in the same age wherein the foundations are destroyed, summoned up and modelled into one corporation, all their joint endeavours would prove ineffectual to the re-establishing of the fallen foundations, as not being man's work, but only God's work to perform. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3. "The foundations." Positions, the things formerly fixed, placed, and settled. It is not said, if the roof be ruinous, or if the side walls be shattered, but if the foundations.

Verse 3. "Foundations be destroyed." In the plural. Here I will not warrant my skill in architecture, but conceive this may pass for an undoubted truth: it is possible that a building settled on several entire foundations (suppose them pillars) close one to another, if one of them fall, yet the structure may still stand, or rather hang (at the least for a short time) by virtue of the complicative, which it receiveth from such foundations which still stand secure. But in case there be a total rout, and an utter ruin of all the foundations, none can fancy to themselves a possibility of that building's subsistence. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3. "What CAN the righteous?" The can of the righteous is a limited can, confined to the rule of God's word; they can do nothing but what they can lawfully do. 2 Corinthians 13:8. "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth:" Illud possumus, quod jure possumus. Wicked men can do anything; their conscience, which is so wide that it is none at all, will bear them out to act anything how unlawful soever, to stab, poison, massacre, by any means, at any time, in any place, whosoever standeth betwixt them and the effecting of their desires. Not so the righteous; they have a rule whereby to walk, which they will not, they must not, they dare not, cross. If therefore a righteous man were assured, that by the breach of one of God's commandments he might restore decayed religion, and re-settle it statu quo prius, his hands, head, and heart are tied up, he can do nothing, because their damnation is just who say (Romans 3:8), "Let us do evil that good may come thereof."
Verse 3. "Do." It is not said, What can they think? It is a great blessing which God hath allowed injured people, that though otherwise oppressed and straitened, they may freely enlarge themselves in their thoughts. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3. Sinning times have ever been the saints' praying times: this sent Ezra with a heavy heart to confess the sin of his people, and to bewail their abominations before the Lord. Ezra 9. And Jeremiah tells the wicked of his degenerate age, that "his soul should weep in secret places for their pride." Jeremiah 13:17. Indeed, sometimes sin comes to such a height, that this is almost all the godly can do, to get into a corner, and bewail the general pollutions of the age. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Such dismal days of national confusion our eyes have seen, when foundations of government were destroyed, and all hurled into military confusion. When it is thus with a people, "What can the righteous do?" Yes, this they may, and should do, "fast and pray." There is yet a God in heaven to be sought to, when a people's deliverance is thrown beyond the help of human policy or power. Now is the fit time to make their appeal to God, as the words following hint: "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven;" in which words God is presented sitting in heaven as a temple, for their encouragement, I conceive, in such a desperate state of affairs, to direct their prayers thither for deliverance. And certainly this hath been the engine that hath been instrumental, above any, to restore this poor nation again, and set it upon the foundation of that lawful government from which it had so dangerously departed. William Gurnall.

Verse 4. The infinite understanding of God doth exactly know the sins of men; he knows so as to consider. He doth not only know them, but intently behold them: "His eyelids try the children of men," a metaphor taken from men, that contract the eyelids when they would wistly and accurately behold a thing: it is not a transient and careless look. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 4. "His eyes behold," etc. God searcheth not as man searcheth, by enquiring into that which before was hid from him; his searching is no more but his beholding; he seeth the heart, he beholdeth the reins; God's very sight is searching. Hebrews 4:13. "All things are naked, and opened unto his eyes," tetrachlidmena, dissected or anatomised. He hath at once as exact a view of the most hidden things, the very entrails of the soul, as if they had been with never so great curiosity anatomised before him. Richard Alleine, 1611-1681.

Verse 4. "His eyes behold," etc. Consider that God not only sees into all you do, but he sees it to that very end that he may examine and search into it. He doth
not only behold you with a common and indifferent look, but with a searching, watchful, and inquisitive eye: he pries into the reasons, the motives, the ends of all your actions. "The Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men." Revelation 1:14, where Christ is described, it is said, his eyes are as a flame of fire: you know the property of fire is to search and make trial of those things which are exposed unto it, and to separate the dross from the pure metal: so, God's eye is like fire, to try and examine the actions of men: he knows and discerns how much your very purest duties have in them of mixture, and base ends of formality, hypocrisy, distractedness, and deadness: he sees through all your specious pretenses, that which you cast as a mist before the eyes of men when yet thou art but a juggler in religion: all your tricks and sleights of outward profession, all those things that you use to cozen and delude men withal, cannot possibly impose upon him: he is a God that can look through all those fig-leaves of outward profession, and discern the nakedness of your duties through them. Ezekiel Hopkins, D.D.


Verse 4. "His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men." When an offender, or one accused for any offence, is brought before a judge, and stands at the bar to be arraigned, the judge looks upon him, eyes him, sets his eye upon him, and he bids the offender look up in his face: "Look upon me," saith the judge, "and speak up:" guiltiness usually clouds the forehead and clothes the brow; the weight of guilt holds down the head! the evil doer hath an ill look, or dares not look up; how glad is he if the judge looks off him. We have such an expression here, speaking of the Lord, the great Judge of heaven and earth: "His eyelids try the children of men," as a judge tries a guilty person with his eye, and reads the characters of his wickedness printed in his face. Hence we have a common speech in our language, such a one looks suspiciously, or, he hath a guilty look. At that great gaol-delivery described in Revelation 6:16, All the prisoners cry out to be hid from the face of him that sat upon the throne. They could not look upon Christ, and they could not endure Christ should look upon them; the eyelids of Christ try the children of men. . . . Wickedness cannot endure to be under the observation of any eye much less of the eye of justice. Hence the actors of it say, "Who seeth us?" It is very hard not to show the guilt of the heart in the face, and it is as hard to have it seen there. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 5. "The Lord trieth the righteous." Except our sins, there is not such plenty of anything in all the world as there is of troubles which come from sin,
as one heavy messenger came to Job after another. Since we are not in paradise, but in the wilderness, we must look for one trouble after another. As a bear came to David after a lion, and a giant after a bear, and a king after a giant, and Philistines after a king, so, when believers have fought with poverty, they shall fight with envy; when they have fought with envy, they shall fight with infamy; when the have fought with infamy, they shall fight with sickness; they shall be like a labourer who is never out of work. *Henry Smith.*

**Verse 5.** "The Lord trieth the righteous." Times of affliction and persecution will distinguish the precious from the vile, it will difference the counterfeit professor from the true. Persecution is a Christian's touchstone, it is a *lapis lydius* that will try what metal men are made of, whether they be silver or tin, gold or dross, wheat or chaff, shadow or substance, carnal or spiritual, sincere or hypocritical. Nothing speaks out more soundness and uprightness than a pursuing after holiness, even then when holiness is most afflicted, pursued, and persecuted in the world: to stand fast in fiery trials argues much integrity within. *Thomas Brooks.*

**Verse 5.** Note the singular opposition of the two sentences. God hates the wicked, and therefore in contrast he loves the righteous; but it is here said that he tries them: therefore it follows that to try and to love are with God the same thing. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 6.** "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares." Snares to hold them; then if they be not delivered, follow fire and brimstone, and they cannot escape. This is the case of a sinner if he repent not; if God pardon not, he is in the snare of Satan's temptation, he is in the snare of divine vengeance; let him therefore cry aloud for his deliverance, that he may have his feet in a large room. The wicked lay snares for the righteous, but God either preventeth them that their souls ever escape them, or else he subverteth them: "The snares are broken and we are delivered." No snares hold us so fast as those of our own sins; they keep down our heads, and stoop us that we cannot look up: a very little ease they are to him that hath not a seared conscience. *Samuel Page,* 1646.

**Verse 6.** "He shall rain snares." As in hunting with the lasso, the huntsman casts a snare from above upon his prey to entangle its head or feet, so shall the Lord from above with many twistings of the line of terror, surround, bind, and take captive the haters of his law. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 6.** "He shall rain snares," etc. He shall rain upon them when they least think of it, even in the midst of their jollity, as rain falls on a fair day. Or, he shall rain down the vengeance when he sees good, for it rains not always.
Though he defers it, yet it will rain. *William Nicholson, Bishop of Gloucester,* in *"David's Harp Strung and Tuned,"* 1662.

Verse 6. *"Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest."* The strange dispensation of affairs in this world is an argument which doth convincingly prove that there shall be such a day wherein all the involucra and entanglements of providence shall be clearly unfolded. Then shall the riddle be dissolved, why God hath given this and that profane wretch so much wealth, and so much power to do mischief: is it not that they might be destroyed for ever? Then shall they be called to a strict account for all that plenty and prosperity for which they are now envied; and the more they have abused, the more dreadful will their condemnation be. Then it will be seen that God gave them not as mercies, but as "snares." It is said that God *"will rain on the wicked snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest:"* when he scatters abroad the desirable things of this world, riches, honours, pleasures, etc., then he rains "snares" upon them; and when he shall call them to an account for these things, then he will rain upon them *"fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest"* of his wrath and fury. Dives, who caroused on earth, yet, in hell could not obtain so much as one poor drop of water to cool his scorched and flaming tongue: had not his excess and intemperance been so great in his life, his fiery thirst had not been so tormenting after death; and therefore, in that sad item that Abraham gives him (Luke 16:25), he bids him *"remember that thou, in thy lifetime, receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."* I look upon this as a most bitter and a most deserved sarcasm; upbraiding him for his gross folly, in making the trifles of this life his good things. Thou hast received thy good things, but now thou art tormented. Oh, never call Dive's purple and delicious fare *good things,* if they thus end in torments! Was it good for him to be wrapped in purple who is now wrapped in flames? Was it good for him to fare deliciously who was only thereby fatted up against the day of slaughter? *Ezekiel Hopkins.*

Verse 6. *"Snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup."* After the judgment follows the condemnation: pre-figured as we have seen, by the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. *"Snares:"* because the allurements of Satan in this life will be their worst punishments in the next; the fire of anger, the brimstone of impurity, the tempest of pride, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. *"This shall be their portion:"* compare it with the psalmist's own saying, "The Lord himself is the portion of my inheritance and my cup." Psalm 16:5. *Cassidorus, in J. M. Neale's Commentary.*
Verse 6. "The portion of their cup." Hebrew, the allotment of their cup. The expression has reference to the custom of distributing to each guest his mess of meat. William French and George Skinner, 1842.

Verse 7. That God may give grace without glory is intelligible; but to admit a man to communion with him in glory without grace, is not intelligible. It is not agreeable to God's holiness to make any inhabitant of heaven, and converse freely with him in a way of intimate love, without such a qualification of grace: "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness;" his countenance doth behold the upright;" he looks upon him with a smiling eye, and therefore he cannot favourably look upon an unrighteous person; so that this necessity is not founded only in the command of God that we should be renewed, but in the very nature of the thing, because God, in regard to his holiness, cannot converse with an impure creature. God must change his nature, or the sinner's nature must be changed. There can be no friendly communion between two of different natures without the change of one of them into the likeness of the other. Wolves and sheep, darkness and light, can never agree. God cannot love a sinner as a sinner, because he hates impurity by a necessity of nature as well as a choice of will. It is as impossible for him to love it as to cease to be holy. Stephen Charnock.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Faith's bold avowal, and brave refusal.

Verse 1. Teacheth us to trust in God, how great soever our dangers be; also that we shall be many times assaulted to make us put far from us this trust, but yet that we must cleave unto it, as the anchor of our souls, sure and steadfast. Thomas Wilcocks.

Verse 1. The advice of cowardice, and the jeer of insolence, both answered by faith. Lesson—Attempt no other answer.

Verse 2. The craftiness of our spiritual enemies.

Verse 3. This may furnish a double discourse.

I. If God's oath and promise could remove, what could we do? Here the answer is easy.

II. If all earthly things fail, and the very State fall to pieces, what can we do? We can suffer joyfully, hope cheerfully, wait patiently, pray earnestly, believe confidently, and triumph finally.

Verse 4. The elevation, mystery, supremacy, purity, everlastingness, invisibility, etc., of the throne of God.

Verses 4, 5. In these verses mark the fact that the children of men, as well as the righteous, are tried; work out the contrast between the two trials in their designs and results, etc.

Verse 5. "The Lord trieth the righteous."
   I. Who are tried?
   II. What in them is tried?—Faith, love, etc.
   III. In what manner?—Trials of every sort.
   IV. How long?
   V. For what purpose?


Verse 5. The trying of the gold, and the sweeping out of the refuse.

Verse 6. "He shall rain." Gracious rain and destroying rain.

Verse 6. The portion of the impenitent.

Verse 7. The Lord possesses righteousness as a personal attribute, loves it in the abstract, and blesses those who practise it.
Psalm 12

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

TITLE. This Psalm is headed "To the Chief Musician upon Sheminith, a Psalm of David," which title is identical with that of the sixth Psalm, except that Neginoth is here omitted. We have nothing new to add, and therefore refer the reader to our remarks on the dedication of Psalm VI. As Sheminith signifies the eighth, the Arabic version says it is concerning the end of the world, which shall be the eighth day, and refers it to the coming of the Messiah: without accepting so fanciful an interpretation, we may read this song of complaining faith in the light of His coming who shall break in pieces the oppressor. The subject will be the better before the mind's eye if we entitle this Psalm: "GOOD THOUGHTS IN BAD TIMES." It is supposed to have been written while Saul was persecuting David, and those who favoured his cause.

DIVISION. In the first and second verses David spreads his plaint before the Lord concerning the treachery of his age; verses 3 and 4 denounce judgments upon proud traitors; in verse 5, Jehovah himself thunders out his wrath against oppressors; hearing this, the Chief Musician sings sweetly of the faithfulness of God and his care of his people, in verses 6 and 7; but closes on the old key of lament in verse 8, as he observes the abounding wickedness of his times. Those holy souls who dwell in Mesech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar, may read and sing these sacred stanzas with hearts in full accord with their mingled melody of lowly mourning and lofty confidence.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "Help, Lord." A short but sweet, suggestive, seasonable, and serviceable prayer; a kind of angel's sword, to be turned every way, and to be used on all occasions. Ainsworth says the word rendered "help," is largely used for all manner of saving, helping, delivering, preserving, etc. Thus it seems that the prayer is very full and instructive. The Psalmist sees the extreme danger of his position, for a man had better be among lions than among liars; he feels his own inability to deal with such sons of Belial, for "he who shall touch them must be fenced with iron;" he therefore turns himself to his all-sufficient Helper, the Lord, whose help is never denied to his servants, and whose aid is enough for all their needs. "Help, Lord," is a very useful ejaculation which we may dart up to heaven on occasions of emergency, whether in labour, learning, suffering, fighting, living, or dying. As small ships can sail into harbours which larger vessels, drawing more water, cannot enter, so our brief cries and short petitions may trade with heaven when our soul is wind-bound, and business-bound, as to longer exercises of devotion, and when the stream of grace seems at too low an ebb to float a more laborious supplication. "For the godly man ceaseth;" the death, departure, or decline of godly men should be a trumpet-call for more prayer. They say that fish smell first at the head, and when godly men decay, the whole commonwealth will soon go rotten. We must not, however, be
rash in our judgment on this point, for Elijah erred in counting himself the only servant of God alive, when there were thousands whom the Lord held in reserve. The present times always appear to be peculiarly dangerous, because they are nearest to our anxious gaze, and whatever evils are rife are sure to be observed, while the faults of past ages are further off, and are more easily overlooked. Yet we expect that in the latter days, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold," and then we must the more thoroughly turn from man, and address ourselves to the Churches' Lord, by whose help the gates of hell shall be kept from prevailing against us. "The faithful fail from among the children of men;" when godliness goes, faithfulness inevitably follows; without fear of God, men have no love of truth. Common honesty is no longer common, when common irreligion leads to universal godlessness. David had his eye on Doeg, and the men of Ziph and Keilah, and perhaps remembered the murdered priests of Nob, and the many banished ones who consorted with him in the cave of Adullam, and wondered where the state would drift without the anchors of its godly and faithful men. David, amid the general misrule, did not betake himself to seditious plottings, but to solemn petitionings; nor did he join with the multitude to do evil, but took up the arms of prayer to withstand their attacks upon virtue.

Verse 2. "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour." They utter that which is vain to hear, because of its frivolous, foolish, want of worth; vain to believe, because it was false and lying; vain to trust to, since it was deceitful and flattering; vain to regard, for it lifted up the hearer, filling him with proud conceit of himself. It is a sad thing when it is the fashion to talk vanity. "Ca'me, and I'll ca'thee." is the old Scotch proverb; give me a high sounding character, and I will give you one. Compliments and fawning congratulations are hateful to honest men; they know that if they take they must give them, and they scorn to do either. These accommodation-bills are most admired by those who are bankrupt in character. Bad are the times when every man thus cajoles and cozens his neighbour. "With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak." He who puffs up another's heart, has nothing better than wind in his own. If a man extols me to my face, he only shows me one side of his heart, and the other is black with contempt for me, or foul with intent to cheat me. Flattery is the sign of the tavern where duplicity is the host. The Chinese consider a man of two hearts to be a very base man, and we shall be safe in reckoning all flatteries to be such.

Verses 3, 4. Total destruction shall overwhelm the lovers of flattery and pride, but meanwhile how they hector and fume! Well did the apostle call them "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame." Free-thinkers are
generally very free-talkers, and they are never more at ease than when railing at God's dominion, and arrogating to themselves unbounded license. Strange is it that the easy yoke of the Lord should so gall the shoulders of the proud, while the iron bands of Satan they bind about themselves as chains of honour: they boastfully cry unto God, "Who is lord over us?" and hear not the hollow voice of the evil one, who cries from the infernal lake, "I am your lord, and right faithfully do ye serve me." Alas, poor fools, their pride and glory shall be cut off like a fading flower! May God grant that our soul may not be gathered with them. It is worthy of observation that flattering lips, and tongues speaking proud things, are classed together: the fitness of this is clear, for they are guilty of the same vice, the first flatters another, and the second flatters himself, in both cases a lie is in their right hands. One generally imagines that flatterers are such mean parasites, so cringing and fawning, that they cannot be proud; but the wise man will tell you that while all pride is truly meanness, there is in the very lowest meanness no small degree of pride. Caesar's horse is even more proud of carrying Caesar, than Caesar is of riding him. The mat on which the emperor wiped his shoes, boasts vaingloriously, crying out, "I cleaned the imperial boots." None are so detestably domineering as the little creatures who creep into office by cringing to the great; those are bad times, indeed, in which these obnoxious beings are numerous and powerful. No wonder that the justice of God in cutting off such injurious persons is matter for a psalm, for both earth and heaven are weary of such provoking offenders, whose presence is a very plague to the people afflicted thereby. Men cannot tame the tongues of such boastful flatterers; but the Lord's remedy if sharp is sure, and is an unanswerable answer to their swelling words of vanity.

Verse 5. In due season the Lord will hear his elect ones, who cry day and night unto him, and though he bear long with their oppressors, yet will he avenge them speedily. Observe that the mere oppression of saints, however silently they bear it, is in itself a cry to God: Moses was heard at the Red Sea, though he said nothing; and Hagar's affliction was heard despite her silence. Jesus feels with his people, and their smarts are mighty orators with him. By-and-by, however, they begin to sigh and express their misery, and then relief comes post-haste. Nothing moves a father like the cries of his children; he bestirs himself, wakes up his manhood, overthrows the enemy, and sets his beloved in safety. A puff is too much for the child to bear, and the foe is so haughty, that he laughs the little one to scorn; but the Father comes, and then it is the child's turn to laugh, when he is set above the rage of his tormentor. What virtue is there in a poor man's sighs, that they should move the Almighty God to arise from his throne. The needy did not dare to speak, and could only sigh in secret, but the Lord heard, and could rest no longer, but girded on his sword for the
battle. It is a fair day when our soul brings God into her quarrel, for when his bare arm is seen, Philistia shall rue the day. The darkest hours of the Church's night are those which precede the break of day. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Jesus will come to deliver just when his needy ones shall sigh, as if all hope had gone for ever. O Lord, set thy now near at hand, and rise up speedily to our help. Should the afflicted reader be able to lay hold upon the promise of this verse, let him gratefully fetch a fulness of comfort from it. Gurnall says, "As one may draw out the wine of a whole hogshead at one tap, so may a poor soul derive the comfort of the whole covenant to himself through one promise, if he be able to apply it." He who promises to set us in safety, means thereby preservation on earth, and eternal salvation in heaven.

Verse 6. What a contrast between the vain words of man, and the pure words of Jehovah. Man's words are yea and nay, but the Lord's promises are yea and amen. For truth, certainty, holiness, faithfulness, the words of the Lord are pure as well-refined silver. In the original there is an allusion to the most severely-purifying process known to the ancients, through which silver was passed when the greatest possible purity was desired; the dross was all consumed, and only the bright and precious metal remained; so clear and free from all alloy of error or unfaithfulness is the book of the words of the Lord. The Bible has passed through the furnace of persecution, literary criticism, philosophic doubt, and scientific discovery, and has lost nothing but those human interpretations which clung to it as alloy to precious ore. The experience of saints has tried it in every conceivable manner, but not a single doctrine or promise has been consumed in the most excessive heat. What God's words are, the words of his children should be. If we would be Godlike in conversation, we must watch our language, and maintain the strictest purity of integrity and holiness in all our communications.

Verse 7. To fall into the hands of an evil generation, so as to be baited by their cruelty, or polluted by their influence, is an evil to be dreaded beyond measure; but it is an evil foreseen and provided for in the text. In life many a saint has lived a hundred years before his age, as though he had darted his soul into the brighter future, and escaped the mists of the beclouded present: he has gone to his grave unreverenced and misunderstood, and lo! as generations come and go, upon a sudden the hero is unearthed, and lives in the admiration and love of the excellent of the earth; preserved for ever from the generation which stigmatised him as a sower of sedition, or burned him as a heretic. It should be our daily prayer that we may rise above our age as the mountain-tops above the clouds, and may stand out as heaven-pointing pinnacle high above the mists of ignorance and sin which roll around us. O Eternal Spirit, fulfil in us the faithful
saying of this verse! Our faith believes those two assuring words, and cries, "Thou shalt," "thou shalt."

Verse 8. Here we return to the fount of bitterness, which first made the psalmist run to the wells of salvation, namely, the prevalence of wickedness. When those in power are vile, their underlings will be no better. As a warm sun brings out noxious flies, so does a sinner in honour foster vice everywhere. Our turf would not so swarm with abominables if those who are styled honourables did not give their countenance to the craft. Would to God that the glory and triumph of our Lord Jesus would encourage us to walk and work on every side; as like acts upon like, since an exalted sinner encourages sinners, our exalted Redeemer must surely excite, cheer, and stimulate his saints. Nerved by a sight of his reigning power we shall meet the evils of the times in the spirit of holy resolution, and shall the more hopefully pray, "Help, Lord."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Verse 1. "Help, Lord." 'Twas high time to call to heaven for help, when Saul cried, "Go, kill me up the priests of Jehovah" (the occasion as it is thought of making this Psalm), and therein committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, as some grave divines are of opinion. 1 Samuel 22:17. David, after many sad thoughts about that slaughter, and the occasion of it, Doeg's malicious information, together with the paucity of his fast friends, and the multitude of his sworn enemies at court, breaks forth abruptly into these words, "Help, Lord," help at a dead lift. The Arabic version hath it, Deliver me by main force, as with weapons of war, for "the Lord is a man of war." Exodus 15:3. John Trapp.

Verse 1. "The faithful." "A faithful man," as a parent, a reprover, an adviser, one "without guile," "who can find?" Proverbs 20:6. Look close. View thyself in the glass of the word. Does thy neighbour or thy friend, find thee faithful to him? What does our daily intercourse witness? Is not the attempt to speak what is agreeable oft made at the expense of truth? Are not professions of regard sometimes utterly inconsistent with our real feelings? In common life, where gross violations are restrained, a thousand petty offences are allowed, that break down the wall between sin and duty, and, judged by the divine standard, are indeed guilty steps upon forbidden ground. Charles Bridges, 1850.

Verse 1. A "faithful" man must be, first of all, faithful to himself; then, he must be faithful to God; and then, he must be faithful to others, particularly the church of God. And this, as it regards ministers, is of peculiar importance. Joseph Irons, 1840.
Verse 1. Even as a careful mother, seeing her child in the way when a company of unruly horses run through the streets in full career, presently whips up her child in her arms and taketh him home; or as the hen, seeing the ravenous kite over her head, clucks and gathers her chickens under her wings; even so when God hath a purpose to bring a heavy calamity upon a land, it hath been usual with him to call and cull out to himself such as are his dearly beloved. He takes his choice servants from the evil to come. Thus was Augustine removed a little before Hippo (wherein he dwelt) was taken; Paroeus died before Heidelberg was sacked; and Luther was taken off before Germany was overrun with war and bloodshed. Ed. Dunsterville in a Sermon at the Funeral of Sir Sim. Harcourt, 1642.

Verse 1. "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth," etc.:—

Back, then, complainer, loathe thy life no more,
Nor deem thyself upon a desert shore,
Because the rocks the nearer prospect close.
Yet in fallen Israel are there hearts and eyes,
That day by day in prayer like thine arise;
Thou knowest them not, but their Creator known.
Go, to the world return, nor fear to cast
Thy bread upon the waters, sure at last
In joy to find it after many days.

John Keble, 1792-1866.

Verses 1, 2, 4. Consider our markets, our fairs, our private contracts and bargains, our shops, our cellars, our weights, our measures, our promises, our protestations, our politic tricks and villainous Machiavelism, our enhancing of the prices of all commodities, and tell, whether the twelfth Psalm may not as fitly be applied to our times as to the days of the man of God; in which the feigning, and lying, and facing, and guile, and subtlety of men provoked the psalmist to cry out, "Help, Lord; for there is not a godly man left: for the faithful are failed from among the children of men: they speak deceitfully every one with his neighbour, flattering with their lips, and speak with a double heart, which have said, With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" R. Wolcombe, 1612.

Verse 2. "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak." The feigned zeal is just like a waterman, that looks one way and rows another way; for this man pretends one thing and intends another thing; as Jehu pretended the zeal of God's glory, but
his aim was at his master's kingdom; and his zeal to God's service was but to bring him to the sceptre of the kingdom. So Demetrius professed great love unto Diana, but his drift was to maintain the honour of his profession; and so we have too many that make great show of holiness, and yet their hearts aim at other ends; but they may be sure, though they can deceive the world and destroy themselves, yet not God, who knoweth the secrets of all hearts. Gr. Williams, 1636.

Verse 2. "They speak vanity."—

Faithless is earth, and faithless are the skies!
Justice is fled, and truth is now no more!

Virgil's Æneid, IV. 373.

Verse 2. "With a double heart." Man is nothing but insincerity, falsehood, and hypocrisy, both in regard to himself and in regard to others. He does not wish that he should be told the truth, he shuns saying it to others; and all these moods, so inconsistent with justice and reason, have their roots in his heart. Blaise Pascal.

Verse 2. "With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak." There is no such stuff to make a cloak of as religion; nothing so fashionable, nothing so profitable: it is a livery wherein a wise man may serve two masters, God and the world, and make a gainful service by either. I serve both, and in both myself, by prevaricating with both. Before man none serves his God with more devotion; for which, among the best of men, I work my own ends, and serve myself. In private, I serve the world; not with so strict devotion, but with more delight; where fulfilling of her servants' lusts, I work my end and serve myself. The house of prayer who more frequents than I? In all Christian duties who more forward than I? I fast with those who fast, that I may eat with those that eat. I mourn with those that mourn. No hand more open to the cause than mine, and in their families none prays longer and with louder zeal. Thus when the opinion of a holy life hath cried the goodness of my conscience up, my trade can lack no custom, my wares can want no price, my words can need no credit, my actions can lack no praise. If I am covetous, it is interpreted providence; if miserable, it is counted temperance; if melancholy, it is construed godly sorrow; if merry, it is voted spiritual joy; if I be rich, it is thought the blessing of a godly life; if poor, supposed the fruit of conscionable dealing; if I be well spoken of, it is the merit of holy conversation; if ill, it is the malice of malignants. Thus I sail with every wind, and have my end in all conditions. This cloak in summer keeps me cool, in winter warm, and hides the nasty bag
of all my secret lusts. Under this cloak I walk in public fairly with applause, and in private sin securely without offence, and officiate wisely without discovery. I compass sea and land to make a proselyte; and no sooner made, but he makes me. At a fast I cry Geneva, and at a feast I cry Rome. If I be poor, I counterfeit abundance to save my credit; if rich, I dissemble poverty to save charges. I most frequent schismatical lectures, which I find most profitable; from thence learning to divulge and maintain new doctrines; they maintain me in suppers thrice a week. I use the help of a lie sometimes, as a new stratagem to uphold the gospel; and I colour oppression with God's judgments executed upon the wicked. Charity I hold an extraordinary duty, therefore not ordinarily to be performed. What I openly reprove abroad, for my own profit, that I secretly act at home, for my own pleasure. But stay, I see a handwriting in my heart which damps my soul. It is charactered in these sad words, "Woe be to you, hypocrites." Matthew 23:13. Francis Quarle's "Hypocrite's Soliloquy."

Verse 2. "With flattering lips," etc. The world indeed says that society could not exist if there were perfect truthfulness and candour between man and man; and that the world's propriety would be as much disturbed if every man said what he pleased, as it was in those days of Israelitish history, when every man did that which was right in his own eyes. The world is assuredly the best judge of its own condition and mode of government, and therefore I will not say what a libel does such a remark contain, but oh, what a picture does it present of the social edifice, that its walls can be cemented and kept together only by flattery and falsehood! Barton Bouchier.

Verse 2. "Flattering lips." The philosopher Bion being asked what animal he though the most hurtful, replied, "That of wild creatures a tyrant, and of tame ones a flatterer." The flatterer is the most dangerous enemy we can have. Raleigh, himself a courtier, and therefore initiated into the whole art of flattery, who discovered in his own career and fate its dangerous and deceptive power, its deep artifice and deeper falsehood, says, "A flatterer is said to be a beast that biteth smiling. But it is hard to know them from friends—they are so obsequious and full of protestations: for as a wolf resembles a dog, so doth a flatterer a friend." The Book of Symbols, 1844.

Verse 2. "They speak with a double heart." The original is, "A heart and a heart:" one for the church, another for the change; one for Sundays, another for working-days; one for the king, another for the pope. A man without a heart is a wonder, but a man with two hearts is a monster. It is said of Judas, "There were many hearts in one man;" and we read of the saints, "There was one heart in many men." Acts 4:32. Dabo illis cor unum; a special blessing. Thomas Adams.
Verse 2. When men cease to be faithful to their God, he who expects to find them so to each other, will be much disappointed. The primitive sincerity will accompany the primitive piety in her flight from the earth; and then interest will succeed conscience in the regulation of human conduct, till one man cannot trust another farther than he holds him by that tie. Hence, by the way, it is, that though many are infidels themselves, yet few choose to have their families and dependents such; as judging, and rightly judging, that true Christians are the only persons to be depended on for the exact discharge of social duties. George Horne.

Verse 3. "The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips," etc. They who take pleasure in deceiving others, will at the last find themselves most of all deceived, when the Sun of truth, by the brightness of his rising, shall at once detect and consume hypocrisy. George Horne.

Verse 3. "Cut off lips and tongues." May there not be here an allusion to those terrible but suggestive punishments which Oriental monarchs were wont to execute on criminals? Lips were cut off and tongues torn out when offenders were convicted of lying or treason. So terrible and infinitely more so are the punishments of sin. C. H. S.

Verses 3, 4. It need not now seem strange to tell you that the Lord is the owner of our bodies, that he has so much propriety therein that they are more his than ours. The apostle tells us as much. 1 Corinthians 6:20. "Glorify God in your bodies which are his." Our bodies, and every member thereof, are his; for if the whole be so, no part is exempted. And therefore they speak proud things, and presumptuously usurped the propriety of God, who said, "Our lips are our own;" as though their lips had not been his who is Lord and Owner of all, but they had been lords thereof, and might have used them as they list. This provoked God to show what right he had to dispose of such lips and tongues, by cutting them off. David Clarkson.

Verse 4. "Who have said, With our tongues will we prevail; who is Lord over us?" So it was: twelve poor and unlearned men on the one side, all the eloquence of Greece and Rome arrayed on the other. From the time of Tertullus to that of Julian the apostate, every species of oratory, learning, wit, was lavished against the church of God; and the result, like the well-known story of that dispute between the Christian peasant and the heathen philosopher, when the latter, having challenged the assembled fathers of a synod to silence him, was put to shame by the simple faith of the former "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I command thee to be dumb." "Who is lord over us?" "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" Exodus 5:2. "What is the
Psalm 12

Verse 4. "Our lips are our own." If we have to do with God, we must quit claim to ourselves and look on God as our owner; but this is fixed in the hearts of men, We will be our own; we will not consent to the claim which God makes to us: "Our lips are our own." Wicked men might as well say the same thing of their whole selves; our bodies, strength, time, parts, etc., are our own, and who is Lord over us? John Howe.

Verse 4. From the faults of the wicked we must learn three contrary lessons; to wit: 1. That nothing which we have is our own. But, 2. WHATSOEVER is given to us of God is for service to be done to him. 3. That whatsoever we do or say, we have a Lord over us to whom we must be answerable when he calleth us to account. David Dickson.

Verse 5. "For the oppression of the poor," etc. When oppressors and persecutors do snuff and puff at the people of God, when they defy them, and scorn them, and think that they can with a blast of their breath blow them away, then God will arise to judgment, as the Chaldee has it; at that very nick of time when all seems to be lost, and when the poor, oppressed, and afflicted people of God can do nothing but sigh and weep, and weep and sigh, then the Lord will arise and ease them of their oppressions, and make their day of extremity a glorious opportunity to work for his own glory, and his people's good. Matthew 22:6, 7. "And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Thomas Brooks.

Verse 5. Fear ye, whosoever ye be, that do wrong the poor; you have power and wealth, and the favour of the judges, but they have the strongest weapons of all, sighings and groanings, which fetch help from heaven for them. These weapons dig down houses, throw up foundations, overthrow whole nations. Chrysostom.

Verse 5. "For the sighings of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord." God is pleased to take notice of every grace, even the least and lowest, and every gracious inclination in any of his servants. To fear his name is no great matter, yet these have a promise. To think on his name less, yet set down in a "book of remembrance." God sets down how many good thoughts a poor soul hath had. As evil thoughts in wicked men are taken notice of—they are the first fruits of the evil heart (Matthew 15:19)—so good thoughts are they which lie uppermost, and best discover a good heart. A desire is a small matter, especially
of the poor man, yet God regards the desire of the poor, and calls a good desire the greatest kindness; "The desire of a man is his kindness." A tear makes no great noise, yet hath a voice, "God hath heard the voice of my weeping." It is no pleasant water, yet God bottles it up. A groan is a poor thing, yet is the best part of a prayer sometimes (Romans 8:26); a sigh is less, yet God is awakened and raised up by it. Psalm 12:5. A look is less than all these, yet this is regarded (Jonah 2:4); breathing is less, yet (Lamentations 3:56), the church could speak of no more; panting is less than breathing, when one is spent for lack of breath, yet this is all the godly can sometimes boast of. Psalm 42:1. The description of a godly man is oftentimes made from his least quod sic. Blessed are the poor, the meek, they that mourn, and they who hunger and thirst. Never did Hannah pray better than when she could get out never a word, but cried, "Hard, hard heart." Nor did the publican, than when he smote his breast and cried, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." Nor Mary Magdalene, than when she came behind Christ, sat down, wept, but kept silence. How sweet is music upon the waters! How fruitful are the lowest valleys! Mourning hearts are most musical, lowest most fruitful. The good shepherd ever takes most care of his weak lambs and feeble sheep. The father makes most of the least, and the mother looks most after the sick child. How comfortable is that of our Saviour, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish!" And that heaven is not to be entered but by such as are like the little child. John Sheffield, 1654.

Verse 5. "The oppression of the poor." Insolent and cruel oppressing of the poor is a sin that brings desolating and destroying judgments upon a people. God sent ten wasting judgments one after another upon Pharaoh, his people, and land, to revenge the cruel oppression of his poor people. "Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: for the Lord will plead their cause." Proverbs 22:22, 23. To rob and oppress the rich is a great sin; but to rob and oppress the poor is a greater; but to rob and oppress the poor because he is poor, and wants money to buy justice, is the top of all inhumanity and impiety. To oppress anyone is sin; but to oppress the oppressed is the height of sin. Poverty, and want, and misery, should be motives to pity; but oppressors make them the whetstone of their cruelty and severity, and therefore the Lord will plead the cause of his poor oppressed people against their oppressors without fee or fear; yea, he will plead their cause with pestilence, blood, and fire. Gog was a great oppressor of the poor (Ezekiel 38:8-14), and God pleads against him with pestilence, blood, and fire (verse 22); "and I will plead against him, with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thomas Brooks.
Verse 6. "The words of the Lord are pure words," etc. How beautifully is this verse introduced, by way of contrast to what was said before concerning! Do sinners talk of vanity? let saints then speak of Jesus and his gospel. Do they talk impure words? then let the faithful use the pure words of God, which like silver, the more used, the more melted in the fire, the more precious will they be. It is true, indeed, despisers will esteem both God and his word as trifling; but oh, what an unknown treasure doth the word, the promises, the covenant relation of the divine things of Jesus contain! They are more to be desired than gold, yea, than pure gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Robert Hawker.

Verse 6. "The words of the Lord are pure words," etc. They that purify silver to the purpose, use to put it in the fire again and again, that it may be thoroughly tried. So is the truth of God; there is scarce any truth but hath been tried over and over again, and still if any dross happens to mingle with it, then God calls it in question again. If in former times there have been Scriptures alleged that have not been pertinent to prove it, that truth shall into the fire again, that what is dross may be burnt up; the Holy Ghost is so curious, so delicate, so exact, he cannot bear that falsehood should be mingled with the truths of the gospel. This is the reason, therefore, why that God doth still, age after age, call former things in question, because that there is still some dross one way or other mingled with them; either in the stating the opinions themselves, or else in the Scriptures that are brought and alleged for them, that have passed for current, for he will never leave till he have purified them. The doctrine of God's free grace hath been tried over and over, and over again. Pelagius begins, and he mingleth his dross with it: he saith, grace is nothing but nature in man. Well, his doctrine was purified, and a great deal of dross purged out. Then come the semi-Pelagians, and they part stakes; they say, nature can do nothing without grace, but they make nature to concur with grace, and to have an influence as well as grace; and the dross of that was burnt up. The Papists, they take up the same quarrel, but will neither be Pelagians nor semi-Pelagians, yet still mingle dross. The Arminians, they come, and they refine popery in that point anew; still they mingle dross. God will have this truth tried seven times in the fire, till he hath brought it forth as pure as pure may be. And I say it is because that truth is thus precious. Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 6. The Scripture is the sun; the church is the clock. The sun we know to be sure, and regularly constant in his motions; the clock, as it may fall out, may go too fast or too slow. As then, we should condemn him of folly that should profess to trust the clock rather than the sun, so we cannot but justly tax the
creduity of those who would rather trust to the church than to the Scripture. *Bishop Hall.*

*Verse 6.* "The words of the Lord are pure words." Men may inspect detached portions of the Book, and please themselves with some things, which at first view, have the semblance of conniving at what is wrong. But let them read it, let them read the whole of it; let them carry along in their minds the character of the persons to which the different portions of it were addressed; the age of the world, and the circumstances under which the different parts of it were written, and the particular objects which even those portions of it have in view, which to an infidel mind appear the most exceptionable; and they may be rationally convinced that, instead of originating in the bosom of an impostor, it owes its origin to men who wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Let them scrutinise it with as much severity as they please; only let their scrutiny be well informed, wisely directed, and with a fair and ingenuous mind, and we have no fears for the issue. There are portions of it on which ignorance and folly have put constructions that are forced and unnatural, and which impure minds have viewed in shadows reflected from their own impurity. Montesquieu said of Voltaire, *Lorsque Voltaire lit un livre, il le fait, puis il écrit contre ce qu'il a fait:* "When Voltaire reads a book, he makes it what he pleases, and then writes against what he has made." It is no difficult matter to besmear and blot its pages and then impute the foul stains that men of corrupt minds have cast upon it, to its stainless Author. But if we honestly look at it as it is, we shall find that like its Author, it is without blemish and without spot. *Gardiner Spring, D.D.*

*Verse 6.* Fry thus translates this verse:—
Psalm 12

The words of Jehovah are pure words—
   Silver refined in the crucible—
   Gold, seven times washed from the earth.

(Heb.) though sometimes applied to express the purity of silver, is more strictly an epithet of gold, from the peculiar method made use of in separating it from the soil by repeated washings and decantations. *John Fry, in loc.*

Verse 6. "Seven times." I cannot but admit that there may be a mystic meaning in the expression "seven times," in allusion to the seven periods of the church, or to that perfection, implied in the figure seven, to which it is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This will be more readily allowed by those who admit of the prophetic interpretation of the seven epistles of the Book of Revelation. *W. Wilson, D. D., in loc.*

Verse 8. "When the vilest men are exalted:" Hebrew, vilities, outidanoi the abstract for the concrete, quisquiliae, outidanoi. Oft, empty vessels swim aloft, rotten posts are gilt with adulterate gold, the worst weeds spring up bravest. Chaff will get to the top of the fan, when good corn, as it lieth at the bottom of the heap, so it falls low at the feet of the fanner. The reason why wicked men "walk" on every side, are so brisk, so busy (and who but they?) is given to be this, because losels and rioters were exalted. See Proverbs 28:12, 18 and 29:2. As rheums and catarrhs fall from the head to the lungs, and cause a consumption of the whole body, so it is in the body politic. As a fish putrefies first in the head and then in all the parts, so here. Some render the text thus, "When they (that is, the wicked) are exalted," it is a "shame for the sons of men," that other men who better deserve preferment, are not only slighted, but vilely handled by such worthless ambitionists, who yet the higher they climb, as apes, the more they discover their deformities." *John Trapp.*

Verse 8. Good thus translates this verse:—

Should the wicked advance on every side;
   Should the dregs of the earth be uppermost?

The original is given literally. (Heb.) means "foeces, foeculences, dregs. (Heb.) is here an adverb, and imports uppermost, rather than exalted. *J. Mason Good, in loc.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER
Verse 1. "Help, Lord."
   I. The Prayer itself, short, suggestive, seasonable, rightly directed, vehement.
      II. Occasions for its use.
      III. Modes of its answer.
      IV. Reasons for expecting gracious reply.

Verse 1. First two clauses. Text for funeral of an eminent believer.

Verse 1. Whole verse.
   I. The fact bewailed—describe godly and faithful, and show how they fail.
      II. The feeling excited. Mourning the loss, fears for church, personal need of such companions, appeal to God.
      III. The forebodings aroused. Failure of the cause, judgments impending, etc.
      IV. The faith remaining: "Help, Lord."

Verse 1. Intimate connection between yielding honour to God and honesty to man, since they decline together.

Verse 2. (first clause). A discourse upon the prevalence and perniciousness of vain talk.

Verse 2. The whole verse. Connection between flattery and treachery.


Verse 3. God's hatred of those twin sins of the lips—Flattery and Pride (which is self flattery). Why he hates them. How he shows his hatred. In whom he hates them most. How to be cleansed from them.

Verses 3, 4.
   I. The revolt of the tongue. Its claim of power, self-possession, and liberty. Contrast this and the believer's confession, "we are not our own."
      II. The method of its rebellion—"flattery, and speaking proud things."
      III. The end of its treason—"cut off."

Verse 5. The Lord aroused—How! Why! What to do! When!

Verse 5. Last clause. Peculiar danger of believers from those who despise them and their special safety. Good practical topic.
Verse 6. The purity, trial, and permanency of the words of the Lord.

Seven crucibles in which believers try the word. A little thought will suggest these.

Verse 7. Preservation from one's generation in this life and for ever. A very suggestive theme.

Verse 8. Sin in high places specially infectious. Call to the rich and prominent to remember their responsibility. Thankfulness for honourable rulers. Discrimination to be used in choice of our representatives, or civic magistrates.

WORK UPON THE TWELFTH PSALM
In "A Godly Meditation upon XX select Psalms . . . . . . . By Sir ANTHONY COPE, Knight, 1547," a thin black letter 4to., is an Exposition, or rather Meditation, on this Psalm. Reprinted 1848.
Psalm 13

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

OCCASION. The Psalm cannot be referred to any especial event or period in David's history. All attempts to find it a birthplace are but guesses. It was, doubtless, more than once the language of that much tried man of God, and is intended to express the feelings of the people of God in those ever-returning trials which beset them. If the reader has never yet found occasion to use the language of this brief ode, he will do so ere long, if he be a man after the Lord's own heart. We have been wont to call this the "How Long Psalm." We had almost said the Howling Psalm, from the incessant repetition of the cry "how long?"

DIVISION. This Psalm is very readily to be divided into three parts: the question of anxiety, 1, 2; the cry of prayer, 3, 4; the song of faith, 5, 6.

EXPOSITION
Verse 1. "How long?" This question is repeated no less than four times. It betokens very intense desire for deliverance, and great anguish of heart. And what if there be some impatience mingled therewith; is not this the more true a portrait of our own experience? It is not easy to prevent desire from degenerating into impatience. O for grace that, while we wait on God, we may be kept from indulging a murmuring spirit! "How long?" Does not the oft-repeated cry become a very HOWLING? And what if grief should find no other means of utterance? Even then, God is not far from the voice of our roaring; for he does not regard the music of our prayers, but his own Spirit's work in them in exciting desire and inflaming the affections.

"How long?" Ah! how long do our days appear when our soul is cast down within us!

"How wearily the moments seem to glide
O'er sadness! How the time
Delights to linger in its flight!"

Time flies with full-fledged wing in our summer days, but in our winters he flutters painfully. A week within prison-walls is longer than a month at liberty. Long sorrow seems to argue abounding corruption; for the gold which is long in the fire must have had much dross to be consumed, hence the question "how long?" may suggest deep searching of heart. "How long wilt thou forget me?" Ah, David! how like a fool thou talkest! Can God forget? Can Omniscience fail in memory? Above all, can Jehovah's heart forget his own beloved child? Ah! brethren, let us drive away the thought, and hear the voice of our covenant God by the mouth of the prophet, "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and
my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." "For ever?" Oh, dark thought! It was surely bad enough to suspect a temporary forgetfulness, but shall we ask the ungracious question, and imagine that the Lord will for ever cast away his people? No, his anger may endure for a night, but his love shall abide eternally. "How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" This is a far more rational question, for God may hide his face, and yet he may remember still. A hidden face is no sign of a forgetful heart. It is in love that his face is turned away; yet to a real child of God, this hiding of his Father's face is terrible and he will never be at ease until, once more he hath his Father's smile.

Verse 2. "How long shall I take counsel, in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?" There is in the original the idea of "laying up" counsels in his heart, as if his devices had become innumerable but unavailing. Herein we have often been like David, for we have considered and reconsidered day after day, but have not discovered the happy device by which to escape from our trouble. Such store is a sad sore. Ruminating upon trouble is bitter work. Children fill their mouths with bitterness when they rebelliously chew the pill which they ought obediently to have taken at once. "How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?" This is like wormwood in the gall, to see the wicked enemy exulting while our soul is bowed down within us. The laughter of a foe grates horribly on the ears of grief. For the devil to make mirth of our misery is the last ounce of our complaint, and quite breaks down our patience; therefore let us make it one chief argument in our plea with mercy.

Thus the careful reader will remark that the question "how long?" is put in four shapes. The writer's grief is viewed, as it seems to be, as it is, as it affects himself within, and his foes without. We are all prone to play most on the worst string. We set up monumental stones over the graves of our joys, but who thinks of erecting monuments of praise for mercies received? We write four books of Lamentations and only one of Canticles, and are far more at home in wailing out a *Misere* than in chanting a *Te Deum*.

Verse 3. But now prayer lifteth up her voice, like the watchman who proclaims the daybreak. Now will the tide turn, and the weeper shall dry his eyes. The mercy-seat is the life of hope and the death of despair. The gloomy thought of God's having forsaken him is still upon the psalmist's soul, and he therefore cries, "Consider and hear me." He remembers at once the root of his woe, and cries aloud that it may be removed. The final absence of God is Tophet's fire, and his temporary absence brings his people into the very suburbs of hell. God
Psalm 13

Verse 4. Another plea is urged in the fourth verse, and it is one which the tried believer may handle well when on his knees. We make use of our arch-enemy for once, and compel him, like Samson, to grind in our mill while we use his cruel arrogance as an argument in prayer. It is not the Lord's will that the great enemy of our souls should overcome his children. This would dishonour God, and cause the evil one to boast. It is well for us that our salvation and God's honour are so intimately connected, that they stand or fall together.

Verse 5. What a change is here! Lo, the rain is over and gone, and the time of the singing of birds is come. The mercy-seat has so refreshed the poor weeper, that he clears his throat for a song. If we have mourned with him, let us now dance with him. David's heart was more often out of tune than his harp, He begins many of his psalms sighing, and ends them singing; and others he begins in joy and ends in sorrow; "so that one would think," says Peter Moulin, "that
those Psalms had been composed by two men of a contrary humour." It is worthy to be observed that the joy is all the greater because of the previous sorrow, as calm is all the more delightful in recollection of the preceding tempest.

"Sorrows remembered sweeten present joy."

Here is his avowal of his confidence: "But I have trusted in thy mercy." For many a year it had been his wont to make the Lord his castle and tower of defence, and he smiles behind the same bulwark still. He is sure of his faith, and his faith makes him sure; had he doubted the reality of his trust in God, he would have blocked up one of the windows through which the sun of heaven delights to shine. Faith is now in exercise, and consequently is readily discovered; there is never a doubt in our heart about the existence of faith while it is in action: when the hare or partridge is quiet we see it not, but let the same be in motion and we soon perceive it. All the powers of his enemies had not driven the psalmist from his stronghold. As the shipwrecked mariner clings to the mast, so did David cling to his faith; he neither could nor would give up his confidence in the Lord his God. O that we may profit by his example and hold by our faith as by our very life!

Now hearken to the music which faith makes in his soul. The bells of the mind are all ringing, "My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation." There is joy and feasting within doors, for a glorious guest has come, and the fatted calf is killed. Sweet is the music which sounds from the strings of the heart. But this is not all; the voice joins itself in the blessed work, and the tongue keeps tune with the soul, while the writer declares, "I will sing unto the Lord."

"I will praise thee every day,
Now thine anger's past away;
Comfortable thoughts arise
From the bleeding sacrifice."

Verse 6. The Psalm closes with a sentence which is a refutation of the charge of forgetfulness which David had uttered in the first verse, "He hath dealt bountifully with me." So shall it be with us if we wait awhile. The complaint which in our haste we utter shall be joyfully retracted, and we shall witness that the Lord hath dealt bountifully with us.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS
Verse 1. "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord?" etc. The departures of God from true believers are never final; they may be tedious, but they are
temporary. As the evil spirit is said to depart from Christ for a season (Luke 4:13; though he quitted that temptation, he did not quit his design, so as to tempt no more), so the good Spirit withdraws from those that are Christ's, for a season only, 'tis with a purpose of coming again. When he hath most evidently forsaken, 'tis as unquestionable that sooner or later he will return; and the happiness of his return will richly recompense for the sadness of his desertion; Isaiah 54:7, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee;" here is not only a gathering after a forsaking, but "great mercies" to make amends for "a small moment." He who hath engaged to be our God for ever, cannot depart for ever. *Timothy Cruso,* 1696.

Verse 1. "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord?" Whatever be the pressing need of Christ's followers in troubles, and their constant cleaving to duty for all that; and whatever be Christ's purpose of love toward them, yet he seeth it fit oftentimes not to come to them at first, but will let the trial go on till it come to a height, and be a trial indeed, and put them seriously to it; for before he came he lets them row "about five and twenty or thirty furlongs" (the last of which make near four miles, eight furlongs going to a mile); and (Mark 6:48) he came not till the fourth watch of the night, which is the morning watch. We are indeed very sparing of ourselves in trouble, and do soon begin to think that we are low and tried enough, and therefore would be delivered; but our wise Lord seeth that we need more. *George Hutcheson,* 1657.

Verse 1. "How long," etc. Enquire into the causes of God's anger. He is never angry but when there is very great reason, when we force him to be so. What is that accursed thing in our hearts, or in our lives, for which God hides his face, and frowns upon us? What particular disobedience to his commands is it for which he has taken up the rod? Job 10:2; "I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me;" as if he should say, Lord, my troubles and my sorrows are very well known. . . . . . We must not cease to be solicitous to know what are the particular sins that have made him to tear us up by the roots, to throw us down as with a whirlwind; what is it that has made him so long angry with us, and so long to delay his help, that if any evil be undiscovered in our souls, we may lament it with a seasonable grief, and get a pardon for it. It is not the common course of God's providence to cover his servants with so thick a darkness as this is, which our troubled souls labour under in the day, or rather in the night of his displeasure; and, therefore, we may with humility desire to know why he proceeds with us in a way that is so singular; for it is some way delightful to the understanding to pierce into the reasons and causes of things. *Timothy Rogers.*
Verse 1. "How long wilt thou forget me," etc. For God to forget David, not to mind him, or look after him, is much! If his eye be never so little once off us, the spiritual adversary is ready presently to seize on us, as the kite on the chick if the hen look not carefully after it. . . . . . As a father will sometimes cross his son to try the child's disposition, to see how he will take it, whether he will mutter and grumble at it, and grow humorous and wayward, neglect his duty to his father because his father seemeth to neglect him, or make offer to run away and withdraw himself from his father's obedience because he seemeth to carry himself harshly and roughly toward him, and to provoke him thereunto; so doth God likewise oft-times cross his children and seemeth to neglect them, so to try their disposition, what metal they are made of, how they stand affected towards him: whether they will neglect God because God seemeth to neglect them, forbear to serve him because he seemeth to forget them, cease to depend upon him because he seemeth not to look after them, to provide for them, or to protect them. Like Joram's prophane pursuivant, "This evil," saith he, "is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?" Or whether they will constantly cleave to him, though he seem not to regard them, nor to have any care of them; and say with Isaiah, "Yet will I wait upon God, though he have hid his face from us, and I will look for him though he look not on us;" for, "They are blessed that wait on him; and he will not fail in due time to show mercy unto all them that do so constantly wait on him." Isaiah 8:17; 30:18. As Samuel dealt with Saul; he kept away till the last hour, to see what Saul would do when Samuel seemed not to keep touch with him. So doth God with his saints, and with those that be in league with him; he withdraweth himself oft, and keeps aloof off for a long time together to try what they will do, and what courses they will take when God seemeth to break with them and to leave them in the suds, as we say; amidst many difficulties much perplexed, as it was with David at this time. Thomas Gataker, 1637.

Verse 1.
1. For desertions. I think them like lying fallow of lean and weak land for some years, while it gathers sap for a better crop. It is possible to gather gold, where it may be had, with moonlight. Oh, if I could but creep one foot, or half a foot, nearer in to Jesus, in such dismal night as that when he is away, I should think it a happy absence!

2. If I knew that the Beloved were only gone away for trial, and further humiliation, and not smoked out of the house with new provocations, I would forgive desertions and hold my peace at his absence. But Christ's bought absence (that I bought with my sin), is two running boils at once, one upon each side; and what side then can I lie on?

3. I know that, as night and shadows are good for flowers, and moonlight
and dews are better than a continual sun, so is Christ's absence of special use, and that it hath some nourishing virtue in it, and giveth sap to humility, and putteth an edge on hunger, and furnisheth a fair field to faith to put forth itself, and to exercise its fingers in gripping it seeth not what. *Samuel Rutherford*, 1600-1661.

*Verses* 1, 2. That which the French proverb hath of sickness is true of all evils, that they come on horseback and go away on foot; we have often seen that a sudden fall, or one meal's surfeit, has stuck by many to their graves; whereas pleasures come like oxen, slow and heavily, and go away like post-horses, upon the spur. Sorrows, because they are lingering guests, I will entertain but moderately, knowing that the more they are made of the longer they will continue: and for pleasures, because they stay not, and do but call to drink at my door, I will use them as passengers with slight respect. He is his own best friend that makes the least of both of them. *Joseph Hall.*

*Verses* 1, 2. "HOW LONG wilt thou forget me? HOW LONG wilt thou hide thy face from me? HOW LONG shall I take counsel in my soul?" The intenseness of the affliction renders it trying to our fortitude; but it is by the continuance of it that patience is put to the test. It is not under the sharpest, but the longest trials, that we are most in danger of fainting. In the first case, the soul collects all its strength, and feels in earnest to call in help from above; but, in the last, the mind relaxes, and sinks into despondency. When Job was accosted with evil tidings in quick succession, he bore it with becoming fortitude; but when he could see no end to his troubles, he sunk under them. *Andrew Fuller.*

*Verse* 1-4. Everything is strangely changed; all its comeliness, and beauty, and glory, vanishes when the *life* is gone: life is the pleasant thing; 'tis sweet and comfortable; but death with its pale attendants, raises a horror and aversion to it everywhere. The saints of God dread the removal of his favour, and the hiding of his face; and when it is hid, a faintness, and a cold amazement and fear seizes upon every part, and they feel strange bitterness, and anguish, and tribulation, which makes their joints to tremble, and is to them as the very pangs of death. *Timothy Rogers.*

*Verses* 1, 5, 6. Prayer helps towards the increase and growth of grace, by drawing the habits of grace into exercise. Now, as exercise brings benefit to the body, so does prayer to the soul. Exercise doth help to digest or breathe forth those humours that clog the spirits. One that stirs little we see grow pursy, and is soon choked up with phlegm, which exercise clearly clears the body of. Prayer is the saint's exercise-field, where his graces are breathed; it is as the wind to the air, it brightens the soul; as bellows to the fire, which clears the coal.
of those ashes that smother them. The Christian, while in this world, lives in an unwholesome climate; one while, the delights of it deaden and dull his love to Christ; another while, the trouble he meets in it damps his faith on the promise. How now should the Christian get out of these distempers, had he not a throne of grace to resort to, where, if once his soul be in a melting frame, he (like one laid in a kindly sweat), soon breathes out the malignity of his disease, and comes into his right temper again? How often do we find the holy prophet, when he first kneels down to pray, full of fears and doubts, who, before he end the duty part, grows into a sweet familiarity with God, and repose in his own spirit! (Psalm 13:1), he begins his prayer as if he thought God would never give him a kind look more: "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?" But by that time he had exercised himself a little in duty, his distemper wears off, the mists scatter, and his faith breaks out as the sun in its strength, verses 5, 6: "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord." Thus his faith lays the cloth, expecting a feast ere long to be set on: he that now questioned whether he should ever hear good news from heaven, is so strong in faith as to make himself merry with the hopes of that mercy which he is assured will come at last. Abraham began with fifty, but his faith got ground on God every step, till he brought down the price of their lives to ten. William Gurnall.

Verses 1, 6. Whatever discouragements thou meetest with in thine attendance on God in ordinances, be like the English jet, fired by water, and not like our ordinary fires, quenched by it; let them add to, not diminish, thy resolution and courage; let not one repulse beat thee off; be violent, give a second storm to the kingdom of heaven. Parents sometimes hide themselves to make their children continue seeking. He that would not at first open his mouth, nor vouchsafe the woman of Canaan a word, doth, upon her continued and fervent petition, at last open his hand and give her whatsoever she asks: "O woman, be it unto thee as thou wilt." Continued importunity is undeniable oratory. And truly, if after all thy pains thou findest Jesus Christ, will it not make amends for thy long patience? Men that venture often at a lottery, though they take blanks twenty times, if afterwards they get a golden bason and ewer, it will make them abundant satisfaction. Suppose thou shouldst continue knocking twenty, nay, forty years, yet if at last, though but one hour before thou diest thy heart be opened to Christ, and he be received into thy soul, and when thou diest heaven be opened to thee, and thy soul received into it, will it not infinitely requite thee for all thy labour? Oh, think of it, and resolve never to be dumb while God is deaf, never to leave off prayer till God return a gracious answer. And for thy comfort, know that he who began his Psalm with "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" comes to
conclude it with, "I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me." George Swinnock.

Verse 2. "How long?" There are many situations of the believer in this life in which the words of this Psalm may be a consolation, and help to revive sinking faith. A certain man lay at the pool of Bethesda, who had an infirmity thirty and eight years. John: 5:5. A woman had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, before she was "loosed." Luke 13:11. Lazarus all his life long laboured under disease and poverty, till he was released by death and transferred to Abraham's bosom. Luke 16:20-22. Let every one, then, who may be tempted to use the complaints of this Psalm, assure his heart that God does not forget his people, help will come at last, and, in the meantime, all things shall work together for good to them that love him. W. Wilson, D.D.

Verse 2. "How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?" There is such a thing as to pore on our guilt and wretchedness, to the overlooking of our highest mercies. Though it be proper to know our own hearts, for the purposes of conviction, yet, if we expect consolation from this quarter, we shall find ourselves sadly disappointed. Such, for a time, appears to have been the case of David. He seems to have been in great distress; and, as is common in such cases, his thoughts turned inward, casting in his mind what he should do, and what would be the end of things. While thus exercised, he had sorrow in his heart daily: but, betaking himself to God for relief, he succeeded, trusting in his mercy, his heart rejoiced in his salvation. There are many persons, who, when in trouble, imitate David in the former part of this experience: I wish we may imitate him in the latter. Andrew Fuller.

Verse 2, 4. "How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?" 'Tis a great relief to the miserable and afflicted, to be pitied by others. It is some relief when others, though they cannot help us, yet seem to be truly concerned for the sadness of our case; when by the kindness of their words and of their actions they do a little smooth the wounds they cannot heal; but 'tis an unspeakable addition to the cross, when a man is brought low under the sense of God's displeasure, to have men mock at his calamity, or to revile him, or to speak roughly; this does inflame and exasperate the wound that was big enough before; and it is a hard thing when one has a dreadful sound in his ears to have every friend to become a son of thunder. It is a small matter for people that are at ease, to deal severely with such as are afflicted, but they little know how their severe speeches and their angry words pierce them to the very soul. 'Tis easy to blame others for complaining, but if such had felt but for a little while what it is to be under the fear of God's anger, they would find that they could not but complain. It cannot but make any person restless and uneasy when he
apprehends that God is his enemy. It is no wonder if he makes every one that he sees, and every place that he is in, a witness of his grief; but now it is a comfort in our temptations and in our fears, that we have so compassionate a friend as Christ is to whom we may repair. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15. *Timothy Rogers.*

*Verse 3.* "Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." In time of sickness and grief, the "eyes" are dull and heavy; and they grow more and more so as death approaches, which closes them in darkness. On the other hand, health and joy render the organs of vision bright and sparkling, seeming, as it were, to impart "light" to them from within. The words, therefore, may be fitly applied to a recovery of the body natural, and thence, of the body politic, from their respective maladies. Nor do they less significantly describe the restoration of the soul to a state of spiritual health and holy joy, which will manifest themselves in like manner, by "the eyes of the understanding being enlightened;" and in this case, the soul is saved from the sleep of sin, as the body is in the other, from the sleep of death. *George Horne.*

*Verse 3.* Why dost thou hide thy face? happily thou wilt say, None can see thy face and live. Ah, Lord, let me die, that I may see thee; let me see thee, that I may die: I would not live, but die; that I may see Christ, I desire death; that I may live with Christ, I despise life. *Augustine.*

*Verse 3.* "How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" Oh, excellent hiding, which is become my perfection! My God, thou hidest thy treasure, to kindle my desire! Thou hidest thy pearl, to inflame the seeker; thou delayest to give, that thou mayest teach me to importune; seemest not to hear, to make me persevere. *John Anselm,* 1034-1109.

*Verse 4.*

Ah! can you bear contempt; the venom'd tongue Of those whom ruin pleases, the keen sneer, The lewd reproaches of the rascal herd; Who for the selfsame actions, if successful, Would be as grossly lavish in your praise? To sum up all in one— can you support The scornful glances, the malignant joy, Or more, detested pity of a rival— Of a triumphant rival?
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Verse 4. "And those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved"— compose comedies out of my tragedies. John Trapp.

Verse 5. "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation."

Faith rejoiceth in tribulation, and triumpheth before the victory. The patient is glad when he feels his physic to work, though it make him sick for the time; because he hopes it will procure health. We rejoice in afflictions, not that they are joyous for the present, but because they shall work for our good. As faith rejoiceth, so it triumpheth in assurance of good success; for it seeth not according to outward appearance, but when all means fail, it keepeth God in sight, and beholdeth him present for our succour. John Ball.

Verse 5. "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation."

Though passion possess our bodies, let "patience possess our souls." The law of our profession binds us to a warfare; patiendo vincimus, our troubles shall end, our victory is eternal. Here David's triumph (Psalm 18:38-40), "I have wounded them, that they were not able to rise; they are fallen under my feet. Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. Thou hast also given me the neck of mine enemies," etc. They have wounds for their wounds; and the treader down of the poor are trodden down by the poor. The Lord will subdue those to us that would have subdued us to themselves; and though for a short time they rode over our heads, yet now at last we shall everlastingly tread upon their necks. Lo, then, the reward of humble patience and confident hope. Speramus et superamus. Deuteronomy 32:31. "Our God is not as their God, even our enemies being judges." Psalm 20:7. "Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses." But no chariot hath strength to oppose, nor horse swiftness to escape, when God pursues. Verse 8. "They are brought down and fallen; we are risen and stand upright." Their trust hath deceived them; down they fall, and never to rise. Our God hath helped us; we are risen, not for a breathing space, but to stand upright for ever. Thomas Adams.

Verse 5. None live so easily, so pleasantly, as those that live by faith. Matthew Henry.

Verse 5. Wherefore I say again, "Live by faith;" again I say, always live by it, rejoice through faith in the Lord. I dare boldly say it is thy fault and neglect of its exercise if thou suffer either thy own melancholy humour or Satan to interrupt thy mirth and spiritual alacrity, and to detain thee in dumps and pensiveness at any time. What if thou beest of a sad constitution? of a dark complexion? Is not faith able to rectify nature? Is it not stronger than any
hellebore? Doth not an experienced divine and physician worthily prefer one dram of it before all the drugs in the apothecary's shop for this effect? Hath it not sovereign virtue in it, to excerebrate all cares, expectorate all fears and griefs, evacuate the mind of all ill thoughts and passions, to exhilarate the whole man? But what good doth it to any to have a cordial by him if he use it not? To wear a sword, soldier-like, by his side, and not to draw it forth in an assault? When a dump overtakes thee, if thou wouldst say to thy soul in a word or two, "Soul, why art thou disquieted? know and consider in whom thou believest," would it not presently return to its rest again? Would not the Master rebuke the winds and storms, and calm thy troubled mind presently? Hath not every man something or other he useth to put away dumps, to drive away the evil spirit, as David with his harp? Some with merry company, some with a cup of sack, most with a pipe of tobacco, without which they cannot ride or go. If they miss it a day together they are troubled with rheums, dulness of spirits. They that live in fens and ill airs dare not stir out without a morning draught of some strong liquor. Poor, silly, smoky helps, in comparison with the least taste (but for dishonouring faith I would say whiff) or draught of faith. Samuel Ward, 1577-1653.

Verse 6. "I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me." Faith keeps the soul from sinking under heavy trials, by bringing in former experiences of the power, mercy, and faithfulness of God to the afflicted soul. Hereby was the psalmist supported in distress. Oh, saith faith, remember what God hath done both for thy outward and inward man: he hath not only delivered thy body when in trouble, but he hath done great things for thy soul; he hath brought thee out of a state of black nature, entered into a covenant relation with thee, made his goodness pass before thee; he hath helped thee to pray, and many times hath heard thy prayers and thy tears. Hath he not formerly brought thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and put a new song in thy mouth, and made thee to resolve never to give way to such unbelieving thoughts and fears again? and how unbecoming is it for thee now to sink in trouble? John Willison, 1680-1750.

Verse 6. "I will sing unto the Lord." Mr. John Philpot having lain for some time in the bishop of London's coal-house, the bishop sent for him, and amongst other questions, asked him why they were so merry in prison? singing (as the prophet speaks) Exultantes in rebus pessimis, rejoicing in your naughtiness, whereas you should rather lament and be sorry. Mr. Philpot answered, "My lord, the mirth which we make is but in singing certain Psalms, as we are commanded by Paul, to rejoice in the Lord, singing together hymns and Psalms, for we are in a dark, comfortless place, and therefore, we thus solace
ourselves. I trust, therefore, your lordship will not be angry, seeing the apostle saith, 'If any be of an upright heart, let him sing Psalms;' and we, to declare that we are of an upright mind to God, though we are in misery, yet refresh ourselves with such singing." After some other discourse, saith he, "I was carried back to my lord's coal-house, where I, with my six fellow prisoners, do rouze together in the straw, as cheerfully (I thank God) as others do in their beds of down." And in a letter to a friend, he thus writes: "Commend me to Mr. Elsing and his wife, and thank them for providing me some ease in my prison; and tell them though my lord's coal-house be very black, yet it is more to be desired of the faithful than the Queen's palace. The world wonders how we can be so merry under such extreme miseries; but our God is omnipotent, who turns misery into felicity. Believe me, there is no such joy in the world, as the people of God have under the cross of Christ: I speak by experience, and therefore believe me, and fear nothing that the world can do unto you, for when they imprison our bodies, they set our souls at liberty to converse with God; when they cast us down, they lift us up; when they kill us, then do they send us to everlasting life. What greater glory can there be than to be made conformable to our Head, Christ? And this is done by affliction. O good God, what am I, upon whom thou shouldst bestow so great a mercy? This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the way, though it be narrow, which is full of the peace of God, and leadeth to eternal bliss. Oh, how my heart leapeth for joy that I am so near the apprehension thereof! God forgive me my unthankfulness, and unworthiness of so great glory. I have so much joy, that though I be in a place of darkness and mourning, yet I cannot lament; but both night and day am so full of joy as I never was so merry before; the Lord's name be praised for ever. Our enemies do fret, fume, and gnash their teeth at it. O pray instantly that this joy may never be taken from us; for it passeth all the delights in this world. This is the peace of God that passeth all understanding. This peace, the more his chosen be afflicted, the more they feel it, and therefore cannot faint neither for fire nor water. Samuel Clarke's "Mirrour," 1671.

Verse 6. "I will sing unto the Lord." How far different is the end of this Psalm from the beginning! John Trapp.

Verse 6. "I will sing unto the Lord," etc. I never knew what it was for God to stand by me at all turns, and at every offer of Satan to afflict me, etc., as I have found him since I came in hither; for look how fears have presented themselves, so have supports and encouragements; yea, when I have started, even as it were at nothing else but my shadow, yet God, as being very tender to me, hath not suffered me to be molested, but would with one Scripture or
another, strengthen me against all; insomuch that I have often said, *Were it lawful, I could pray for greater trouble, for the greater comfort's sake.* Ecclesiastes 7:14; 2 Corinthians 1:5. *John Bunyan,* 1628-1688.

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

*Verse 1.* The apparent length of sorrow, only apparent. Contrast with days of joy, with eternal misery and eternal joy. Impatience, and other evil passions, cause the seeming length. Means of shortening, by refusing to forestall, or to repine afterwards.

*Verse 1 (second clause).* Hiding of the divine face. Why at all? Why from me? Why so long?

*Verse 2.* Advice to the dejected, or the soul directed to look out of itself for consolation. *A. Fuller.*

*Verse 2 (first clause).*— *Self-torture,* its cause, curse, crime, and cure.

*Verse 2.* "*Having sorrow in my heart daily.*"

I. The cause of daily sorrow. Great enemy, unbelief, sin, trial, loss of Jesus' presence, sympathy with others, mourning for human ruin.

II. The necessity of daily sorrow. Purge corruptions, excite graces, raise desires heavenward.

III. The cure of daily sorrow. Good food from God's table, old wine of promises, walks with Jesus, exercise in good works, avoidance of everything unhealthy. *B. Davies.*

*Verse 2 (second clause).*— Time anticipated when defeat shall be turned into victory.

*Verse 3.* By accomodating the text to the believer.

I. True character of Satan, "enemy."

II. Remarkable fact that this enemy is exalted over us.

III. Pressing enquiry, "How long?" *B. Davies.*

Verse 4. Noteth the nature of the wicked two ways; namely, the more they prevail the more insolent they are; they wonderfully exult over those that are afflicted. T. Wilcocks.

Verse 5. Experience and perseverence. "I have," "my heart shall."

Verse 6. The bountiful giver and the hearty singer.

The whole Psalm would make a good subject, showing the stages from mourning to rejoicing, dwelling especially upon the turning point, prayer. There are two verses for each, mourning, praying, rejoicing. A. G. Brown.
Psalm 14

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. This admirable ode is simply headed, "To the Chief Musician, by David." The dedication to the Chief Musician stands at the head of fifty-three of the Psalms, and clearly indicates that such psalms were intended, not merely for the private use of believers, but to be sung in the great assemblies by the appointed choir at whose head was the overseer, or superintendent, called in our version, "the Chief Musician," and by Ainsworth, "the Master of the Music." Several of these psalms have little or no praise in them, and were not addressed directly to the Most High, and yet were to be sung in public worship; which is a clear indication that the theory of Augustine lately revived by certain hymn-book makers, that nothing but praise should be sung, is far more plausible than scriptural. Not only did the ancient Church chant hallowed doctrine and offer prayer amid her spiritual songs, but even the wailing notes of complaint were put into her mouth by the sweet singer of Israel who was inspired of God. Some persons grasp at any nicety which has a gloss of apparent correctness upon it, and are pleased with being more fancifully precise than others; nevertheless it will ever be the way of plain men, not only to magnify the Lord in sacred canticles, but also, according to Paul's precept, to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts unto the Lord.

As no distinguishing title is given to this Psalm, we would suggest as an assistance to the memory, the heading—CONCERNING PRACTICAL ATHEISM. The many conjectures as to the occasion upon which it was written are so completely without foundation, that it would be a waste of time to mention them at length. The apostle Paul, in Romans 3, has shown incidentally that the drift of the inspired writer is to show that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin; there was, therefore, no reason for fixing upon any particular historical occasion, when all of history reeks with terrible evidence of human corruption. With instructive alterations, David has given us in Psalm 53 a second edition of this humiliating psalm, being moved of the Holy Ghost thus doubly to declare a truth which is ever distasteful to carnal minds.

DIVISION. The world's foolish creed (verse 1); its practical influence in corrupting morals, 1, 2, 3. The persecuting tendencies of sinners, 4; their alarms, 5; their ridicule of the godly, 6; and a prayer for the manifestation of the Lord to his people's joy.

EXPOSITION
Verse 1. "The fool." The Atheist is the fool pre-eminently, and a fool universally. He would not deny God if he were not a fool by nature, and having denied God it is no marvel that he becomes a fool in practice. Sin is always folly, and as it is the height of sin to attack the very existence of the Most High, so it is also the greatest imaginable folly. To say there is no God is to belie the plainest evidence, which is obstinacy; to oppose the common consent of mankind, which is stupidity; to stifle consciousness, which is madness. If the sinner could by his atheism destroy the God whom he hates there were some sense, although much wickedness, in his infidelity; but as denying the existence of fire does not prevent its burning a man who is in it, so doubting the existence of God will not stop the Judge of all the earth from destroying the rebel who breaks his laws; nay, this atheism is a crime which much provokes heaven, and
will bring down terrible vengeance on the fool who indulges it. The proverb says, "A fool's tongue cuts his own throat," and in this instance it kills both soul and body for ever: would to God the mischief stopped even there, but alas! one fool makes hundreds, and a noisy blasphemer spreads his horrible doctrines as lepers spread the plague. Ainsworth, in his "Annotations," tells us that the word here used is *Nabal*, which has the signification of fading, dying, or falling away, as a withered leaf or flower; it is a title given to the foolish man as having lost the juice and sap of wisdom, reason, honesty, and godliness. Trapp hits the mark when he calls him "that sapless fellow, that carcase of a man, that walking sepulchre of himself, in whom all religion and right reason is withered and wasted, dried up and decayed. Some translate it *the apostate*, and others *the wretch*. With what earnestness should we shun the appearance of doubt as to the presence, activity, power and love of God, for all such mistrust is of the nature of folly, and who among us would wish to be ranked with the fool in the text? Yet let us never forget that all unregenerate men are more or less such fools.

The fool *"hath said in his heart."* May a man with his mouth profess to believe, and yet in heart say the reverse? Had he hardly become audacious enough to utter his folly with his tongue? Did the Lord look upon his thoughts as being in the nature of words to Him though not to man? Is this where man first becomes an unbeliever?—in his heart, not in his head? And when he talks atheistically, is it a foolish heart speaking, and endeavouring to clamour down the voice of conscience? We think so. If the affections were set upon truth and righteousness, the understanding would have no difficulty in settling the question of a present personal Deity, but as the heart dislikes the good and the right, it is no wonder that it desires to be rid of that Elohim, who is the great moral Governor, the Patron of rectitude and the Punisher of iniquity. While men's hearts remain what they are, we must not be surprised at the prevalence of scepticism; a corrupt tree will bring forth corrupt fruit. "Every man," says Dickson, "so long as he lieth unrenewed and unreconciled to God is nothing in effect but a madman." What wonder then if he raves? Such fools as those we are now dealing with are common to all time, and all countries; they grow without watering, and are found all the world over. The spread of mere intellectual enlightenment will not diminish their number, for since it is an affair of the heart, this folly and great learning will often dwell together. To answer sceptical cavillings will be labour lost until grace enters to make the mind willing to believe; fools can raise more objections in an hour than wise men can answer in seven years, indeed it is their mirth to set stools for wise men to stumble over. Let the preacher aim at the heart, and preach the all-conquering love of Jesus, and he will by God's grace win more doubters to the faith of the gospel than any hundred of the best reasoners who only direct their
arguments to the head.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," or "no God." So monstrous is the assertion, that the man hardly dared to put it as a positive statement, but went very near to doing so. Calvin seems to regard this saying, "no God," as hardly amounting to a syllogism, scarcely reaching to a positive, dogmatical declaration; but Dr. Alexander clearly shows that it does. It is not merely the wish of the sinner's corrupt nature, and the hope of his rebellious heart, but he manages after a fashion to bring himself to assert it, and at certain seasons he thinks that he believes it. It is a solemn reflection that some who worship God with their lips may in their hearts be saying, "no God." It is worthy of observation that he does not say there is no Jehovah, but there is no Elohim; Deity in the abstract is not so much the object of attack, as the covenant, personal, ruling and governing presence of God in the world. God as ruler, lawgiver, worker, Saviour, is the butt at which the arrows of human wrath are shot. How impotent the malice! How mad the rage which raves and foams against Him in whom we live and move and have our being! How horrible the insanity which leads a man who owes his all to God to cry out, "No God"! How terrible the depravity which makes the whole race adopt this as their hearts desire, "no God!"

"They are corrupt." This refers to all men, and we have the warrant of the Holy Ghost for so saying; see the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Where there is enmity to God, there is deep, inward depravity of mind. The words are rendered by eminent critics in an active sense, "they have done corruptly:" this may serve to remind us that sin is not only in our nature passively as the source of evil, but we ourselves actively fan the flame and corrupt ourselves, making that blacker still which was black as darkness itself already. We rivet our own chains by habit and continuance.

"They have done abominable works." When men begin with renouncing the Most High God, who shall tell where they will end? When the Master's eyes are put out, what will not the servants do? Observe the state of the world before the flood, as pourtrayed in Genesis 6:12, and remember that human nature is unchanged. He who would see a terrible photograph of the world without God must read that most painful of all inspired Scriptures, the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Learned Hindoos have confessed that the description is literally correct in Hindostan at the present moment; and were it not for the restraining grace of God, it would be so in England. Alas! it is even here but too correct a picture of things which are done of men in secret. Things loathsome to God and man are sweet to some palates.

"There is none that doeth good." Sins of omission must abound where transgressions are rife. Those who do the things which they ought not to have done, are sure to leave undone those things which they ought to have done.
What a picture of our race is this! Save only where grace reigns, there is none that doeth good; humanity, fallen and debased, is a desert without an oasis, a night without a star, a dunghill without a jewel, a hell without a bottom.

Verse 2. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men." As from a watchtower, or other elevated place of observation, the Lord is represented as gazing intently upon men. He will not punish blindly, nor like a tyrant command an indiscriminate massacre because a rumour of rebellion has come up to his ears. What condescending interest and impartial justice are here imagined! The case of Sodom, visited before it was overthrown, illustrates the careful manner in which Divine Justice beholds the sin before it avenges it, and searches out the righteous that they perish not with the guilty. Behold then the eyes of Omniscience ransacking the globe, and prying among every people and nation, "to see if there were any that did understand and seek God." He who is looking down knows the good, is quick to discern it, would be delighted to find it; but as he views all the unregenerate children of men his search is fruitless, for of all the race of Adam, no unrenewed soul is other than an enemy to God and goodness. The objects of the Lord's search are not wealthy men, great men, or learned men; these, with all they can offer, cannot meet the demands of the great Governor: at the same time, he is not looking for superlative eminence in virtue, he seeks for any that understand themselves, their state, their duty, their destiny, their happiness; he looks for any that seek God, who, if there be a God, are willing and anxious to find him out. Surely this is not too great a matter to expect; for if men have not yet known God, if they have any right understanding, they will seek him. Alas! even this low degree of good is not to be found even by him who sees all things: but men love the hideous negation of "No God," and with their backs to their Creator, who is the sun of their life, they journey into the dreary region of unbelief and alienation, which is a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death without any order and where the light is as darkness.

Verse 3. "They are all gone aside." Without exception, all men have apostatized from the Lord their Maker, from his laws, and from all the eternal principles of right. Like stubborn heifers they have sturdily refused to receive the yoke, like errant sheep they have found a gap and left the right field. The original speaks of the race as a whole, as a totality; and humanity as a whole has become depraved in heart and defiled in life. "They have altogether become filthy;" as a whole they are spoiled and soured like corrupt leaven, or, as some put it, they have become putrid and even stinking. The only reason why we do not more clearly see this foulness is because we are accustomed to it, just as those who work daily among offensive odours at last cease to smell them. The
miller does not observe the noise of his own mill, and we are slow to discover
our own ruin and depravity. But are there no special cases, are all men sinful?
"Yes," says the Psalmist, in a manner not to be mistaken, "they are." He has put
it positively, he repeats it negatively, "There is none that doeth good, no, not
one." The Hebrew phrase is an utter denial concerning any mere man that he of
himself doeth good. What can be more sweeping? This is the verdict of the all-
seeing Jehovah, who cannot exaggerate or mistake. As if no hope of finding a
solitary specimen of a good man among the unrenewed human family might be
harboured for an instant. The Holy Spirit is not content with saying all and
altogether, but adds the crushing threefold negative, "none, no, not one." What
say the opponents to the doctrine of natural depravity to this? Rather what do
we feel concerning it? Do we not confess that we by nature are corrupt, and do
we not bless the sovereign grace which has renewed us in the spirit of our
minds, that sin may no more have dominion over us, but that grace may rule
and reign?

Verse 4. Hatred of God and corruptness of life are the motive forces which
produce persecution. Men who having no saving knowledge of divine things,
enslave themselves to become workers of iniquity, have no heart to cry to the
Lord for deliverance, but seek to amuse themselves with devouring the poor
and despised people of God. It is hard bondage to be a "worker of iniquity;" a
worker at the galleys, or in the mines of Siberia, is not more truly degraded and
wretched; the toil is hard and the reward dreadful: those who have no
knowledge choose such slavery, but those who are taught of God cry to be
rescued from it. The same ignorance which keeps men bondsmen to evil, makes
them hate the freeborn sons of God; hence they seek to eat them up "as they eat
bread,"—daily, ravenously, as though it were an ordinary, usual, every-day
matter to oppress the saints of God. As pikes in a pond, eat up little fish, as
eagles prey on smaller birds, as wolves rend the sheep of the pasture, so sinners
naturally and as a matter of course, persecute, malign, and mock the followers
of the Lord Jesus. While thus preying, they forswear all praying, and in this act
consistently, for how could they hope to be heard while their hands are full of
blood?

Verse 5. Oppressors have it not all their own way, they have their fits of
trembling and their appointed seasons of overthrow. There—where they denied
God and hectored against his people; there—where they thought of peace and
safety, they were made to quail. "There were they"—these very loud-mouthed,
iron-handed, proud-hearted Nimrods and Herods, those heady, high-minded
sinners—"there were they in great fear." A panic terror seized them: "they
feared a fear," as the Hebrew puts it; an undefinable, horrible, mysterious dread
crept over them. The most hardened of men have their periods when conscience casts them into a cold sweat of alarm. As cowards are cruel, so all cruel men are at heart cowards. The ghost of past sin is a terrible spectre to haunt any man, and though unbelievers may boast as loudly as they will, a sound is in their ears which makes them ill at ease.

"For God is in the generation of the righteous." This makes the company of godly men so irksome to the wicked because they perceive that God is with them. Shut their eyes as they may, they cannot but perceive the image of God in the character of his truly gracious people, nor can they fail to see that he works for their deliverance. Like Haman, they instinctively feel a trembling when they see God's Mordecais. Even though the saint may be in a mean position, mourning at the gate where the persecutor rejoices in state, the sinner feels the influence of the believer's true nobility and quails before it, for God is there. Let scoffers beware, for they persecute the Lord Jesus when they molest his people; the union is very close between God and his people, it amounts to a mysterious indwelling, for God is in the generation of the righteous.

Verse 6. Notwithstanding their real cowardice, the wicked put on the lion's skin and lord it over the Lord's poor ones. Though fools themselves, they mock at the truly wise as if the folly were on their side; but this is what might be expected, for how should brutish minds appreciate excellence, and how can those who have owl's eyes admire the sun? The special point and butt of their jest seems to be the confidence of the godly in their Lord. What can your God do for you now? Who is that God who can deliver out of our hand? Where is the reward of all your praying and beseeching? Taunting questions of this sort they thrust into the faces of weak but gracious souls, and tempt them to feel ashamed of their refuge. Let us not be laughed out of our confidence by them, let us scorn their scorning and defy their jeers; we shall need to wait but a little, and then the Lord our refuge will avenge his own elect, and ease himself of his adversaries, who once made so light of him and of his people.

Verse 6. Natural enough is this closing prayer, for what would so effectually convince atheists, overthrow persecutors, stay sin, and secure the godly, as the manifest appearance of Israel's great Salvation? The coming of Messiah was the desire of the godly in all ages, and though he has already come with a sin-offering to purge away iniquity, we look for him to come a second time, to come without a sin-offering unto salvation. O that these weary years would have an end! Why tarries he so long? He knows that sin abounds and that his people are down-trodden; why comes he not to the rescue? His glorious advent will restore his ancient people from literal captivity, and his SPIRITUAL seed from spiritual sorrow. Wrestling Jacob and prevailing Israel shall alike rejoice
before him when he is revealed as their salvation. O that he were come! What happy, holy, halcyon, heavenly days should we then see! But let us not count him slack, for behold he comes, he comes quickly! Blessed are all they that wait for him.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. There is a peculiar mark put upon this Psalm, in that it is twice in the Book of psalms. The fourteenth Psalm and the fifty-third Psalm are the same, with the alteration of one or two expressions at most. And there is another mark put upon it, that the apostle transcribes a great part of it. Romans 3:10-12.

It contains a description of a most deplorable state of things in the world—ay, in Israel; a most deplorable state, by reason of the general corruption that was befallen all sorts of men, in their principles, and in their practices, and in their opinions.

First, it was a time when there was a mighty prevalent principle of atheism got into the world, got among the great men of the world. Saith he, "That is their principle, they say in their hearts, 'There is no God.'" It is true, they did not absolutely profess it; but it was the principle whereby all their actings were regulated, and which they conformed unto. "The fool," saith he, "hath said in his heart, There is no God." Not this or that particular man, but the fool—that is, those foolish men; for in the next word he tells you, "They are corrupt;" and verse 3, "They are all gone aside." "The fool" is taken indefinitely for the great company and society of foolish men, to intimate that whatsoever they were divided about else, they were all agreed in this. "They are all a company of atheists," saith he, "practical atheists."

Secondly, their affections were suitable to this principle, as all men's affections and actions are suitable to their principles. What are you to expect from men whose principle is, that there is no God? Why, saith he, for their affections, "They are corrupt," which he expresseth again (verse 3), "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy." "All gone aside." The word in the original is, "They are all grown sour," as drink, that hath been formerly of some use, but when grown vapid—lost all its spirits and life—it is an insipid thing, good for nothing. And, saith he, "They are altogether become filthy"—"become stinking," as the margin hath it. They have corrupt affections, that have left them no life, no savour; but stinking, corrupt lusts prevail in them universally. They say, "There is no God;" and they are filled with stinking, corrupt lusts.

Thirdly, if this be their principle and these their affections, let us look after their actions, to see if they be any better. But consider their actions. They be of
two sorts; 1. How they act in the world, 2. How they act toward the people of God.

1. How do they act in the world? Why, consider that, as to their duties which they omit, and as to the wickednesses which they perform. What good do they do? Nay, saith he, "None of them doeth good." Yea, some of them. "No, not one." Saith he, verses 1, 3, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." If there was any one among them that did attend to what was really good, and useful in the world, there was some hope. "No," saith he, "their principle is atheism, their affections are corrupt; and for good, there is not one of them doeth any good—they omit all duties."

What do they do for evil? Why, saith he, "They have done abominable works"—"works," saith he, "not to be named, not to be spoken of—works which God abhors, which all good men abhor." "Abominable works," saith he, "such as the very light of nature would abhor;" and give me leave to use the expression of the psalmist—"stinking, filthy works." So he doth describe the state and condition of things under the reign of Saul, when he wrote this Psalm.

2. "If thus it be with them, and if thus it be with their own ways, yet they let the people of God alone; they will not add that to the rest of their sins." Nay, it is quite otherwise, saith he, "They eat up my people as they eat bread." "Those workers of iniquity have no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord." What is the reason why he brings it in in that manner? Why could he not say, "They have no knowledge that do such abominable things;" but brings it in thus, "They have no knowledge who eat up my people as they eat bread?" "It is strange, that after all my dealings with them and declaration of my will, they should be so brutish as not to know this would be their ruin. Don't they know this will devour them, destroy them, and be called over again in a particular manner? In the midst of all the sins, and greatest and highest provocations that are in the world, God lays a special weight upon the eating of his people. They may feed upon their own lusts what they will; but, "Have they no knowledge, that they eat up my people as they eat bread?"

There are very many things that might be observed from all this; but I aim to give but a few hints from the Psalms.

Well, what is the state of things now? You see what it was with them. How was it with the providence of God in reference unto them? Which is strange, and a man would scarce believe it in such a course as this is, he tells you (verse 5), notwithstanding all this, they were in great fear. "There were they in great fear," saith he. May be so, for they saw some evil coming upon them. No, there was nothing but the hand of God in it; for in Psalm 53:5, where these words are repeated, it is, "There were they in great fear, where no fear was"—no visible cause of fear yet they were in great fear.
God by his providence seldom gives an absolute, universal security unto men in their height of sin, and oppression, and sensuality, and lusts: but he will secretly put them in fear where no fear is: and though there be nothing seen that should cause them to have any fear, they shall act like men at their wits' end with fear.

But whence should this fear arise? Saith he, it ariseth from hence, "For God is in the generation of the righteous." Plainly they see their work doth not go on; their meat doth not digest with them; their bread doth not go well down. "They were eating and devouring my people, and when they came to devour them, they found God was among them (they could not digest their bread); and this put them in fear; quite surprised them." They came, and thought to have found them a sweet morsel: when engaged, God was there filling their mouth and teeth with gravel; and he began to break out the jawbone of the terrible ones when they came to feed upon them. Saith he, "God was there." (Verse 5.)

The Holy Ghost gives an account of the state of things that was between those two sorts of people he had described—between the fool and the people of God—they that were devouring, and them that had been utterly devoured, had not God been among them. Both were in fear—they that were to be devoured, and those that did devour. And they took several ways for their relief; and he showeth what those ways were, and what judgment they made upon the ways of one another. Saith he, "Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge."

There are the persons spoken of—they are "the poor;" and that is those who are described in the verses foregoing, the people that were ready to be eaten up and devoured.

And there is the hope and refuge that these poor had in such a time as this, when all things were in fear; and that was "the LORD." The poor maketh the Lord his refuge.

And you may observe here, that as he did describe all the wicked as one man, "the fool," so he describes all his own people as one man, "the poor"—that is, the poor man: "Because the LORD is his refuge." He keeps it in the singular number. Whosoever the people of God may differ in, they are all as one man in this business.

And there is the way whereby these poor make God their refuge. They do it by "counsel," saith he. It is not a thing they do by chance, but they look upon it as their wisdom. They do it upon consideration, upon advice. It is a thing of great wisdom.

Well, what thoughts have the others concerning this acting of theirs? The poor make God their refuge; and they do it by counsel. What judgment, now, doth the world make of this counsel of theirs? Why, they "shame it;" that is, they cast shame upon it, contemn it as a very foolish thing, to make the Lord
their refuge. "Truly, if they could make this or that great man their refuge, it were something; but to make the Lord their refuge, this is the foolishest thing in the world," say they. To shame men's counsel, to despise their counsel as foolish, is as great contempt as they can lay upon them.

Here you see the state of things as they are represented in this Psalm, and spread before the Lord: which being laid down, the psalmist showeth what our duty is upon such a state of things—what is the duty of the people of God, things thus being stated. Saith he, "Their way is to go to prayer:" verse 7, "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." If things are thus stated, then cry, then pray, "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion," etc. There shall a revenue of praise come to God out of Zion, to the rejoicing of his people. John Owen.

Verse 1. "The fool." That sapless fellow, that carcase of a man, that walking sepulchre of himself, in whom all religion and right reason is withered and wasted, dried up and decayed. That apostate in whom natural principles are extinct, and from whom God is departed, as when the prince is departed, hangings are taken down. That mere animal that hath no more than a reasonable soul, and for little other purpose than as salt, to keep his body from putrefying. That wicked man hereafter described, that studieth atheism. John Trapp.

Verse 1. "The fool," etc. The world we live in is a world of fools. The far greater part of mankind act a part entirely irrational. So great is their infatuation, that they prefer time to eternity, momentary enjoyments to those that shall never have an end, and listen to the testimony of Satan in preference to that of God. Of all folly, that is the greatest, which relates to eternal objects, because it is the most fatal, and when persisted in through life, entirely remediless. A mistake in the management of temporal concerns may be afterwards rectified. At any rate, it is comparatively of little importance. But an error in spiritual and eternal matters, as it is in itself of the greatest moment, if carried through life, can never be remedied; because after death there is no redemption. The greatest folly that any creature is capable of, is that of denying or entertaining unjust apprehensions of the being and perfections of the great Creator. Therefore in a way of eminence, the appellation of fool is given by the Spirit of God, to him who is chargeable with this guilt. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." John Jamieson, M.A., 1789.

Verse 1. "The fool," a term in Scripture signifying a wicked man, used also by the heathen philosophers to signify a vicious person, (Heb.) as coming from (Heb.) signifies the extinction of life in men, animals, and plants; so the word (Heb.) is taken Isaiah 40:7, (Heb.) "the flower fadeth" (Isaiah 28:1), a plant that
hath lost all that juice that made it lovely and useful. So, a fool is one that hath lost his wisdom and right notion of God and divine things, which were communicated to man by creation; one dead in sin, yet one not so much void of rational faculties, as of grace in those faculties; not one that wants a reason, but abuses his reason. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 1. "The fool hath said," etc. This folly is bound up in every heart. It is bound, but it is not tongue-tied; it speaks blasphemous things against God, it says there is "no God." There is a difference indeed in the language: gross sins speak this louder, there are crying sins; but though less sins speak it not so loud, they whisper it. But the Lord can hear the language of the heart, the whisperings of its motions, as plainly as we hear one another in our ordinary discourse. Oh, how heinous is the least sin, which is so injurious to the very being of the great God! David Clarkson.

Verse 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." If you will turn over some few leaves, as far as the fifty-third Psalm, you shall not only find my text, but this whole Psalm, without any alteration, save only in the fifth verse, and that not at all in the sense neither. What shall we say? Took the Holy Spirit of God such especial particular notice of the sayings and deeds of a fool, that one expression of them would not serve the turn? Or, does that babbling and madness of a fool so much concern us, as that we need to have them urged upon us once and again, and a third time in the third of the Romans? Surely not any one of us present here, is this fool! Nay, if one of us could but tell where to find such a fool as this, that would offer to say, though in his heart, "There is no God," he should not rest in quiet, he should soon perceive we were not of his faction. We that are able to tell David an article or two of faith more than ever he was acquainted with! Nay, more; can we with any imaginable ground of reason be supposed liable to any suspicion of atheism, that are able to read to David a lecture out of his own Psalms, and explain the meaning of his own prophecies much clearer than himself which held the pen to the Holy Spirit of God? Though we cannot deny but that in other things there may be found some spice of folly and imperfection in us, but it cannot be imagined that we, who are almost cloyed with heavenly manna of God's word, that can instruct our teachers, and are able to maintain opinions and tenets, the scruples whereof not both the universities in this land, nor the whole clergy are able to resolve, that it should be possible for us ever to come to that perfection and excellency of folly and madness, as to entertain thought that there is no God: nay, we are not so uncharitable as to charge a Turk or an infidel with such a horrible imputation as this.

Beloved Christians, be not wise in your own conceits: if you will seriously...
examine the third of Romans (which I mentioned before), you shall find that Paul, out of this Psalm, and the like words of Isaiah, doth conclude the whole posterity of Adam (Christ only excepted), under sin and the curse of God; which inference of his were weak and inconcluding, unless every man of his own nature were such a one as the prophet here describes; and the same apostle in another place expresses, "Even altogether without God in the world," i.e., not maintaining it as an opinion which they would undertake by force of argument to confirm. That there is no God: for we read not of above three or four among the heathens, that were of any fashion, which went this far; but such as though in their discourse and serious thoughts they do not question a deity, but would abhor any man that would not liberally allow unto God all his glorious attributes, yet in their hearts and affections they deny him; they live as if there was no God, having no respect at all to him in all their projects, and therefore, indeed and in God's esteem, become formally, and in strict propriety of speech, very atheists. William Chillingworth, 1602-1643.

Verse 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Why do men resist God's authority, against which they cannot dispute? and disobey his commands, unto which they cannot devise to frame an exception? What but the spirit of enmity, can make them regret "so easy a yoke," reject so "light a burden," shun and fly off from so peaceful and pleasant paths? yea, and take ways that so manifestly "take hold of hell, and lead down to the chambers of death," rather choosing to perish than obey? Is not this the very height of enmity? What further proof would we seek of a disaffected and implacable heart? Yet to all this we may cast in that fearful addition, their saying in their heart, "No God;" as much as to say, "O that there were none!" This is enmity not only to the highest pitch of wickedness, to wish their common parent extinct, the author of their being, but even unto madness itself. For in the forgetful heat of this transport, it is not thought on that they wish the most absolute impossibility; and that, if it were possible, they wish, with his, the extinction of their own and of all being; and that the sense of their hearts, put into words, would amount to no less than a direful and most horrid exclamation and curse upon God and the whole creation of God at once! As if, by the blasphemy of their poisonous breath, they would wither all nature, blast the whole universe of being, and make it fade, languish, and drop into nothing. This is to set their mouth against heaven and earth, themselves, and all things at once, as if they thought their feeble breath should overpower the omnipotent Word, shake and shiver the adamantine pillars of heaven and earth, and the Almighty fiat be defeated by their nay, striking at the root of all! So fitly is it said, "The fool hath in his heart" muttered thus. Nor are there few such fools; but this is plainly given us as the common character of apostate man, the whole revolted race, of whom it
is said in very general terms, "They are all gone back, there is none that doeth good." This is their sense, one and all, that is, comparatively; and the true state of the case being laid before them, it is more their temper and sense to say, "No God," than to repent, "and turn to him." What mad enmity is this! Nor can we devise into what else to resolve it. John Howe.

Verse 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." He that shall deny there is a God, sins with a very high hand against the light of nature; for every creature, yea, the least gnat and fly, and the meanest worm that crawls upon the ground will confute and confound that man that disputes whether there be a God or no. The name of God is written in such full, fair, and shining characters upon the whole creation, that all men may run and read that there is a God. The notion of a deity is so strongly and deeply impressed upon the tables of all men's hearts, that to deny a God is to quench the very principles of common nature; yea, it is formally _deicidium_, a killing of God, as much a sin the creature lies. There are none of these atheists in hell, for the devils believe and tremble. James 2:19. The Greek word priddoudi, that is here used, signifies properly the roaring of the sea; it implies such an extreme fear, as causeth not only trembling, but also a roaring and screeching out. Mark 6:49; Acts 16:29. The devils believe and acknowledge four articles of our faith. Matthew 8:29. (1.) They acknowledge God; (2.) Christ; (3.) The day of judgment; (4.) That they shall be tormented then; so that he doth not believe that there is a God, is more vile than a devil. To deny there is a God, is a sort of atheism that is not to be found in hell.

"On earth are atheists many,
In hell there is not any."

Augustine, speaking of atheists, saith, "That albeit there be some who think, or would persuade themselves, that there is no God, yet the most vile and desperate wretch that ever lived would not say, there was no God." Seneca hath a remarkable speech, _Mentiuntur qui dicunt se non sentire Deum esse: nam etsi tibi affirmant interdi— noctu tamen dubitant_. They lie, saith he, who say they perceive not there is a God; for although they affirm it to thee in the daytime, yet by night they doubt of it. Further, saith the same author, I have heard of some that deny that there was a God; yet never knew the man, but when he was sick he would seek unto God for help; therefore they do but lie that say there is no God; they sin against the light of their own consciences; they who most studiously go about to deny God, yet cannot do it but some check of conscience will fly in their faces. Tully would say that there was never any nation under heaven so barbarous as to deny that there was a God. _T. Brooks_.

Verse 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Popery has not won to itself so great wits as atheism; it is the superfluity of wit that makes atheists. These will not be beaten down with impertinent arguments; disordered hail-shot of Scriptures will never scare them; they must be convinced and beaten by their own weapons. "Hast thou appealed to Caesar? To Caesar thou shalt go." Have they appealed to reason? Let us bring reason to them, that we may bring them to reason. We need not fear the want of weapons in that armoury, but our own ignorance and want of skill to use them. There is enough even in philosophy to convince atheism, and make them confess, "We are foiled with our own weapons;" for with all their wit atheists are fools. Thomas Adams.

Verse 1. As there is no wound more mortal than that which plucketh forth man's heart or soul; so, likewise, is there no person or pestilence of greater force suddenly in men to kill all faith, hope, and charity, with the fear of God, and consequently to cast them headlong into the pit of hell, than to deny the principle and foundation of all religion—namely, that there is a God. Robert Cawdray's "Treasury or Storehouse of Similes," 1609.

Verse 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Who in the world is a verier fool, a more ignorant, wretched person, than he that is an atheist? A man may better believe there is no such man as himself, and that he is not in being, than that there is no God; for himself can cease to be, and once was not, and shall be changed from what he is, and in very many periods of his life knows not that he is; and so it is every night with him when he sleeps; but none of these can happen to God; and if he knows it not, he is a fool. Can anything in this world be more foolish than to think that all this rare fabric of heaven and earth can come by chance, when all the skill of art is not able to make an oyster? To see rare effects, and no cause; an excellent government and no prince; a motion without an immovable; a circle without a centre; a time without eternity; a second without a first; a thing that begins not from itself, and therefore, not to perceive there is something from whence it does begin, which must be without beginning; these things are so against philosophy and natural reason, that he must needs be a beast in his understanding that does not assent to them; this is the atheist: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." That is his character; the thing framed, says that nothing framed it; the tongue never made itself to speak, and yet talks against him that did; saying, that which is made, is, and that which made it, is not. But this folly is as infinite as hell, as much without light or bound, as the chaos or the primitive nothing. Jeremy Taylor, 1613-1667.

Verse 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." A wise man, that lives up to the principles of reason and virtue, if one considers him in his
solitude as taking in the system of the universe, observing the mutual
dependence and harmony by which the whole frame of it hangs together,
beating down his passions, or swelling his thoughts with magnificent ideas of
providence, makes a nobler figure in the eye of an intelligent being, than the
greatest conqueror amidst the pomp and solemnities of a triumph. On the
contrary, there is not a more ridiculous animal than an atheist in his retirement.
His mind is incapable of rapture or elevation: he can only consider himself as
an insignificant figure in a landscape, and wandering up and down in a field or
a meadow, under the same terms as the meanest animals about him, and as
subject to as total a mortality as they, with this aggravation, that he is the only
one amongst them who lies under the apprehension of it. In distresses he must
be of all creatures the most helpless and forlorn; he feels the whole pressure of
a present calamity, without being relieved by the memory of anything that is
past, or the prospect of anything that is to come. Annihilation is the greatest
blessing that he proposes to himself, and a halter or a pistol the only refuge he
can fly to. But if you would behold one of these gloomy miscreants in his
poorest figure, you must consider him under the terrors or at the approach of
death. About thirty years ago, I was a shipboard with one of these vermin,
when there arose a brisk gale, which could frighten nobody but himself. Upon
the rolling of the ship he fell upon his knees, and confessed to the chaplain, that
he had been a vile atheist, and had denied a Supreme Being ever since he came
to his estate. The good man was astonished, and a report immediately ran
through the ship, that there was an atheist upon the upper deck. Several of the
common seamen, who had never heard the word before, thought it had been
some strange fish; but they were more surprised when they saw it was a man,
and heard out of his own mouth, "That he never believed till that day that there
was a God." As he lay in the agonies of confession, one of the honest tars
whispered to the boatswain, "That it would be a good deed to heave him
overboard." But we were now within sight of a port, when of a sudden the wind
fell, and the penitent relapsed, begging all of us that were present, as we were
gentlemen, not to say anything of what had passed. He had not been ashore
above two days, when one of the company began to rally him upon his
devotion on shipboard, which the other denied in so high terms, that it
produced the lie on both sides, and ended in a duel. The atheist was run through
the body, and after some loss of blood, became as good a Christian as he was at
sea, till he found that his wound was not mortal. He is at present one of the
free-thinkers of the age, and now writing a pamphlet against several received
opinions concerning the existence of fairies. Joseph Addison (1671 - 1719), in
"The Tattler."

Verse 1:—
"'There is no God,' the fool in secret said:
There is no God that rules or earth or sky.'

Tear off the band that binds the wretch's head,
That God may burst upon his faithless eye!

Is there no God?—The stars in myriads spread,
If he look up, the blasphemy deny;
While his own features, in the mirror read,
Reflect the image of Divinity.

Is there no God?—The streams that silver flows,
The air he breathes, the ground he treads, the trees,
The flowers, the grass, the sands, each wind that blows,
All speak of God; throughout, one voice agrees,
And, eloquent, his dread existence shows:
Blind to thyself, ah, see him, fool, in these!"

_Giovanni Cotta._

**Verse 1:**

"The owlet, Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings across the noon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and shuts them close,
And, hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,
Cries out, 'Where is it'"

_Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772-1834._

_Verses 1._ "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works." Sin pleaseth the flesh. _Omne simile nutrit simile._ Corruption inherent is nourished by the accession of corrupt actions. Judas's covetousness is sweetened with unjust gain. Joab is heartened and hardened with blood. 1 Kings 2:5. Theft is fitted to and fatted in the thievish heart with obvious booties. Pride is fed with the officious compliments of observant grooms. Extortion battens in the usurer's affections by the trolling in of his moneys. Sacrilege thrives in the church-robber by the pleasing distinctions of those sycophant priests, and helped with their not laborious profit. Nature is led, is fed with sense. And when the citadel of the heart is once won, the turret of the understanding will not long hold out. As the suffumigations of the oppressed stomach surge up and cause the headache, or as the thick spumy mists, which vapour up from the dark and foggy earth, do often suffocate the brighter air, and to us more than eclipse the sun, the black and corrupt affections, which ascend out of the nether part of the soul, do no less darken and choke the understanding. Neither can the fire of
grace be kept alive at God's altar (man's heart), when the clouds of lust shall rain down such showers of impiety on it. *Perit omne judicium, cum res transit ad affectum.* Farewell the perspicuity of judgment, when the matter is put to the partiality of affection. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 1.** "They are corrupt, they have done abominable things: there is none that doeth good." "Men," says Bernard, "because they are corrupt in their minds, become abominable in their doings: corrupt before God, abominable before men. There are three sorts of men of which none doeth good. There are those who neither understand nor seek God, and they are the dead: there are others who understand him, but seek him not, and they are the wicked. There are others that seek him but understand him not, and they are the fools." "O God," cries a writer of the middle ages, "how many are here at this day who, under the name of Christianity, worship idols, and are abominable both to thee and to men! For every man worships that which he most loves. The proud man bows down before the idol of worldly power; the covetous man before the idol of money; the adulterer before the idol of beauty; and so of the rest." And of such, saith the apostle, "They profess that they know God, but in works deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Titus 1:16. *There is none that doeth good.* Notice how Paul avails himself of this testimony of the psalmist, among those which he heaps together in the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans, where he is proving concerning "both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." Romans 3:9. *John Mason Neale, in loc.*

**Verse 1.** The argument of my text is the atheist's divinity, the brief of his belief couched all in one article, and that negative too, clean contrary to the fashion of all creeds, *"There is no God."* The article but one; but so many absurdities tied to the train of it, and itself so irreligious, so prodigiously profane, that he dares not speak it out, but saith it softly to himself, in secret, *"in his heart."* So the text yields these three points; Who is he? A "fool." What he saith, *"no God."* How he speaks it, *"in his heart."* A fool, his bolt, and his draught. I will speak of them severally. . . . . . . . There is a child in years, and there is a child in manners, *aetate et moribus,* saith Aristotle. So there is a fool; for fools and children both are called nhipoi. There is a fool in wit, and there is a fool in life; *stultus in scientia, et stultus in conscientia,* a witless and a graceless fool. The latter is worthy of the title as the first; both void of reason; not of the faculty but of the use. Yea, the latter fool is indeed the more kindly of the twain; for the sot would use his reason if he could; the sinner will not though he may. It is not the natural, but the moral fool that David means, the wicked and ungracious person, for so is the sense of the original term. . . . . . . It is time we leave the
person, and come unto the act. What hath this fool done? Surely nothing; he hath only said. What hath he said? Nay, nothing either; he hath only thought: for to say in heart, is but to think. There are two sorts of saying in the Scripture, one meant indeed so properly, the other but in hope; one by word of mouth, the other by thought of heart. You see the psalmist means here the second sort. The bolt the fool here shoots is atheism: he makes no noise at the loss of it, as bowmen use; he draws and delivers closely, and stilly, out of sight, and without sound: he saith "God is not," but "in heart." The heart hath a mouth; intus est os cordis, saith Augustine. God, saith Cyprian, is cordis auditor, he hears the heart; then belike it hath some speech. When God said to Moses, quare clamatis? why criest thou? we find no words he uttered: silens auditor, saith Gregory, he is heard through saying nothing. There is a silent speech (Psalm 4:4), "Commune with your own heart," saith David, "and be still." Speech is not the heart's action, no more than meditation is the mouth's. But sometimes the heart and mouth exchange offices; lingua mea meditabitur, saith David. Psalm 35:28. There is lingua meditans, a musing tongue; here is cor loquens, a speaking heart. And to say the truth, the philosopher saith well, it is the heart doth all things, mens videt, mens audit, mens loquitur. It is the heart that speaks, the tongue is but the instrument to give the sound. It is but the heart's echo to repeat the words after it. Except when the tongue doth run before the wit, the heart doth dictate to the mouth; it suggests what it shall say. The heart is the soul's herald: look what she will have proclaimed, the heart reads it, and the mouth cries it. The tongue saith nought but what the heart saith first. Nay, in very deed, the truest and kindest speech is the heart's. The tongue and lips are Jesuits, they lease, and lie, and use equivocations: flattery, or fear, or other by-respect, other wry respect adulterate their words. But the heart speaks as it means, worth twenty mouths, if it could speak audibly. Richard Clerke, D.D.,—1634 (one of the translators of our English Bible).

Verses 1, 4. The Scripture gives this as a cause of the notorious courses of wicked men, that "God is not in all their thoughts." Psalm 10:4. They forget there is a God of vengeance and a day of reckoning. "The fool" would needs enforce upon his heart, that "there is no God," and what follows: "Corrupt they are, there is none doth good: they eat up my people as bread," etc. They make no more bones of devouring men and their estates, than they make conscience of eating a piece of bread. What a wretched condition hath sin brought man unto, that the great God who " filleth heaven and earth" (Jeremiah 23:24) should yet have no place in the heart which he hath especially made for himself! The sun is not so clear as this truth, that God is, for all things in the world are because God is. If he were not, nothing could be. It is from him that wicked men have that strength they have to commit sin, therefore sin proceeds from
Atheism, especially these plotting sins; for if God were more thought on, he would take off the soul from sinful contrivings, and fix it upon himself. Richard Sibbes.

Verse 2. *To see if there were any that did understand. . . . . seek God.*" None seek him aright, and as he ought to be sought, nor can do while they live in sin: for men in seeking God fail in many things: as, First, men seek him not for himself. Secondly, they seek him not alone, but other things with him. Thirdly, they seek other things before him, as worldlings do. Fourthly, they seek him coldly or carelessly. Fifthly, they seek him inconstantly; example of Judas and Demas. Sixthly, they seek him not in his word, as heretics do. Seventhly, they seek him not in all his word, as hypocrites do. Lastly, they seek him not seasonably and timely, as profane, impenitent sinners do; have no care to depend upon God's word, but follow their own lusts and fashions of this world. Thomas Wilson, 1653.

Verses 2, 3. What was the issue of God's so looking upon men? "They are all gone aside," that is, from him and his ways; "They are altogether become filthy;" their practices are such as make then stink; "There is none that doeth good, no, not one;" of so many millions of men that are upon the earth, there is not one doeth good. There were men of excellent parts then in the world, men of soul, but not one of them did know God, or seek after God: Paul therefore hath laid it down for a universal maxim, that the animal, natural, or intellectual man, receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and so are rejected by him. William Greenhill.

Verse 3. The ungodly are "vile" persons (Nahum 1:14). "I will make thy grave; for thou art vile." Sin makes men base, it blots their name, it taints their blood: "They are altogether become filthy;" in the Hebrew it is, they are become stinking. Call wicked men ever so bad, you cannot call them out of their name; they are "swine" (Matthew 7:6); "vipers" (Matthew 3:7); "devils" (John 6:70). The wicked are the dross and refuse (Psalms 119:119); and heaven is too pure to have any dross mingle with it. Thomas Watson.

Verse 3. "Altogether become filthy." Thus the Roman satirist describes his own age:

"Nothing is left, nothing, for future times
To add to the full catalogue of crimes;
The baffled sons must feel the same desires,
And act the same mad follies as their sires,
Vice has attained its zenith."
Verse 3. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." Origen maketh a question, how it could be said that there was none, neither among the Jews nor Gentiles, that did any good; seeing there were many among them which did clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and did other good things: he hereunto maketh this answer:—That like as one that layeth a foundation, and buildeth upon it a wall or two, yet cannot be said to have built a house till he have finished it; so although these might do some good things, yet they attained not unto perfect goodness, which was only to be found in Christ. But this is not the apostle's meaning only to exclude men from the perfection of justice; for even the faithful and believers were short of that perfection which is required; he therefore showeth what men are by nature, all under sin and in the same state of damnation, without grace and faith in Christ: if any perform any good work, either it is of grace, and so not of themselves, or if they did it by the light of nature, they did it not as they ought, and so it was far from a good work indeed. Andrew Willet (1562-1621), on Romans 3:10.

Verse 4. "Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" Men's ignorance is the reason why they fear not what they should fear. Why is it that the ungodly fear not sin? Oh, it's because they know it not. "Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" Sure enough they have none, for "they eat up my people as they eat bread;" such morsels would scald their mouths, they would not dare to be such persecutors and destroyers of the people of God; they would be afraid to touch them if they did but know what they did. Richard Alleine.

Verse 4. "Who eat up my people as they eat bread." That is, quotidiē, daily, saith Austin; as duly as they eat bread; or, with the same eagerness and voracity. These man-eaters, these Laobomoi, cruel cannibals, make no more conscience to undo a poor man, than to eat a good meal when they are hungry. Like pickerels in a pond, or sharks in the sea, they devour the poorer, as those do the lesser fishes; and that many times with a plausible, invisible consumption; as the usurer, who like the ostrich, can digest any metal; but especially money. John Trapp.

Verse 4. "Who eat up my people as the eat bread." Oh, how few consult and believe the Scriptures setting forth the enmity of wicked men against God's people! The Scripture tells us "they eat up God's people as bread," which implies a strange inclination in them to devour the saints, and that they take as great delight therein as a hungry man in eating, and that it is natural to them to molest them. The Scripture compares them, for their hateful qualities, to the lions, and bears, to foxes for subtlety, to wild bulls, to greedy swine, to
scorpions, to briers and thorns (grievous and vexing things). The Scripture represents them as industrious and unwearied in their bloody enterprises, they cannot sleep without doing mischief. Herodias had rather have the blood of a saint than half a kingdom. Haman would pay a great fine to the king that the scattered Jews (who keep not the king's laws) may be cut off. Wicked men will run the hazard of damming their own souls, rather than not fling a dagger at the apple of God's eye. Though they know what one word—aha!!—cost, yet they will break through all natural, civil, and moral obligations, to ruin God's people. The Holy Ghost calls them "implacable" men, fierce and headstrong; they are like the hot oven for fury, like the sea for boundless rage; yet, "who hath believed" this Scripture "report?" Did we believe what enemies all wicked men are unto all saints, we should not lean to our own prudence and discretion to secure us from any danger by these men; we would get an ark to secure us from the deluge of their wrath; if at any time we be cast among them and delivered, we would bless God with the three children that the hot fiery oven did not consume us; we would not wonder when we hear of any of their barbarous cruelty, but rather wonder at God's restraining them every day; we would be suspicious of receiving hurt when cast among light and frothy companions; we would shun their company as we do lions and scorpions; we would never commit any trust or secret into their hands; we would not be light-hearted whilst in their society; we would not rely on their promises any more than we would on the promise of the devil, their father; we would long for heaven, to be delivered from "the tents of Kedar;" we would not count any of the saints secured from danger, though related to any great wicked man; we would not twist ourselves with them by matching ourselves or children to these sons and daughters of Belial; neither would we make choice of devils to be our servants. Lewis Stuckley.

Verse 4. This is an evil world. It hates the people of God. "Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15:19. Haman's hatred was against the whole seed of the Jews. When you can find a serpent without a sting, or a leopard without spots, then may you expect to find a wicked world without hatred to the saints. Piety is the target which is aimed at. "They are mine adversaries because I follow the thing that good is." Psalm 38:20. The world pretends to hate the godly for something else, but the ground of their quarrel is holiness. The world's hatred is implacable: anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot. You may as soon reconcile heaven and hell as the two seeds. If the world hated Christ, no wonder that it hates us. "The world hated me before it hated you." John 15:18. Why should any hate Christ? This blessed Dove had no gall, this rose of Sharon did send forth a most sweet perfume; but this shows
the world's baseness, it is a Christ-hating and a saint-eating world. Thomas Watson.

Verse 5. "There were they in great fear." That we may not mistake the meaning of the point, we must understand that this fainheartedness and cowardliness doth not always come upon presumptuous sinners when they behold imminent dangers, for though none of them have true courage and fortitude, yet many of them have a kind of desperate stoutness and resolution when they do, as it were, see death present before their faces; which proceedeth from a kind of deadness, that is upon their hearts, and a brawneness that hath overgrown their consciences to their greater condemnation. But when it pleaseth the Lord to waken them out of the dead slumber, and to set the worm of conscience awork within them, then this doctrine holdeth true without any exception, that the boldest sinners prove at length the basest cowards: and they that have been most audacious in adventuring upon the most mischievous evils, do become of all others most timorous when God's revenging hand seizeth upon them for the same. John Dod, 1547-1645.

Verse 5. "God is in the generation of the righteous;" that is, he favours that generation or sort of men; God is in all generations, but such he delights in most: the wicked have cause enough to fear those in whom God delights. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 5. The King of Glory cannot come into the heart (as he is said to come into the hearts of his people as such; Psalm 24:9,10), but some glory of himself will appear; and as God doth accompany the word with majesty because it is his word, so he doth accompany his own children, and their ways, with majesty, yea, even in their greatest debasements. As when Stephen was brought before the council, as a prisoner at the bar for his life, then God manifested his presence to him, for it is said, "His face shone as the face of an angel of God" (Acts 6:15); in a proportionable manner it is ordinarily true what Solomon says of all righteous men, "A man's wisdom makes his face to shine." Ecclesiastes 8:1. Thus Peter also speaks (1 Peter 4:14): "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you, for the Spirit," not only of God, or of grace, but "of glory, resteth upon you." And so in the martyrs; their innocency, and carriage, and godly behaviour, what majesty had it with it! What an amiableness in the sight of the people, which daunted, dashed, and confounded their most wretched oppressors; so that although the wicked persecutors "did eat up God's people as bread" (verse 4), yet it is added that they were in great fear upon this very account, that "God is in the generation of the just." God stands, as it were, astonished at their dealings: "Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge," (so in the words afore) "that they eat up my people as bread," and make no more
ado of it that a man doth that heartily eats of his meat? They seem to do thus, they would carry it and bear it out; but for all that they are in great fear whilst they do thus, and God strikes their hearts with terror when they most insult. Why? For, "God is in the generation of, or dwelleth in the just," and God gives often some glimmerings, hints, and warnings to the wicked (such as Pilate had concerning Christ), that his people are righteous. And this you may see in Philippians 1:28: "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." In that latter passage, I observe that an assurance of salvation, and a spirit of terror, and that of God, is given either. In the Old Testament it is recorded of David (1 Samuel 18:12), that although Saul hated him (verse 9), and sought to destroy him (verse 10,11), "yet Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul;" which is the reason in hand. God manifested his presence in David, and struck Saul's conscience with his godly and wise carriage, and that made him afraid. Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 6. "Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge." In the fifty-third Psalm it is, "Thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them." Of course, the allusion is totally different in each; in this Psalm it is the indignant remonstrance of the Psalmist with "the workers of iniquity" for undervaluing and putting God's poor to shame; the other affirms the final shame and confusion of the ungodly, and the contempt in which the Lord holds them. In either case it sweetly illustrates God's care of his poor, not merely the poor in spirit, but literally the poor and low ones, the oppressed and the injured. It is this character of God which is so conspicuously delineated in his word. We may look through all the Shasters and Vedas of the Hindoo, the Koran of the Mahometan, the legislation of the Greek, and the code of the Roman, aye, and the Talmud of the Jew, the bitterest of all; and not in one single line or page shall we find a vestige or trace of that tenderness, compassion, or sympathy for the wrongs, and oppressions, and trials, and sorrows of God's poor, which the Christian's Bible evidences in almost every page. Barton Bouchier.

Verse 6. "Ye have shamed." Every fool that saith in his heart there is no God, hath out of the same quiver a bolt to shoot at goodness. Barren Michal hath too many sons, who, like their mother, jeer at holy David. John Trapp.

Verse 6. "Ye have shamed," saith he, "the counsel of the poor." There is nothing that wicked men do so despise as the making God a refuge—nothing which they scorn in their hearts like it. "They shame it," saith he, "It is a thing to be cast out of all consideration. The wise man trusts in his wisdom, the strong man in his strength, the rich man in his riches; but this trusting in God is the
foolishest thing in the world." The reasons of it are—1. They know not God; and it is a foolish thing to trust one knows not whom. 2. They are enemies to God, and God is their enemy; and they account it a foolish thing to trust their enemy. 3. They know not the way of God's assistance and help. And—4. They seek for such help, such assistance, such supplies, as God will not give; to be delivered, to serve their lusts; to be preserved, to execute their rage, filthiness, and folly. They have no other design or end of these things; and God will give none of them. And it is a foolish thing in any man to trust God to be preserved in sin. It is true, their folly is their wisdom, considering their state and condition. It is a folly to trust in God to live in sin, and despise the counsel of the poor. John Owen.

Verse 6. "Ye have made a mock of the counsel of the poor:" and why? "because the Lord is his trust." This is the very true cause, whatsoever other pretenses there be. Whence observe this doctrine; that true godliness is that which breeds the quarrel between God's children and the wicked. Ungodly men may say what they list, as, namely, that they hate and dislike them for that they are proud and saucy in meddling with their betters; for that they are so scornful and disdainful towards their neighbours; for that they are malcontent, and turbulent, and I know not what; but the true reason is yielded by the Lord in this place, to wit, because they make him their stay and their confidence, and will not depend upon lying vanities as the men of the world do. John Dod.

Verse 6. "The Lord is his refuge." Be persuaded actually to hide yourselves with Jesus Christ. To have a hiding-place and not to use it, is as bad as to want one; fly to Christ; run into the holes of this Rock. Ralph Robinson, 1656.

Verse 7. "O that salvation," etc. Like as when we be in quiet, we do pray either nothing at all, or very coldly unto God; so in adversity and trouble, our spirit is stirred up and enkindled to prayer, whereof we do find examples everywhere in the Psalms of David; so that affliction is as it were the sauce of prayer, as hunger is unto meat. Truly their prayer is usually unsavoury who are without afflictions, and many of them do not pray truly, but do rather counterfeit a prayer, or pray for custom. Wolfgang Musculus, 1497-1563.

Verse 7. "Out of Zion." Zion, the church is no Saviour, neither dare we trust in her ministers or ordinances, and yet salvation comes to men through her. The hungry multitudes are fed by the hands of the disciples, who delight to act as the servitors of the gospel feast. Zion becomes the site of the fountain of healing waters which shall flow east and west till all nations drink thereat. What a reason for maintaining in the utmost purity and energy all the works of the church of the living God! C. H. S.
Verse 7. "When the Lord turneth the captivity of his people: then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." Notice that by Israel we are to understand those other sheep which the Lord has that are not of this fold, but which he must also bring, that they may hear his voice. For it is Israel, not Judah; Sion, not Jerusalem. "When the Lord turneth the captivity of his people." "Then," as it is in the parallel passage, "were we like unto them that dream." A glorious dream indeed, in which, fancy what we may, the half of the beauty, the half of the splendour, will not be reached by our imagination. "The captivity" of our souls to the law of concupiscence, of our bodies to the law of death; the captivity of our senses to fear; the captivity, the conclusion of which is so beautifully expressed by one of our greatest poets: namely, Giles Fletcher (1588-1623), in his "Christ's Triumph over Death."

"No sorrow now hangs clouding on their brow;  
   No bloodless malady impales their face;  
   No age drops on their hairs his silver snow;  
   No nakedness their bodies doth embase;  
   No poverty themselves and theirs disgrace;  
   No fear of death the joy of life devours;  
   No unchaste sleep their precious time deflower;  
   No loss, no grief, no change, wait on their winged hours."

John Mason Neale, in loc.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER
Verse 1 (first clause). The folly of atheism.

Verse 1. Atheism of the heart. Jamieson's Sermons on the Heart.

Verse 1 (whole verse). Describe:
   I. The creed of the fool.
   II. The fool who holds the creed: or thus, Atheism.
      I. Its source: "the heart."
      II. Its creed: "no God."
      III. Its fruits: "corrupt," etc.

Verse 1.
   I. The great source of sin—alienation from God.
   II. Its place of dominion—the heart.
   III. Its effect upon the intellect—makes man a fool.
   IV. Its manifestations in the life—acts of commission and omission.
Verse 1 (last clause). The lantern of Diogenes. Hold it up upon all classes, and denounce their sins.

Verse 2.
   I. Condescending search.
   II. Favoured subjects.
   III. Generous intentions.

Verse 2. What God looks for, and what we should look for. Men usually are quick to see things congruous to their own character.

Verses 2, 3. God's search for a naturally good man; the result; lessons to be learned therefrom.

Verse 3. Total depravity of the race.

Verse 4. "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" If men rightly knew God, his law, the evil of sin, the torment of hell, and other great truths, would they sin as they do? Or if they know these and yet continue in their iniquities, how guilty and foolish they are! Answer the question both positively and negatively, and it supplies material for a searching discourse.

Verse 4 (first clause). The crying sin of transgressing against light and knowledge.

Verse 4 (last clause). Absence of prayer, a sure mark of a graceless state.

Verse 5. The foolish fears of those who have no fear of God.

Verse 5. The Lord's nearness to the righteous, its consequences to the persecutor, and its encouragement to saints.

Verse 6. The wisdom of making the Lord our refuge. John Owen.

Verse 6. Describe,
   I. The poor man here intended.
   II. His counsel.
   III. His reproach.
   IV. His refuge.

Verse 6. Trust in God, a theme for mockery to fools only. Show its wisdom.

Verse 7. Longings for the advent.
Verse 7. "Out of Zion." The church, the channel of blessings to men.

Verse 7. Discourse to promote revival.
   I. Frequent condition of the church, "captivity."
   II. Means of revival—the Lord's coming in grace.
   III. Consequences, "rejoice," "be glad."

Psalm 15

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

SUBJECT, &c. This Psalm of David bears no dedicatory title at all indicative of the occasion upon which it was written, but it is exceedingly probable that, together with the twenty-fourth Psalm, to which it bears a striking resemblance, its composition was in some way connected with the removal of the ark to the holy hill of Zion. Who should attend upon the ark was a matter of no small consequence, for because unauthorized persons had intruded into the office, David was unable on the first occasion to complete his purpose of bringing the ark to Zion. On the second attempt he is more careful, not only to allot the work of carrying the ark to the divinely appointed Levites (1 Chronicles 15:2), but also to leave it in charge of the man whose house the Lord had blessed, even Obed-edom, who, with his many sons, ministered in the house of the Lord. (1 Chronicles 26:8, 12.) Spiritually we have here a description of the man who is a child at home in the Church of God on earth, and who will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever above. He is primarily Jesus, the perfect man, and in him all who through grace are conformed to his image.

DIVISION. The first verse asks the question; the rest of the verses answer it. We will call the Psalm THE QUESTION AND ANSWER.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. THE QUESTION. Jehovah. Thou high and holy One, who shall be permitted to have fellowship with thee? The heavens are not pure in thy sight, and thou chargest thine angels with folly, who then of mortal mould shall dwell with thee, thou dread consuming fire? A sense of the glory of the Lord and of the holiness which becomes his house, his service, and his attendants, excites the humble mind to ask the solemn question before us. Where angels bow with veiled faces, how shall man be able to worship at all? The unthinking many imagine it to be a very easy matter to approach the Most High, and when professedly engaged in his worship they have no questionings of heart as to their fitness for it; but truly humbled souls often shrink under a sense of utter unworthiness, and would not dare to approach the throne of the God of holiness if it were not for him, our Lord, our Advocate, who can abide in the heavenly temple, because his righteousness endureth for ever. "Who shall abide in thy tabernacle?" Who shall be admitted to be one of the household of God, to sojourn under his roof and enjoy communion with himself? "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" Who shall be a citizen of Zion, and an inhabitant of the heavenly Jerusalem? The question is raised, because it is a question. All men have not this privilege, nay, even among professors there are aliens from the commonwealth, who have no secret intercourse with God. On the grounds of law no mere man can dwell with God, for there is not one upon earth who
answers to the just requirements mentioned in the succeeding verses. The questions in the text are asked of the Lord, as if none but the Infinite Mind could answer them so as to satisfy the unquiet conscience. We must know from the Lord of the tabernacle what are the qualifications for his service, and when we have been taught of him, we shall clearly see that only our spotless Lord Jesus, and those who are conformed unto his image, can ever stand with acceptance before the Majesty on high.

Impertinent curiosity frequently desires to know who and how many shall be saved; if those who thus ask the question, "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" would make it a soul-searching enquiry in reference to themselves they would act much more wisely. Members of the visible church, which is God's tabernacle of worship, and hill of eminence, should diligently see to it, that they have the preparation of heart which fits them to be inmates of the house of God. Without the wedding-dress of righteousness in Christ Jesus, we have no right to sit at the banquet of communion. Without uprightness of walk we are not fit for the imperfect church on earth, and certainly we must not hope to enter the perfect church above.

Verse 2. THE ANSWER. The Lord in answer to the question informs us by his Holy Spirit of the character of the man who alone can dwell in his holy hill. In perfection this holiness is found only in the Man of Sorrows, but in a measure it is wrought in all his people by the Holy Ghost. Faith and the graces of the Spirit are not mentioned, because this is a description of outward character, and where fruits are found the root may not be seen, but it is surely there. Observe the accepted man's walk, work, and word. "He that walketh uprightly," he keeps himself erect as those do who traverse high ropes; if they lean on one side over they must go, or as those who carry precious but fragile ware in baskets on their heads, who lose all if they lose their perpendicular. True believers do not cringe as flatterers, wriggle as serpents, bend double as earth-grubbers, or crook on one side as those who have sinister aims; they have the strong backbone of the vital principle of grace within, and being themselves upright, they are able to walk uprightly. Walking is of far more importance than talking. He only is right who is upright in walk and downright in honesty. "And worketh righteousness." His faith shows itself by good works, and therefore is no dead faith. God's house is a hive for workers, not a nest for drones. Those who rejoice that everything is done for them by another, even the Lord Jesus, and therefore hate legality, are the best doers in the world upon gospel principles. If we are not positively serving the Lord, and doing his holy will to the best of our power, we may seriously debate our interest in divine things, for trees which bear no fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire. "And speaketh the truth in his heart." The fool in the last psalm spoke falsely in his
heart; observe both here and elsewhere in the two psalms, the striking contrast. Saints not only desire to love and speak truth with their lips, but they seek to be true within; they will not lie even in the closet of their hearts, for God is there to listen; they scorn double meanings, evasions, equivocations, white lies, flatteries, and deceptions. Though truths, like roses, have thorns about them, good men wear them in their bosoms. Our heart must be the sanctuary and refuge of truth, should it be banished from all the world beside, and hunted from among men; at all risk we must entertain the angel of truth, for truth is God's daughter. We must be careful that the heart is really fixed and settled in principle, for tenderness of conscience toward truthfulness, like the bloom on a peach, needs gentle handling, and once lost it were hard to regain it. Jesus was the mirror of sincerity and holiness. Oh, to be more and more fashioned after his similitude!

Verse 3. After the positive comes the negative. "He that backbiteth not with his tongue." There is a sinful way of backbiting with the heart when we think too hardly of a neighbour, but it is the tongue which does the mischief. Some men's tongues bite more than their teeth. The tongue is not steel, but it cuts, and it's wounds are very hard to heal; its worst wounds are not with its edge to our face, but with its back when our head is turned. Under the law, a night hawk was an unclean bird, and its human image is abominable everywhere. All slanderers are the devil's bellows to blow up contention, but those are the worst which blow at the back of the fire. "Nor doeth evil to his neighbour." He whobridles his tongue will not give a licence to his hand. Loving our neighbour as ourselves will make us jealous of his good name, careful not to injure his estate, or by ill example to corrupt his character. "Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." He is a fool if not a knave who picks up stolen goods and harbours them; in slander as well as robbery, the receiver is as bad as the thief. If there were not gratified hearers of ill reports, there would be an end of the trade of spreading them. Trapp says, that "the tale-bearer carrieth the devil in his tongue, and the tale-hearer carries the devil in his ear." The original may be translated, "endureth;" implying that it is a sin to endure or tolerate tale-bearers. "Show that man out!" we should say of a drunkard, yet it is very questionable if his unmanly behaviour will do us so much mischief as the tale-bearers insinuating story. "Call for a policeman!" we say if we see a thief at his business; ought we to feel no indignation when we hear a gossip at her work? Mad dog! Mad dog!! is a terrible hue and cry, but there are few curs whose bite is so dangerous as a busybody's tongue. Fire! fire!! is an alarming note, but the tale-bearer's tongue is set on fire of hell, and those who indulge it had better mend their manners, or they may find that there is fire in hell for unbridled
tongues. Our Lord spake evil of no man, but breathed a prayer for his foes; we
must be like him, or we shall never be with him.

Verse 4. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that
fear the Lord." We must be as honest in paying respect as in paying our bills.
Honour to whom honour is due. To all good men we owe a debt of honour, and
we have no right to hand over what is their due to vile persons who happen to
be in high places. When base men are in office, it is our duty to respect the
office; but we cannot so violate our consciences as to do otherwise than
contemn the men; and on the other hand, when true saints are in poverty and
distress, we must sympathize with their afflictions and honour the men none the
less. We may honour the roughest cabinet for the sake of the jewels, but we
must not prize false gems because of their setting. A sinner in a gold chain and
silken robes is no more to be compared with a saint in rags than a rushlight in a
silver candlestick with the sun behind a cloud. The proverb says, that "ugly
women, finely dressed, are the uglier for it," and so mean men in high estate are
the more mean because of it. "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth
not." Scriptural saints under the New Testament rule "swear not at all," but
their word is as good as an oath: those men of God who think it right to swear,
are careful and prayerful lest they should even seem to overshoot the mark.
When engagements have been entered into which turn out to be unprofitable,
"the saints are men of honour still." Our blessed Surety swore to his own hurt,
but how gloriously he stood to his suretyship! what a comfort to us that he
changeth not, and what an example to us to be scrupulously and precisely exact
in fulfilling our covenants with others! The most far-seeing trader may enter
into engagements which turn out to be serious losses, but whatsoever else he
loses, if he keeps his honour, his losses will be bearable; if that be lost all is
lost.

Verse 5. "He that putteth not out his money to usury." Usury was and is hateful
both to God and man. That a lender should share with the borrower in gains
made by his money is most fitting and proper; but that the man of property
should eat up the poor wretch who unfortunately obtained a loan of him is
abominable. Those who grind poor tradesmen, needy widows, and such like, by
charging them interest at intolerable rates, will find that their gold, and their
silver are cankered. The man who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord must
shake off this sin as Paul shook the viper into the fire. "Nor taketh reward
against the innocent." Bribery is a sin both in the giver and the receiver. It was
frequently practised in Eastern courts of justice; that form of it is now under our
excellent judges almost an unheard-of thing; yet the sin survives in various
forms, which the reader needs not that we should mention; and under every
shape it is loathsome to the true man of God. He remembers that Jesus instead of taking reward against the innocent died for the guilty.

Verse 5. "He that doeth these things shall never be moved." No storm shall tear him from his foundations, drag him from his anchorage, or uproot him from his place. Like the Lord Jesus, whose dominion is everlasting, the true Christian shall never lose his crown. He shall not only be on Zion, but like Zion, fixed and firm. He shall dwell in the tabernacle of the Most High, and neither death nor judgment shall remove him from his place of privilege and blessedness.

Let us betake ourselves to prayer and self-examination, for this Psalm is as fire for the gold, and as a furnace for silver. Can we endure its testing power?

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS
Verse 1. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?" In that the church of Christ upon earth is a "tabernacle," we may note, that neither the church itself, nor the members of it, have any fixed or firm seat of habitation in this world: "Arise, depart, for this is not your rest." Micah 2:10. "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Hebrews 13:14. God's tabernacle, being a movable temple, wandered up and down, sometimes in the desert, sometimes in Shiloh, sometimes among the Philistines, sometimes in Kerjathjearim, and never found any settled place till it was translated into the mountain of God: even so the church of God wandereth as a straggler and a stranger in the wilderness of this world, being destitute, tormented, and afflicted on every side, persecuted from this city to that, and never enjoying any constant habitation of sound and sure rest until it be translated unto "God's holy hill." The verb (Heb.) gur (as the learned in Hebrew note) signifying to dwell as a stranger, or a sojourner, imports that a citizen of heaven is a pilgrim on earth. . . . . In that the church is a tabernacle, we may see that it is not a fort, compassed about with any strong walls, armed with any human forces; and yet such as keep within her are defended from heat of sun, and hurt of storms. Her strength is not here, but from above, for Christ her Head is in all her troubles a present help, a refuge against the tempest, a shadow against the heat. Isaiah 35:4. The church on earth is indeed a tabernacle, but it is God's tabernacle, wherein he dwaileth as in his house; "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?" for to this end the Lord commanded the tabernacle to be made, that he might dwell among them, the blessed apostle construeth it of his dwelling among them. 2 Corinthians 6:16. "You are," saith he, "the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them." To the same purpose, God is said elsewhere to dwell in Sion, and to walk in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, that is, in the midst of the seven churches, in the midst of his city (Psalms 46:5), in

Verse 1. "Lord, who shall abide," etc. If David, a man endued with an excellent and divine spirit, one in whom singular wisdom, rare knowledge, and deep understanding of hidden secrets appeared, who being taught of God in heavenly things, far surpassed and exceeded in wisdom all his teachers and counsellors, did notwithstanding desire to know the sheep from the goats, the good from the bad, the saints from the hypocrites, the true worshippers of God from dissemblers, the true inhabitants of the holy tabernacle from the intruders of the wicked, lest therein he should be deceived; how great cause have we, in whom neither the like spirit, neither such wisdom, nor equal knowledge, nor comparable understanding, by many degrees appeareth, to fear our own weakness, to doubt of our own judgments, to confess our own infirmity, and to suspect the subtle sleights and coloured pretenses of men: and for further knowledge in hidden, deep, and secret things, with David to demand and ask this question, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" . . . . . . . . . Where David saith, "Who shall abide in thy holy hill?" he giveth us to understand that there is no true and sound rest but in the holy hill of the Lord, which is the church. Then the wicked and ungodly which are not of God's house, of his holy hill, of the church, have no quiet, rest, nor sound peace; but they are in continual perplexity, continual torment, continual disquietness of their minds. Richard Turnbull, 1606.

Verse 1. "Abide in the tabernacle," etc. The worshippers in the outer court only will get their eternal abode without among the dogs, sorcerers, etc; but they that shall be inhabitants of heaven, come further in, even unto the tabernacle itself: their souls are fed at his table, they find the smell of his garments as of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and if they miss it at any time, it is the grief of their souls, and they are never at rest till they recover it again. Thomas Boston.

Verse 1. "Who shall dwell," etc.

"Now who is he? Say, if ye can, Who so shall gain the firm abode? Pilate shall say, 'Behold the Man!' And John, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'"

John Barclay, quoted by A. A. Bonar, in loc.

Verse 1. "Holy hill." Heaven is aptly compared to a hill, hell to a hole. Now who shall ascend unto this holy mount? None but those whom this mount
Psalm 15

Verses 1, 2. The disguising and counterfeiting of hypocrites in all ages, occasioned haply this query: for, as Paul speaks, "all are not Israel that are of Israel," a great many living in the church are not of the church, according to that of the doctors upon this place, multi sunt corpore qui non sunt fide, multi nomine qui non sunt nomine. Wherefore, David, here perceiving that sundry people were shuffled into God's tabernacle like goats among the sheep, and tares among the corn, being Jews outwardly, but not inwardly, deceiving others often, and, sometimes, themselves also, with a bare profession of religion, and false opinion of true piety, cometh unto God (as to the searcher and trier of the hearts of men, acquainted with all secrets, and best understanding who are his own), saying unto him, O Lord, forsomuch as there is so much unsoundness and hypocrisy reigning among those that dwell in thy tabernacle, professing thy word, and frequenting the places of thy worship; I beseech thee most humbly, to declare to thy people some tokens and cognizances by which a true subject of thy kingdom may be discerned from the children of this world. Here then, observe, that an external profession of faith, and outward communion with the church of God, is not sufficient unto salvation, unless we lead an incorrupt life correspondent to the same, doing the thing which is right, and speaking the truth in our heart. And, therefore, the silly Papist is exceedingly deceived in relying so much upon the church's outside, to wit, upon the succession of Roman bishops, upon the multitude of Roman Catholics, upon the power and pomp of the Roman synagogue, crying as the Jews in old time, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord," our church is the temple of the Lord. The carnal and careless gospeller is deceived also, placing all his religion in the formal observation of outward service, for a mere verbal Christian is a real atheist, according to that of Paul (Titus 1:16), "In word they profess that they know God, but in their works they deny him;" and so many who seem to sojourn in God's tabernacle for a time, shall never rest upon his "holy hill:" and this assertion is expressly confirmed by Christ himself: "Not every one (saith he) that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:21-23. Consider this, all ye which are Christians in lip only but not in life, making a mask of religion, or rather a very vizard, with eyes, and mouth, and nose, fairly painted and proportioned to all pretenses and
purposes. O think on this, all ye that forget God, he that dwelleth on high, and beholds the things here below, suffers none to rest upon the mountain of his holiness but such as walk uprightly, doing that which is just, and speaking that which is true. John Boys.

Verse 2. "He that walketh uprightly," etc. If neither the golden reason of excellency can move us, nor the silver reason of profit allure us, then must the iron reason of necessity enforce us to integrity and uprightness of heart. For first, such is the necessity thereof, that without integrity the best graces we seem to have are counterfeit, and, therefore, but glorious sins; the best worship we can perform is but hypocrisy, and therefore abominable in God's sight. For uprightness is the soundness of all grace and virtues, as also of all religion and worship of God, without which they are unsound and nothing worth. And first, as touching graces, if they be not joined with uprightness of heart, they are sins under the masks or vizards of virtue, yea, as it may seem, double sins: for as Augustine saith, Simulata aequitas est duplex iniquitas, quia et inquitas est, et similatio: Feigned equity is double iniquity, both because it is iniquity, and because it is feigning. George Downname, D.D., 1604.

Verse 2. "He that walketh uprightly." Here two questions are moved; First. Why David describes a sound member of the church, and inheritor of heaven, by works rather than by faith, seeing the kingdom of heaven is promised unto faith, and the profession thereof also maketh one a member of the visible church? Secondly. Why, among all the fruits of faith, almost innumerable, he makes choice of those duties especially which concern our neighbours? To the first, answer may be, that in this, and in all other places in Holy Scripture, where good works are commanded or commended in any, faith is ever presupposed, according to that apostolical maxim, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" "Without me," saith our blessed Saviour, "ye can do nothing" (John 15:5); and without faith in him it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6); fides est operum fomes, as Paulinus wittily: "Faith (as our church speaks), is the nest of good works; albeit our birds be never so fair, though haply we do that which is right, and speak that which is true, yet all these will be lost, except it be brought forth in a true belief." Aristides was so just in his government that he would not tread awry for any respect to friend or despite of foe. Pomponius is said to have been so true, that he never made lie himself, nor suffered a lie in other. Curtius at Rome, Menaeceus at Thebes, Codrus at Athens, exposed themselves unto voluntary death, for the good of their neighbours and country: yet, because they wanted the rest of true faith in the world's Saviour, where to lay their young, we cannot (if we speak with our prophet here from God's oracle), say that they shall ever rest upon his holy hill. Another answer may be,
that faith is an inward and hidden grace, and many deceive themselves and others with a feigned profession thereof, and therefore the Holy Spirit will have every man's faith to be tried and known by their fruits, and howsoever, eternal life be promised to faith, and eternal damnation be threatened against infidelity, yet the sentence of salvation and condemnation shall be pronounced according to works, as the clearest evidence of both. It is truly said, out of Bernard, that although our good works are not causa regnandi, yet they be via regni, the causeway wherein, although not the cause wherefore, we must ascend God's holy hill. To the second demand, why the duties immediately belonging to God, are not mentioned here, but only such as concern our brother? Answer is made, that this question is propounded of such as, living in the visible church, openly profess the faith, and would seem to be devout, hearing the word of God, and calling upon his name; for of such as are profane atheists, and so not so much as make a semblance of holiness, there is no question to be made, for, without all doubt, there can be no resting place for such in the kingdom of heaven. Now that we may discern aright which of those that profess religion are sound, and which unsound; the marks are not to be taken from an outward hearing of the word, or receiving of the sacraments, and much less from a formal observation of human traditions in God's tabernacle (For all these things hypocrites usually perform), but from the duties of righteousness, giving every man his due, because the touchstone of piety towards God is charity towards our brother. "Herein," saith John, "are the children of God known, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." John Boys.

Verse 2. There is no ascertaining the quality of a tree but by its fruits. When the wheels of a clock move within, the hand on the dial will move without. When the heart of a man is sound in conversion, then the life will be fair in profession. When the conduit is walled in, how shall we judge of the spring but by the waters which run through the pipes? William Secker.

Verse 2. "And worketh righteousness." A man must first be righteous before he can work righteousness of life. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." 1 John 3:7. The tree makes the fruit, not the fruit the tree; and therefore the tree must be good before the fruit can be good. Matthew 7:18. A righteous man may make a righteous work, but no work of an unrighteous man can make him righteous. Now we become righteous only by faith, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Romans 5:1. . . . Wherefore let men work as they will, if they be not true believers in Christ, they are not workers of righteousness; and, consequently, they will not be dwellers in heaven. Ye must then close with Christ in the first place, and by faith receive the gift of imputed
righteousness, or ye will never truly bear this character of a citizen of Zion. A man shall as soon force fruit out of a branch broken off from the tree and withered, as work righteousness without believing in, and uniting with Christ. These are two things by which those that hear the gospel are ruined. Thomas Boston.

Verse 2. "Worketh righteousness." Jacob's ladder had stairs, upon which he saw none standing still, but all either ascending, or else descending by it. Ascend you likewise to the top of the ladder, to heaven, and there you shall hear one say, "My Father doth now work, and I work also." Whereupon Basil noteth that King David having first said, "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle?" adds then, not he that hath wrought righteousness heretofore, but he that doth now work righteousness, even as Christ saith, "My Father doth now work, and I work also." Thomas Playfere.

Verse 2. But here observe, David saith, "that worketh righteousness;" not that talks about, thinks about, or hears of, righteousness; because, "not the hearers of the law, but the doers of the law, shall be justified." What then do we owe unto others? That which Christ saith (Matthew 7), "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them," even unto your enemies: that is, to injure no one, to succour those that suffer injury, and to do good unto all men. But these things, I say, are spoken especially unto those who have respect of persons; as if he has said, It is not because thou art a priest, nor because thou art of a religious order, not because thou prayest much, nor because thou dost miracles, nor because thou teachest excellently, nor because thou art dignified with the title of father, nor because thou art the doer of any work (except righteousness), that thou shalt rest in the holy hill of the Lord; for if thou be destitute of the works of righteousness, neither all thy good works, nor thy indulgences, nor thy votes and suffrages, nor thy intercessions, shall avail thee anything. Therefore, the truth is firm; that it is the walker without spot, and the doer of righteousness, that shall rest in the tabernacles of the Lord. Yet how many are there, who build, increase and adorn churches, monastaries, altars, vessels, garments, etc., who, all the while, never so much as think of the works of righteousness; nay, who tread righteousness under foot that they may work these their own works, and because of them hope to gain the pardon of their unrighteousness, while thousands are deceived by these means! Hence, in the last day, Christ will say, "I was an hungered, I was thirsty, I was naked, I was in prison, I was a stranger." He will not say one word about those works which are done and admired at this day. And, on the other hand, it is of no account against thee that thou art a layman, or poor, or sick, or contemptible, or how vile soever thou art, if thou workest righteousness, thou shalt be saved. The
only work that we must hope will be considered and accounted of, is the work of righteousness: all other works that either urge or allure us on under a show of godliness, are a thing of naught. Martin Luther.

Verse 2. "And speaketh the truth in his heart." Anatomists have observed that the tongue in man is tied with a double string to the heart. And so in truth spoken there is necessary a double agreement of our words. 1. With our heart. That is, to the speaking of truth, it is necessary our words agree with our mind and thoughts about the thing. We must speak as we think, and our tongues must be faithful interpreters of our mind: otherwise we lie, not speaking as we think. So what is truth in itself may be spoken by a man, and yet he be a liar; namely, if he does not think as he speaks. 2. With the thing as it is in itself. Though we think a thing to be so, which is not so, we lie, when we affirm it; because it is not as we say, though we really think it is so. For our mistaken notions of things can never stamp lies to pass current for truths. 2 Thessalonians 2:11. Thomas Boston.

Verse 2. I this day heard a sermon from Psalm 15:2, "And speaketh the truth in his heart." . . . . . O my soul, receive the admonition that has been given thee! Study truth in the inward parts; let integrity and truth always accompany thee, and preserve thee: speak the truth in thy heart. I am thankful for any conviction and sense I have of the evil of lying; Lord, increase my abhorrence of it: as a further assistance and help against this mean, sordid, pernicious vice, I would endeavour, and resolve, in pursuit of the directions laid before us in the sermon, to mortify those passions and corruptions from whence this sin of lying more ordinarily flows, and which are the chief occasion of it, as "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" (Matthew 15:19); so, from the same fountain proceed evil words. And I would, with the greatest zeal, set myself against such corruptions as upon observation I find more commonly betray me into this iniquity: pride often indites our speech, and coins many a lie; so envy, covetousness, malice, etc. I would endeavour to cleanse myself from all this filthiness: there never will be a mortified tongue while there is an unmortified heart. If I love the world inordinately, it is a thousand to one I shall be often stretching a point to promote a worldly interest; and if I hate my brother, it is the same odds I shall reproach him. Lord, help me to purge the fountain, and then the streams will be pure. When the spring of a clock, and all of the movements are right, the hand will go right; and so it is here. The tongue follows the inward inclination. I would resolve to do nothing that may need a lie. If Gehazi's covetousness had not shamed him, he had not wanted a lie to excuse him, "He that walks uprightly, walks surely" and safely in this, as well as other respects. Proverbs 10:9. May I do nothing that is dishonourable and
mean, nothing that cannot bear the light, and then I shall have little temptation to lying. I would endeavour for a lively sense of the eye of God upon me, acting and speaking in his presence. Lord, I desire to set thee always before me; thou understandest my thoughts as perfectly as others do my words. I would consider before I speak, and not speak much or rashly. Proverbs 29:20. I would often think of the severity of a future judgment, when every secret shall be made manifest, and the hypocrite and liar exposed before angels and men. Lastly, I would frequently beg divine assistance herein. Psalm 119:29; Proverbs 30:8. O my God, help me in my future conduct, remove from me the way of lying; may the law of kindness and truth be in my tongue; may I take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I bewail my past miscarriages in this respect, and flee to thy mercy through the blood of Christ; bless to me the instructions that have been this day given me; let no iniquity prevail against me; "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, and cleanse me from secret faults." I commit my thoughts, desires, and tongue, to thy conduct and government; may I think and act in thy fear, and always speak the truth in my heart. Benjamin Bennet's "Christian Oratory," 1728.

Verses 2, 5. As the eagle casteth off her beak, and so reneweth her youth, and the snake strippeth off her old skin, and so maketh herself smooth: even so he that will enter into the joys of God, and rest upon his holy mountain, must, as the Scripture speaks, put off the old man and put on the new, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness, repenting truly speedily, steadily. Robert Cawdrey.

Verse 3. "He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour." Lamentation for the gross neglect of this duty, or the frequent commission of this sin. What tears are sufficient to bewail it? How thick do censures and reproaches fly in all places, at all tables, in all conventions! And this were the more tolerable, if it were only the fault of ungodly men, of strangers and enemies to religion; for so saith the proverb, "Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked." When a man's heart is full of hell, it is not unreasonable to expect his tongue should be set on fire of hell; and it is no wonder to hear such persons reproach good men, yea, even for their goodness. But alas! the disease doth not rest here, this plague is not only among the Egyptians but Israelites too. It is very doleful to consider how professors sharpen their tongues like swords against professors; and one good man censures and reproaches another, and one minister traduceth another; and who can say, "I am clean from this sin?" O that I could move your pity in this case! For the Lord's sake pity yourselves, and do not pollute and wound your consciences with this crime. Pity your brethren; let it suffice that godly
Psalm 15

ministers and Christians are loaded with reproaches by wicked men—there is no need that you should combine with them in this diabolical work. You should support and strengthen their hands against the reproaches of the ungodly world, and not add affliction to the afflicted. O pity the world, and pity the church which Christ hath purchased with his own blood, which methinks bespeaks you in these words, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." Job 19:21. Pity the mad and miserable world, and help it against this sin; stop the bloody issue; restrain this wicked practice amongst men as much as possibly you can, and lament it before God, and for what you cannot do yourselves, give God no rest until he shall please to work a cure. Matthew Poole, 1624-1679.

Verse 3. "He that backbiteth not," etc. Detraction or slander is not lightly to be passed over, because we do so easily fail in this point. For the good name of a man, as saith Solomon, is a precious thing to every one, and to be preferred before much treasure, insomuch that it is no less grievous to hurt a man with the tongue than with a sword: nay, oftentimes the stroke of a tongue is grievouser than the wound of a spear, as it is in the French proverb. And therefore the tongue must be bridled, that we hurt not in any wise the good name of our neighbour: but preserve it unto him safe and sound, as much as in us shall lie. That which he addeth touching evil or injury not to be done to our neighbour, is like unto that which we have seen already concerning the working or exercising of righteousness. He would have us therefore so to exercise all upright dealing, that we might be far from doing any damage or wrong to our neighbours. And by the name of neighbour, is meant every man and woman, as it is plain and evident. For we are all created of God, and placed in this world that we might live uprightly and sincerely together. And therefore he breaketh the law of human society (for we are all tied and bound by this law of nature) that doth hurt or injury to another. The third member of this verse is, nor that reproacheth another, or, that maintaineth not a false report give one against another; which latter particle seemeth to be the better, since he had spoken before expressly, touching the good name of another, not to be hurt or wronged with our tongue. To the which fault this is next in degree, wherewith we are too much encumbered, and which we scarce acknowledge to be a fault, when we further and maintain the slanders devised and given out by another against a man, either by hearing them or telling them forth to others, as we heard them. For why? It seemeth for the most part to be enough for us if we can say, that we feign not this or that, nor make it of our own heads, but only tell it forth as we heard it of others, without adding anything of our own brain. But as oft as we do this we fail in our duty doing, in not providing for our neighbour's credit, as were requisite for the things, which being uttered by others ought to be passed
over in silence and to lie dead, we gather up, and by telling them forth, disperse
them abroad, which whether it be a sin or no, when as we ought by all means
possible to wish and do well unto our neighbours, all men do see. And therefore
thou that travellest towards eternal life, must not only not devise false reports
and slanders against other men, but also not so much as have them in thy mouth
being devised by others, neither by any means assist or maintain them in
slandering; but by all honest and lawful means, provide for the credit and
estimation of thy neighbour, so much as in thee lieth. Peter Baro, D.D., 1560.

Verse 3. "He that backbiteth not with his tongue." The Hebrew word (Heb.)
signifieth to play the spy, and by a metaphor, to backbite or slander, for
backbiters and whisperers, after the manner of spies, go up and down
dissembling their malice, that they may espy the faults and defects of others,
whereof they may make a malicious relation to such as will give ear to their
slanders. So that backbiting is a malicious defamation of a man behind his
back. . . . . And that the citizen of heaven doth and ought to abhor from
backbiting, the horrible wickedness of this sin doth evince. For first, Leviticus
19:16, where it is strictly forbidden, the "tale-bearer" is compared to a
pedlar: "Thou shalt not walk about with tales and slanders, as it were a pedlar
among thy people." So much (Heb.) signifieth. For as the pedlar having bought
his wares of some one or more goeth about from house to house that he may
sell the same to others; so backbiters and tale-bearers, gathering together tales
and rumours, as it were wares, go from one to another, that such wares as either
themselves have invented, or have gathered by report, they may utter in the
absence of their neighbour to his infamy and disgrace. Likewise Psalm 50:20, it
is condemned as a notable crime, which God will not suffer to go unpunished;
Ezekiel 22:9, it is reckoned among the abominations of Jerusalem, for which
destruction is denounced against it; and Romans 1:29, 30, among the crimes of
the heathen, given over unto a reprobate sense, this is placed: they were
"whisperers and backbiters." George Downame.

Verse 3. "He that backbiteth not." He that is guilty of backbiting, that speaks
evil of another behind his back, if that which he speaks be false, is guilty of
lying, which is prejudicial to salvation. If that which he speaks be true, yet he is
void of charity in seeking to defame another. For as Solomon observes, "Love
covereth all sins." Proverbs 10:12. Where there is love and charity, there will
be a covering and concealing of men's sins as much as may be. Now where
charity is wanting, their salvation is not to be expected. 1 Corinthians 13:1, etc.;
1 John 3:14, 15. Christopher Cartwright, 1602-1658.

Verse 3. "Backbiteth not." This crime is a conjugation of evils, and is
productive of infinite mischiefs; it undermines peace, and saps the foundation
of friendship; it destroys families, and rends in pieces the very heart and vitals of charity; it makes an evil man party, and witness, and judge, and executioner of the innocent. Bishop Taylor.

Verse 3. "Backbiteth." The scorpion hurteth none but such as he toucheth with the tip of his tail; and the crocodile and basilisk slay none but such as either the force of their sight, or strength of their breath reacheth. The viper woundeth none but such as it biteth; the venomous herbs or roots kill none but such as taste, or handle, or smell them, and so come near unto them; but the poison of slanderous tongues is much more rank and deadly; for that hurteth and slayeth, woundeth and killeth, not only near, but afar off; not only at hand, but by distance of place removed; not only at home, but abroad; not only in our own nation, but in foreign countries; and spareth neither quick nor dead. Richard Turnbull.

Verse 3. "Backbiteth." The word here used comes from a root signifying foot, and denotes a person who goes about from house to house, speaking things he should not (1 Timothy 5:13); and a word from this root signifieth spies; and the phrase here may point at persons who creep into houses, pry into the secrets of families, divulge them, and oftentimes represent them in a false light. Such are ranked among the worst of men, and are very unfit to be in the society of saints, or in the Church of Christ. See Romans 1:30. John Gill.

Verse 3. "Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." The saints of God must not be too light of hearing, much less of believing all tales, rumours, and reports of their brethren; and charity requireth that we do not only stop and stay them, but that we examine them before we believe them. Saul, the king, too light of belief in this point, believed the slanderous and false reports of David's enemies, who put into Saul's head that David imagined evil against him. Yea, David himself showed his great infirmity in that, that without due examination and proof of the matter, he believed the false report of Ziba, against Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan; of whom to David the king, persecuted by Absalom his son, Ziba reported falsely, that he should say, "This day shall the house of Israel restore unto me the kingdom of my father." The example of whose infirmity in Scripture reproved, must not we follow; but let us rather embrace the truth of that heavenly doctrine which, through God's Spirit, here he preacheth, that we believe not false reports against our neighbours. Richard Turnbull.

Verse 3. Despise not thy neighbour, but think thyself as bad a sinner, and that the like defects may befall thee. If thou canst not excuse his doing, excuse his intent which may be good; or if the deed be evil, think it was done of
ignorance; if thou canst no way excuse him, think some great temptation befell him, and that thou shouldst be worse if the like temptation befell thee; and give God thanks that the like as yet hath not befallen thee. Despise not a man being a sinner, for though he be evil to-day, he may turn to-morrow. William Perkins, 1558-1602.

Verses 3, 4, 5. They that cry down moral honesty, cry down that which is a great part of religion, my duty towards God, and my duty towards man. What care I to see a man run after a sermon, if he cozens and cheats as soon as he comes home? On the other side, morality must not be without religion, for if so, it may change as I see convenience. Religion must govern it. He that has not religion to govern his morality, is not a dram better than my mastiff-dog; so long as you stroke him, and please him, and do not pinch him, he will play with you as finely as may be, he is a very good moral mastiff; but if you hurt him, he will fly in your face, and tear out your throat. John Seldon, 1584-1654.

Verse 4. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned," etc. When wicked Jehoram, king of Israel, came to Eliseus, the prophet, to ask counsel of the Lord, and to entreat for waters, having in company Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, being virtuous; the prophet showeth his contempt to the one, being wicked, and his reverence to the other, being godly, faithful and virtuous, said, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee." 2 Kings 3:14. Thus was the wicked vile in his sight; thus did he not flatter the ungodly. In like manner godly Mordecai, the Jew, having Haman the ambitious and proud Agagite in contempt, would in no wise bow the knee unto him in sign of honour, as the rest of the people did; for which cause he was extremely hated, menaced, and molested of proud and wicked Haman. To wink at their wickedness, to uphold them in their iniquity, to fawn upon them and flatter them, to praise them when they deserve just reproof, is, as it were, an honouring of them; to which, as to a most grievous sin, the prophet denounces a most bitter curse: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Isaiah 5:20. Richard Turnbull.

Verse 4. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned." To contemn the wicked and honour the godly, are opposite the one to the other. But the former may seem not to be sufficiently beseeming to a godly man. For why should he contemn or despise others, who is commanded by all means to care for the credit of others, as we heard even now? Nay, a godly man, letting others go, ought to search into himself, and to accuse himself, but not to judge of others. But this saying of the prophet is to be understood rather of the faults than of the
person. As every man therefore is to be loved, so are the faults of every man to be hated of the godly. For so is God himself, whom we desire to be like unto, that we might dwell with him, affected and disposed. For why? he hateth no man, nay, he hateth nothing at all in this whole universal world, but only sin. For he is the author and preserver of all things that be; and therefore doth good and wisheth well to all; only of sin he is not the author, but the free and unconstrained will of man and Satan. Notwithstanding God doth so greatly hate sin, that by reason thereof he doth sometimes neglect and forsake men, yea, and have them in contempt. So then a godly man, nor contemneth any; but yet notwithstanding he disliketh sin in sinful men, and that he sticketh not to let them perceive either by reproving them, or shunning their company, or by doing of some other thing, whereby they may know they are disliked of good men for their enormities, and see themselves to be contemned of others for their wicked and ungodly life. A good man therefore must not flatter the ungodly in their ungracious attempts, but must freely declare that he disalloweth their course and conversation.

Verse 4. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned." Augustine, as Posidonius writeth, showing what hatred he had to tale-bearers and false reporters of others, had two verses written over his table; by translation these:

"He that doth love with bitter speech the absent to defame,
Must surely know that at this board no place is for the same."

Richard Turnbull.

Verse 4. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned." The burgess of the New Jerusalem, reprobos reprobat, et probos probat; he cannot flatter any man, nor fancy such as in whom he findeth not aliquid Christi, something of the image of God. A golden Colosse, stuffed with rubbish, he cannot stoop to, "But he honoureth them that fear the Lord," as the only earthly angels, though never so mean and despicable in the world's eye. Mr. Fox, being asked whether he remembered not such a poor servant of God who had received succour from him in time of trouble? answered, "I remember him well; I tell you, I forget the lords and ladies, to remember such." John Trapp.

Verse 4. "He honoureth them that fear the Lord." Though the godly some way or other be injurious unto us, we ought nevertheless to honour and not to despise them. So Joseph did Mary, though he supposed her to have dealt injuriously with him; and she had done so, indeed, if it had been with her as he imagined. Calvin's resolution concerning Luther was very admirable in this respect. They differed much about the presence of Christ in the sacrament; and
Luther being of a vehement spirit, wrote bitterly against those who did hold otherwise in that point than himself did. This enforced some, who were more nearly concerned in the business, to prepare to answer Luther; which Calvin understanding, and fearing lest they being provoked by Luther's tartness, should deal with him in the like kind, he wrote unto Bullinger, a prime man among them, persuading and exhorting him to carry the business so as to show all due respect unto Luther, considering what worth and excellency there was in him, however he had demeaned himself in that particular. And he adds, that he often used to say, that although Luther should call him devil, yet he would do him that honour, to acknowledge him a choice servant of God. 

Christopher Cartwright.

Verse 4. "He honoureth them that fear the Lord." I have read of one that said, If he should meet a preacher and an angel together, he would first salute the preacher and then the angel. Charles Bradbury's "Cabinet of Jewels," 1785.

Verse 4. "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not."

"His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles;
    His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate;
    His tears pure messengers, sent from his heart;
    His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth."

William Shakspere.

Verse 5. The Puritanic divines are almost all of them against the taking of any interest upon money, and go to the length of saying that one penny per cent. per annum will shut a man out of heaven if persisted in. It appeared to me to be useless to quote opinions in which I cannot agree, especially as this would occupy space better employed. The demanding of excessive and grinding interest is a sin to be detested; the taking of the usual and current interest in a commercial country is not contrary to the law of love. The Jews were not engaged in commerce, and to lend money even at the lowest interest to their fellow farmers in times of poverty would have been usurious; but they might lend to strangers, who would usually be occupied in commerce, because in the commercial world, money is a fruitful thing, and the lender has a right to a part of its products; a loan to enable a non-trader to live over a season of want is quite another matter. C. H. S.

Verse 5. "He that putteth not out his money to usury." By usury is generally understood the gain of anything above the principal, or that which was lent, exacted only in consideration of the loan, whether it be in money, corn, wares,
or the like. It is most commonly taken for an unlawful profit which a person makes of his money or goods. The Hebrew word for usury signifies biting. The law of God prohibits rigorous imposing conditions of gain for the loan of money or goods, and exacting them without respect to the condition of the borrower, whether he gain or lose; whether poverty occasioned his borrowing, or a visible prospect of gain by employing the borrowed goods. It is said in Exodus 22:25, 26, "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury," etc. And in Leviticus 25:35, 36, 37, "If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner, that he may live with thee: take thou no usury of him," etc. This law forbids the taking usury from a brother that was poor, an Israelite reduced to poverty, or from a proselyte; but in Deuteronomy 23:20, God seems to tolerate usury towards strangers; "Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury." By strangers, in this passage, some understand the Gentiles in general, or all such as were not Jews, excepting proselytes. Others think that by strangers are meant the Canaanites, and the other people that were devoted to slavery and subjection; of these the Hebrews were permitted to exact usury, but not of such strangers with whom they had no quarrel, and against whom the Lord had not denounced his judgments. The Hebrews were plainly commanded in Exodus 22:25, etc., not to receive usury for money from any that borrowed from necessity, as in that case in Nehemiah 5:5, 7. And such provision the law made for the preserving of estates to their families by the year of jubilee; for a people that had little concern in trade, could not be supposed to borrow money but out of necessity: but they were allowed to lend upon usury to strangers, whom yet they must not oppress. This law, therefore, in the strictness of it, it obligeth us to show mercy to those we have advantage against, and to be content to share with those we lend to in loss, as well as profit, if Providence cross them. And upon this condition, a valuable commentator says, It seems as lawful for me to receive interest for money, which another takes pains with, improves, but runs the hazard of in trade, as it is to receive rent for my land, which another takes pains with, improves, but runs the hazard of in husbandry." Alexander Cruden, 1701-1770.

Verse 5. "He that putteth not out his money to usury." "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee." Exodus 22:25. Rather, according to the letter of the original, "If thou lend money to my people, even to a poor man with thee." The Israelites were a people but little engaged in commerce, and therefore could not in general be supposed to borrow money but from sheer necessity; and of that necessity the lender was not to take advantage by usurious exactions. The law is not to be understood as a prohibition of interest
at any rate whatever, but of excessive interest or usury. The clause, "Thou shalt not be to him as an usurer," is equivalent to saying, 'Thou shalt not domineer and lord it over him rigorously and cruelly.' That this class of men were peculiarly to be extortionate and oppressive in their dealings with debtors would seem to be implied by the etymology of the original term for *usury* (Heb. *neshek*), which comes from a root signifying *to bite*; and in Nehemiah 5:2-5, we have a remarkable case of the bitter and grinding effects resulting from the creditor's rights over the debtor. A large portion of the people had not only mortgaged their lands, vineyards, and houses, but had actually sold their sons and daughters into bondage, to satisfy the claims of their grasping creditors. In this emergency Nehemiah espoused the cause of the poor, and compelled the rich, against whom he called the people together, to remit the whole of their dues; and, moreover, exacted from them an oath that they would never afterwards oppress their poor brethren for the payment of those debts. This was not because every part of those proceedings had been contrary to the letter of the Mosaic law, but because it was a flagrant breach of equity under the circumstances. It was taking a cruel and barbarous advantage of the necessities of their brethren, at which God was highly indignant, and which his servants properly rebuked. From this law the Hebrew canonists have gathered a general rule, that "Whoso exacteth of a poor man, and knoweth that he hath not aught to pay him, he transgresseth against this prohibition, Thou shalt not be to him as an exacting creditor." (*Maimonides, in Ainsworth.*) We nowhere learn from the institutes delivered by Moses that the simple taking of interest, especially from the neighbouring nations (Deuteronomy 23:19, 20), was forbidden to the Israelites; but the divine law would give no countenance to the griping and extortionate practices to which miserly money-lenders are always prone. The deserving and industrious poor might sometimes be reduced to such straits, that pecuniary accommodations might be very desirable to them; and towards such God would inculcate a mild, kind, and forbearing spirit, and the precept is enforced by the relation which they sustained to him: q.d., "Remember that you are lending to *my* people, *my* poor; and therefore, take no advantage of their necessities. Trust me against the fear of loss, and treat them kindly and generously." *George Bush, in "Notes on the Book of Exodus,"* 1856.

**Verse 5.** "He that putteth not out his money to usury." With respect to the first clause, as David seems to condemn all kinds of usury in general, and without exception, the very name has been everywhere held in detestation. But crafty men have invented specious names under which to conceal the vice; and thinking by this artifice to escape, they have plundered with greater excess than if they had lent on usury avowedly and openly. God, however, will not be dealt with and imposed upon by sophistry and false pretenses. He looks upon the
thing as it really is. There is no worse species of usury than an unjust way of making bargains, where equity is disregarded on both sides. Let us, then, remember that all bargains, in which the one party unrighteously strives to make gain by the loss of the other party, whatever name may be given to them, are here condemned. It may be asked, whether all kinds of usury are to be put into this denunciation, and regarded as alike unlawful? If we condemn all without distinction, there is a danger lest many, seeing themselves brought into such a strait as to find that sin must be incurred, in whatever way they can turn themselves, may be rendered bolder by despair, and may rush headlong into all kinds of usury without choice or discrimination. On the other hand, whenever we concede that something may be lawfully done in this way, many will give themselves loose reins, thinking that a liberty to exercise usury, without control or moderation, has been granted them. In the first place, therefore, I would, above all things, counsel my readers to beware of ingeniously contriving deceitful pretexts by which to take advantage of their fellow men, and let them not imagine that anything can be lawful to them which is grievous and hurtful to others. . . . . It is not without cause that God has in Leviticus 25:35, 36, forbidden usury, adding this reason: "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase." We see that the end for which the law was framed was that man should not cruelly oppress the poor, who ought rather to receive sympathy and compassion. This was, indeed, a part of the judicial law which God appointed for the Jews in particular; but it is a common principle of justice, which extends to all nations, and to all ages, that we should keep ourselves from plundering and devouring the poor who are in distress and want. Whence it follows, that the gain which he who lends his money upon interest acquires, without doing injury to any one, is not to be included under the head of unlawful usury. The Hebrew word (Heb.) neshek, which David employs, being derived from another word which signifies to bite, sufficiently shows that usuries are condemned in so far as they involve in them, or lead to, a license of robbing, or plundering our fellow men. Ezekiel, indeed (chapters 18:17, and 22:12), seems to condemn the taking of any interest whatever upon money lent; but he, doubtless, has an eye to the unjust and crafty arts of gaining by which the rich devoured the poor people. In short, provided we had engraven on our hearts the rule of equity which Christ prescribes in Matthew 7:12, "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," it would not be necessary to enter into lengthened disputes concerning usury. John Calvin, in loc.
Verse 5 (first clause). The Mosaic law forbids the lending of money for interest to an Israelite. Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:37; Deuteronomy 23:19; Proverbs 28:8; Ezekiel 18:8. In several of the passages referred to, it is expressly supposed that money is lent only to the poor, a supposition which has its ground in the simple relations of the Mosaic times, in which lending, for the purpose of speculation and gain, had no existence. Such lending ought only to be a work of brotherly love; and it is a great violation of that if any one, instead of helping his neighbour, takes advantage of his need to bring him into still greater straits. The Mosaic regulation in question has, accordingly, its import also for New Testament times. With the interest-lending of capitalists, who borrow for speculation, it has nothing to do. This belongs to a quite different matter, as is implied even by the name (Heb.), a mordendo, according to which only such usury can be meant as plagues and impoverishes a neighbour. By unseasonable comparison with our modes of speech, many would expound, "His money he puts not to interest." E. W. Hengstenberg.

Verse 5 (first clause). The worm called in Latin teredo, whereof Pliny hath reported something in his story, breeding in wood, to the touch as soft yet it hath such teeth as endeavoureth and consumeth the hard timber. So the usurer is a soft beast at first to handle, but in continuance of time the hardness of his teeth will eat thee up, both flesh and bone, if thou beware not. He pleadeth love, but not for thy sake, but for his own; for as the ivy colleth and claspeth the oak as a lover, but thereby it growtheth up and over toppeth the oak, and sucketh out the juice and sap thereof, that it cannot thrive nor prosper; so the usurer colleth, embraceth, and claspeth in arms the borrower, that thereby himself may grow richer, and suck all wealth, goods, and riches from him, that he never thriveth or prospereth after. The pleasure the usurer sheweth is like the playing of the cat with the silly mouse: the cat playeth with the mouse, but the play of the cat is the death of the mouse. The usurer pleasureth the borrower; but the pleasure of the usurer is the undoing of the borrower. The fox through craft slideth and tumbleth and maketh much pastime till he come to the prey, then he devoureth: the usurer maketh many fair speeches, giveth out many fair promises, pretendeth very great kindness, until he have got thee within his compass, then he crusheth and cruciateth thee. The usurer preyeth upon the poor, he waxeth rich at the penury of his brother, he clotheth himself with the coat of the naked, he gathereth riches of the indigency and want of his neighbour; he feedeth himself of the bread of the hungry, and devoureth his poor brother, as the beasts do the smaller; than which, saith Ambrose, there is no greater inhumanity and cruelty, no greater wretchedness and iniquity, as Chrysostom in many places, and Basil upon this Psalm, have well observed. Richard Turnbull.
Psalm 15 308

Verse 5. The rich make the poor to fill them; for usurers feed upon the poor, even as great fishes devour the small. Therefore, he which said, Let there not be a beggar in Israel (Deuteronomy 15:4), said too, Let there not be an usurer in Israel. For if there be usurers in Israel there will be beggars in Israel; for usurers make beggars, even as lawyers make quarrellers. . . . . It is a miserable occupation to live by sin, and a great comfort to a man when he looketh upon his gold and silver, and his heart telleth him, All this is well gotten; and when he lieth upon his death-bed, and must leave all to his children, he can say unto them, I leave you mine own; but the usurer cannot say, I leave you mine own, but I leave you other men's; therefore the usurer can never die in peace, because if he die before he maketh restitution, he dieth in his sin. Henry Smith.

Verse 5. Biting usurers were so abhorred in the primitive church, that as they condemned the usurer himself, so they made the scribes, who wrote the bonds, and also the witnesses, incapable of any benefit; and that no testament or latter will, written by such should be valid. The house of the usurer was called domus Satanae, the house of the devil; and they ordained that no man should eat or drink with such usurer, nor fetch fire from them; and after they were dead that they should not be buried in Christian burial. The conclusion of this is (Ezekiel 18:13), this sin is matched with theft; and verse 11, with adultery; and verse 12, with violence; it is the daughter of oppression and sister to idolatry, and he that doth these things shall not dwell in God's holy hill. Albeit, these worldlings think themselves more honest than thieves and adulterers, yet the Lord maketh their case all alike. John Weemse, 1636.

Verse 5. "Taketh reward against the innocent." I am sure this is scala inferni, the right way to hell, to be covetous, to take bribes, and pervert justice. If a judge should ask me the way to hell, I should show him this way: First, let him be a covetous man; let his heart be poisoned with covetousness. Then let him go a little further and take bribes; and, lastly, pervert judgments. Lo, here is the mother, and the daughter, and the daughter's daughter. Avarice is the mother; she brings forth bribe-taking, and bribe-taking perverting of judgment. There lacks a fourth thing to make up the mess, which, so help me God, if I were judge, should be hangum tuum, a Tyburn tippet to take with him; an it were the judge of the King's Bench, my Lord Chief Judge of England, yea, an it were my Lord Chancellor himself, to Tyburn with him. Hugh Latimer.

Verse 5. Taketh reward against the innocent." I come to corrupt lawyers and advocates, who so often take rewards against the innocent, as they do take upon them the defence of such causes as they in their own conscience are persuaded to be evil and unjust. Which being so common a fault among lawyers, as that very few which plead causes, either in civil or ecclesiastical
courts, do seem to make any conscience thereof, to whom all is fish that cometh
to their nets; therefore all lawyers are to be exhorted to apply this note unto
themselves. George Downname.

Verse 5. "He that doeth." "Tis not said he that professes this or that, or he that
believes thus and thus, or he that is of such or such an opinion or way of
worship, or he that sets up new lights, and pretends the Spirit for his immediate
guide; 'tis not he that hears much or talks much of religion; no, nor he that
preaches and prays much, nor he that thinks much of these things, and means
well; but 'tis he that "doeth these things"—that is actually employed about
them—that is the religious and truly godly man. 'Tis not, I say, a formal
professor, a confidant solifidian, a wild opinionist, a high-flown perfectist; it is
not a constant hearer, or a mighty talker, or a laborious teacher, or a gifted
brother, or a simple well-wisher must pass; but 'tis the honest and sincere doer
of these things, that will abide the test and stand the trial; when all other flashy
pretences shall, in those searching flames, be burnt and consumed like "hay and
stubble," as the apostle expresses it. To wear Christ's livery and to do him no
service is but to mock a gracious Master; to own him in our profession and
deny him in our practice, is, with Judas, to betray him with a kiss of homage;
with the rude soldiers to bow the knee before him, and, in the meantime to beat
his sacred head with his reeden sceptre, and with Pilate to crown him with
thorns, to crucify the Lord and write over his head, "King of the Jews:" in a
word, to grieve him with our honours, and wound him with our
acknowledgments. A Christian profession without a life answerable, will be so
far from saving any one, that 'twill highly aggravate his condemnation; when a
dissembled friendship at the great day of discoveries shall be looked upon as
the worst of enmities. A mere outside formality of worship, is at best but
Prometheus's sacrifice, a skeleton of bones and a religious cheat. . . . . . The
harmless humour of meaning well is not enough to approve a man's spiritual
state, to acquit obligations, or to ascertain his expectations. For he that bids us
"eschew evil" does immediately subjoin, that we must "follow" and "hold fast
that which is good." It will be no good account not to have done evil, unless we
make it appear that we have been doing good too; since the non-commission of
great sins will not excuse our omission of great duties. In the best
commonwealth of bees, the drone without a sting, as she has no weapon for
mischief, so, wanting a tool for employ, is deservedly cashiered the hive.
Condensed from Adam Littleton, D.D., 1627-1694.

Verse 5. "He that doeth these things shall never be moved." Mark how the
prophet saith not, he that readeth these things, or he that heareth these things,
but he that doth them, shall never be removed. For were it enough to read or
hear these precepts, then should an infinite number of vain and wicked persons enter into, and continue in the church, which notwithstanding have no place therein; for there are very few, or none at all, which have not read, or at least have not heard these things, yet they will not do them. Neither doth he say, he that talketh of these things, but he that doth them; for many now in these days can talk gloriously of uprightness, justice, truth, in whom notwithstanding, there is neither upright dealings, nor sound righteousness, nor unfeigned truth to be found. Many can say that slander is sin, injury is iniquity, to receive false reports is uncharitable, that it becometh not the saints to flatter the wicked, that to break promise and falsify their oaths is unseemly, to give upon usury is oppression, to receive bribes against the innocent is extreme cruelty; yet themselves backbite and hurt their neighbour, they themselves believe every tale that is brought them, they flatter and fawn upon the wicked for advantage, they swear and forswear for commodity, they oppress through usury, and receive gifts of bribery against the innocent; and so in word they speak of these things, but do them not indeed. . . . . Neither doth David say he that preacheth these, "shall never be removed," for then not only many other wicked persons, which can speak of, yea, many ungodly men which can also preach of virtue, should have the place in the Lord's tabernacle, and rest upon his holy hill; but also among others, even Balaam the covetous prophet, should have a sure place in God's tabernacle; for he could say, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more" (Numbers 22:18); yet he took rewards; yet he was carried away with covetousness, as much as in him lay, to work the destruction of Israel, the innocent people of the Lord. Richard Turnbull.

Verse 5. "Shall never be moved." Moved he may be for a time, but not removed for ever. His soul is bound up in the bundle of life, near unto the throne of glory; when the souls of the wicked are restless as a stone in the midst of a sling, saith the Targum in 1 Samuel 25. John Trapp.

Verse 5 (last clause). The holy soul is the love of God, the joy of angels; her eyes dare look upon the glorious Judge whom she knows to be her Saviour. Her heart is courageous; she dares stand the thunder; and when guilty minds creep into corners, she is confident in him that will defend her. She challengeth the whole world to accuse her of injustice, and fears not the subornation of false witnesses, because she knows the testimony of her own conscience. Her language is free and bold, without the guiltiness of broken stops. Her forehead is clear and smooth, as the brow of heaven. Her knees are ever bent to the throne of grace; her feet traveling toward Jerusalem; her hands weaving the web of righteousness. Good men bless her; good angels guard her; the Son of
God doth kiss her; and when all the world shall be turned to a burning pile, she shall be brought safe to the mountain of joy, and set in a throne of blessedness for ever. *Thomas Adams.*

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

*Verse 1.* Qualifications for church membership on earth and in heaven. A subject for self-examination.

*Verse 1.*

I. *Comparison of the church to the tabernacle.* God's presence manifested, sacrifice offered, and vessels of grace preserved in it; mean externally, glorious within.

II. *Comparison of its double position to that of the tabernacle.* Moving in the wilderness, and fixed on the hill.

III. Enquire into qualification for admittance into church and tabernacle. Parallel with the priests, etc.

*Verse 1.* The great question. Asked by idle curiosity, despair, godly fear, earnest enquirer, soul troubled by falls of others, holy faith. Give answer to each.

*Verse 1.* The citizen of Zion described. *Thomas Boston's Sermons.*

*Verse 1.* Anxiety to know the true saints, how far lawful and profitable.

*Verse 1.* God the only infallible discerner of true saints.

*Verse 2.* "*He that walketh uprightly.*"

I. What he must be. He must be upright in heart. A man himself bent double cannot walk uprightly.

II. How he must act. Neither from impulse, ambition, gain, fear, or flattery. He must not be warped in any direction, but stand perpendicularly.

III. What he must expect. Snares, etc., to trip him.

IV. Where he must walk. Path of duty, the only one in which he can walk uprightly.

V. Where he must look. Up, right-up, and then he will be upright.

*Verse 2.* "*Speaketh the truth in his heart.*" Subject:— Heart falsehood and heart truth.

*Verse 2 (first clause).* The citizen of Zion, an upright walker.
Verse 2 (middle clause). The citizen of Zion, a worker of righteousness.

Verse 2 (last clause). The citizen of Zion, a speaker of truth. *Four Sermons in Thomas Boston's Works.*

Verse 3. The evils of detraction. It affects three persons here mentioned: the backbiter, the suffering neighbour, and the taker-up of the reproach.

Verse 3. "Nor taketh up a reproach." The sin of being too ready to believe ill reports. Common, cruel, foolish, injurious, wicked.

Verse 4. The duty of practically honouring those who fear the Lord. Commendation, deference, assistance, imitation, etc.

Verse 4. The sin of estimating persons other than by their practical characters.

Verse 4 (last clause). The Lord Jesus as our unchanging Surety, his oath and his hurt.

Verse 5. The evidences and privileges of godly men.

Verse 5 (last clause). The fixedness and safety of the godly.

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**WORKS UPON THE FIFTEENTH PSALM**

*Fower Sermons and Two Questions,* as they were uttered and disputed by that learned Frenchman, P[ETER] B[ARO]. 1560.


*Four Sermons,* by way of Exposition of Psalm XV., by RICHARD TURNBULL, are found at the end of the old 4to containing his Exposition of the Epistles of James and Jude. There is no separate title page to the Exposition of the Psalm; the date of the book is 1606.

*The Works of John Boys, D.D., Deane of Canterburie,* 1629, folio, contains Expositions of Psalms II., IX., and XV. (The folio edition of Boys' Works consists of Expositions of the Scriptures used in the Liturgy.)

*A Practical and Polemical Commentary, or Exposition on the whole Fifteenth Psalm,* wherein the text is learnedly and fruitfully explained, some controversies discussed, sundry cases of conscience are cleared; more especially that of USURIE. By CHRISTOPHER CARTWRIGHT, late minister of Saint-Martin's, in the city of York. 1658. 4to.
Psalm 16

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

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

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

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

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "Preserve me," keep, or save me, or as Horsley thinks, "guard me," even as bodyguards surround their monarch, or as shepherds protect their flocks. Tempted in all points like as we are, the manhood of Jesus needed to be preserved from the power of evil; and though in itself pure, the Lord Jesus did not confide in that purity of nature, but as an example to his followers, looked to the Lord, his God, for preservation. One of the great names of God is "the Preserver of men," (Job 7:20,) and this gracious office the Father exercised
towards our Mediator and Representative. It had been promised to the Lord Jesus in express words, that he should be preserved, Isaiah 49:7, 8. "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people." This promise was to the letter fulfilled, both by providential deliverance and sustaining power, in the case of our Lord. Being preserved himself, he is able to restore the preserved of Israel, for we are "preserved in Christ Jesus and called." As one with him, the elect were preserved in his preservation, and we may view this mediatorial supplication as the petition of the Great High Priest for all those who are in him. The intercession recorded in John 17 is but an amplification of this cry, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." When he says, "preserve me," he means his members, his mystical body, himself, and all in him. But while we rejoice in the fact that the Lord Jesus used this prayer for his members, we must not forget that he employed it most surely for himself; he had so emptied himself, and so truly taken upon him the form of a servant, that as man he needed divine keeping even as we do, and often cried unto the strong for strength. Frequently on the mountain-top he breathed forth this desire, and on one occasion in almost the same words, he publicly prayed, "Father, save me from this hour." (John 12:27.) If Jesus looked out of himself for protection, how much more must we, his erring followers, do so!

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

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

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

"My goodness extendeth not to thee." The work of our Lord Jesus was not needful on account of any necessity in the Divine Being. Jehovah would have been inconceivably glorious had the human race perished, and had no atonement been offered. Although the life-work and death-agony of the Son did reflect unparalleled lustre upon every attribute of God, yet the Most Blessed and Infinitely Happy God stood in no need of the obedience and death of his Son; it was for our sakes that the work of redemption was undertaken, and not because of any lack or want on the part of the Most High. How modestly does the Saviour here estimate his own goodness! What overwhelming reasons have we for imitating his humility! "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" (Job 35:7.)

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

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

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

Verse 4. The same loving heart which opens towards the chosen people is fast closed against those who continue in their rebellion against God. Jesus hates all wickedness, and especially the high crime of idolatry. The text while it shows our Lord's abhorrence of sin, shows also the sinner's greediness after it. Professed believers are often slow towards the true Lord, but sinners "hasten after another god." They run like madmen where we creep like snails. Let their zeal rebuke our tardiness. Yet theirs is a case in which the more they haste the worse they speed, for their sorrows are multiplied by their diligence in multiplying their sins. Matthew Henry pithily says, "They that multiply gods multiply griefs to themselves; for whosoever thinks one god too little, will find two too many, and yet hundreds not enough." The cruelties and hardships which men endure for their false gods is wonderful to contemplate; our missionary reports are a noteworthy comment on this passage; but perhaps our own experience is an equally vivid exposition; for when we have given our heart to idols, sooner or later we have had to smart for it. Near the roots of our
self-love all our sorrows lie, and when that idol is overthrown, the sting is gone from grief. Moses broke the golden calf and ground it to powder, and cast it into the water of which he made Israel to drink, and so shall our cherished idols become bitter portions for us, unless we at once forsake them. Our Lord had no selfishness; he served but one Lord, and served him only. As for those who turn aside from Jehovah, he was separate from them, bearing their reproach without the camp. Sin and the Saviour had no communion. He came to destroy, not to patronize or be allied with the works of the devil. Hence he refused the testimony of unclean spirits as to his divinity, for in nothing would he have fellowship with darkness. We should be careful above measure not to connect ourselves in the remotest degree with falsehood in religion; even the most solemn of Popish rites we must abhor. "Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer." The old proverb says, "It is not safe to eat at the devil's mess, though the spoon be never so long." The mere mentioning of ill names it were well to avoid,—"nor take up their names into my lips." If we allow poison upon the lip, it may ere long penetrate to the inwards, and it is well to keep out of the mouth that which we would shut out from the heart. If the church would enjoy union with Christ, she must break all the bonds of impiety, and keep herself pure from all the pollutions of carnal will-worship, which now pollute the service of God. Some professors are guilty of great sin in remaining in the communion of Popish churches, where God is as much dishonoured as in Rome herself, only in a more crafty manner.

Verse 5. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup." With what confidence and bounding joy does Jesus turn to Jehovah, whom his soul possessed and delighted in! Content beyond measure with his portion in the Lord his God, he had not a single desire with which to hunt after other gods; his cup was full, and his heart was full too; even in his sorest sorrows he still laid hold with both his hands upon his Father, crying, "My God, my God:" he had not so much as a thought of falling down to worship the prince of this world, although tempted with an "all these will I give thee." We, too, can make our boast in the Lord; he is the meat and the drink of our souls. He is our portion, supplying all our necessities, and our cup yielding royal luxuries; our cup in this life, and our inheritance in the life to come. As children of the Father who is in heaven, we inherit, by virtue of our joint heirship with Jesus, all the riches of the covenant of grace; and the portion which falls to us sets upon our table the bread of heaven and the new wine of the kingdom. Who would not be satisfied with such dainty diet? Our shallow cup of sorrow we may well drain with resignation, since the deep cup of love stands side by side with it, and will never be empty. "Thou maintainest my lot." Some tenants have a covenant in their leases that they themselves shall maintain and uphold, but in our case
Jehovah himself maintains our lot. Our Lord Jesus delighted in this truth, that the Father was on his side, and would maintain his right against all the wrongs of men. He knew that his elect would be reserved for him, and that almighty power would preserve them as his lot and reward for ever. Let us also be glad, because the Judge of all the earth will vindicate our righteous cause.

Verse 6. Jesus found the way of obedience to lead into "pleasant places."

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

Verse 7. "I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel." Praise as well as prayer was presented to the Father by our Lord Jesus, and we are not truly his followers unless our resolve be, "I will bless the Lord." Jesus is called Wonderful, Counsellor, but as man he spake not of himself, but as his Father had taught him. Read in confirmation of this, John 7:16; 8:28; and 12:49, 50; and the prophecy concerning him in Isaiah 11:2, 3. It was our Redeemer's wont
to repair to his Father for direction, and having received it, he blessed him for
giving him counsel. It would be well for us if we would follow his example of
lowliness, cease from trusting in our own understanding, and seek to be guided
by the Spirit of God. "My reins also instruct me in the night seasons." By the
reins understand the inner man, the affections and feelings. The communion
of the soul with God brings to it an inner spiritual wisdom which in still seasons is
revealed to itself. Our Redeemer spent many nights alone upon the mountain,
and we may readily conceive that together with his fellowship with heaven, he
carried on a profitable commerce with himself; reviewing his experience,
forecasting his work, and considering his position. Great generals fight their
battles in their own mind long before the trumpet sounds, and so did our Lord
win our battle on his knees before he gained it on the cross. It is a gracious
habit after taking counsel from above to take counsel within. Wise men see
more with their eyes shut by night than fools can see by day with their eyes
open. He who learns from God and so gets the seed, will soon find wisdom
within himself growing in the garden of his soul; "Thine ears shall hear a voice
behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right
hand and when ye turn to the left." The night season which the sinner chooses
for his sins is the hallowed hour of quiet when believers hear the soft still
voices of heaven, and of the heavenly life within themselves.

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

Verse 9. He clearly foresaw that he must die, for he speaks of his flesh resting, and of his soul in the abode of separate spirits; death was full before his face, or he would not have mentioned corruption; but such was his devout reliance upon his God, that he sang over the tomb, and rejoiced in vision of the sepulchre. He knew that the visit of his soul to Sheol, or the invisible world of disembodied spirits, would be a very short one, and that his body in a very brief space would leave the grave, uninjured by its sojourn there; all this made him say, "my heart is glad," and moved his tongue, the glory of his frame, to rejoice in God, the strength of his salvation. Oh, for such holy faith in the prospect of trial and of death! It is the work of faith, not merely to create a peace which passeth all understanding, but to fill the heart full of gladness until the tongue, which, as the organ of an intelligent creature, is our glory, bursts forth in notes of harmonious praise. Faith gives us living joy, and bestows dying rest. "My flesh also shall rest in hope."

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

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

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

Verse 11. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life." To Jesus first this way was shown, for he is the first begotten from the dead, the first-born of every creature. He himself opened up the way through his own flesh, and then trod it as the forerunner of his own redeemed. The thought of being made the path of life to his people, gladdened the soul of Jesus. "In thy presence is fulness of joy." Christ being raised from the dead ascended into glory, to dwell in constant nearness to God, where joy is at its full for ever: the foresight of this urged him onward in his glorious but grievous toil. To bring his chosen to eternal happiness was the high ambition which inspired him, and made him wade through a sea of blood. O God, when a worldling's mirth has all expired, for ever with Jesus may we dwell "at thy right hand," where "there are pleasures for evermore;" and meanwhile, may we have an earnest by tasting thy love below. Trapp's note on the heavenly verse which closes the Psalm is a sweet morsel, which may serve for a contemplation, and yield a foretaste of our inheritance. He writes, "Here is as much said as can be, but words are too weak to utter it. For quality there is in heaven joy and pleasures; for quantity, a fulness, a torrent whereat they drink without let or loathing; for constancy, it is at God's right hand, who is stronger than all, neither can any take us out of his hand; it is a constant happiness without intermission: and for perpetuity it is for evermore. Heaven's joys are without measure, mixture, or end."

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**EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS**

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 1. "For in thee do I put my trust." Here the prophet setteth down the cause why he prayeth to God; whereby he declareth, that none can truly call upon God unless they believe. Romans 10:14. "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" In regard whereof as he prayeth to God to be his Saviour, so he is fully assured that God will be his Saviour. If, then, without faith we cannot truly call upon God, the men of this world rather prate like parrots than pray like Christians, at what time they utter these words; for that they trust not in God they declare both by neglecting the lawful means, and also in using unlawful means. Some we see trust in friends; some shoulder out, as they think, the cross with their goods; some fence themselves with authority; others bathe and baste themselves in pleasure to put the evil day far from them; others make flesh their arm; and others make the wedge of gold their confidence; and these men when they seek for help at the Lord, mean in their hearts to find it in their friends, good authority and pleasure, howsoever for fear, they dare not say this outwardly. Again, here we are to observe under what shelter we may harbour ourselves in the showers of adversity, even under the protection of the Almighty. And why? "Whoso dwelleth in the secret of the Most High, shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty." And here in effect is showed, that whosoever putteth his trust in God shall be preserved; otherwise the prophet's reason here had not been good. Besides, we see he pleadeth not by merit, but sueth by faith, teaching us that if we come with like faith, we may obtain the like deliverance.—Richard Greenham.

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

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

Verse 2. "My goodness extendeth not to thee." I think the words should be understood of what the Messiah was doing for men. My goodness, (Heb.) tobhathi, "my bounty" is not to thee. What I am doing can add nothing to thy divinity; thou art not providing this astonishing sacrifice because thou canst derive any excellence from it; but this bounty extends to the saints—to all the spirits of just men made perfect, whose bodies are still in the earth; and to the excellent, (Heb.) addirey, "the noble or super-eminent ones," those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. The saints and illustrious ones not only taste of my goodness, but enjoy my salvation. Perhaps angels themselves may be intended; they are not uninterested in the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. They desire to look into these
things; and the victories of the cross in the conversion of sinners cause joy among the angels of God.—Adam Clarke.

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

Verse 2. "My goodness extendeth not to thee." Oh, how great is God's goodness to you! He calls upon others for the same things, and conscience stands as Pharaoh's taskmasters, requiring the tale of bricks but not allowing straw; it impels and presseth, but gives no enlargement of heart, andbuffets and wounds them for neglect: as the hard creditor that, taking the poor debtor by the throat, saith, "Pay me that thou owest me," but yields him no power to do it; thus God might deal with you also, for he oweth not assistance to us; but we owe obedience to him. Remember, we had power, and it is just to demand what we cannot do, because the weakness that is in us is of ourselves: we have impoverished ourselves. Therefore, when in much mercy he puts forth his hand into the work with thee, be very thankful. If the work be not done, he is no
loser; if done, and well done, he is no gainer. Job 22:2; 35:6-8. But the gain is all to thee; all the good that comes by it is to thyself.—Joseph Symonds, 1639.

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

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

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

**Verses 2, 3.** "My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints." God's goodness to us should make us merciful to others. It were strange indeed a soul should come out of his tender bosom with a hard uncharitable heart. Some children do not indeed take after their earthly parents, as Cicero's son, who had nothing of his father but his name; but God's children all partake of their heavenly Father's nature. Philosophy tells us, that there is no reaction from the earth to the heavens; they indeed shed their influences upon the lower world, which quicken and fructify it, but the earth returns none back to make the sun shine the better. David knew that his goodness extended not unto God, but this made him reach it forth to his brethren. Indeed, God hath left his poor saints to receive the rents we owe unto him for his mercies. An ingenuous guest, though his friend will take nothing for his entertainment, yet, to show his thankfulness, will give something to his servants.—William Gurnall.
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Verse 3. "But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." My brethren, look upon saintship as the greatest excellency to love it. So did Christ. His eye was "upon the excellent ones in the earth;" that is, upon the saints, who were excellent to him; yea, also even when not saints, because God loved them. Isaiah 43:4. It is strange to hear how men by their speeches will undervalue a saint as such, if without some other outward excellency. For whilst they acknowledge a man a saint, yet in other respects, they will contemn him; "He is a holy man," they will say, "but he is weak," etc. But is he a saint? And can there be any such other imperfection or weakness found as shall lay him low in thy thoughts in comparison of other carnal men more excellent? Hath not Christ loved him, bought him, redeemed him?—Thomas Goodwin.

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

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

Verse 3. By David's language, there were many singular saints in his day: "To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Was it so then, and should it not be so now? We know the New Testament outshines the Old as much as the sun outshines the moon. If we then live in a more glorious dispensation, should we not maintain a more glorious conversation? . . . "The excellent." Were the sun to give no more delight than a star, you could not believe he was the regent of the day; were he to transmit no more heat than a glow-worm, you would question his being the source of elementary heat. Were God to do no more than a creature, where would his Godhead be? Were a man to do no more than a brute, where would his
manhood be? Were not a saint to excel a sinner, where would his sanctity be?—William Secker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 5. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." If the Lord be thy portion, then thou mayest conclude, omnipotency is my portion, immensity, all-sufficiency, etc. Say not, If so, then I should be omnipotent, etc. There is a vast difference betwixt identity and interest, betwixt conveying of a title, and transmutation of nature. A friend gives thee an invaluable treasure, and all the securities of it that thou canst desire; wilt thou deny it is thine because thou art not changed into its nature? The attributes are thine, as thy inheritance, as thy lands are thine; not because thou art changed into their nature, but because the title is conveyed to thee, it is given thee, and improved for thy benefit. If another manage it, who can do it with greater advantage to thee than to thyself, it is no infringement of thy title. . . . . The Lord is our portion, and this is incomparably more than if we had heaven and earth; for all the earth is but as a point compared with the vastness of the heavens, and the heavens themselves are but a point compared with God. What a large possession have we then! There is no confiscation of it, no banishment from it. Our portion fills heaven and earth, and is infinitely above heaven and below earth, and beyond both. Poor men boast and pride themselves of a kingdom, but we have more than all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof. Christ has given us more than the devil could offer him.—David Clarkson.
Verse 5. "Portion of mine inheritance and of my cup," may contain an allusion to the daily supply of food, and also to the inheritance of Levi. Deuteronomy 18:1, 2.—”Critical and Explanatory Pocket Bible." By A. R. Fausset and B. M. Smith, 1867.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 7. "My reins also instruct me in the night seasons." This shows that God, who, he says, was always present to him, had given him some admonition in his dreams, or at least his waking thoughts by night, from whence he gathered a certain assurance of his recovery; possibly he might be directed to some remedy. Antonine thanks the gods for directing him in his sleep to remedies.—Z. Mudge, in loc, 1744.
Psalm 16

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

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

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

Verse 8. "I have set the Lord ALWAYS before me." Like as the gnomon doth ever behold the north star, whether it be closed and shut up in a coffer of gold, silver, or wood, never losing its nature; so a faithful Christian man, whether he abound in wealth or be pinched with poverty, whether he be of high or low degree in this world, ought continually to have his faith and hope surely built and grounded upon Christ, and to have his heart and mind fast fixed and settled in him, and to follow him through thick and thin, through fire and water, through wars and peace, through hunger and cold, through friends and foes,
through a thousand perils and dangers, through the surges and waves of envy, malice, hatred, evil speeches, railing sentences, contempt of the world, flesh, and devil, and even in death itself, be it never so bitter, cruel, and tyrannical, yet never to lose sight and view of Christ, never to give over faith, hope, and trust in him.—Robert Cawdray.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Verse 9.* "*Therefore my heart is glad,*" etc. That is, I am all over in very good plight, as well as heart can wish, or require; I do over-abound exceedingly with joy; "God forgive me mine unthankfulness and unworthiness of so great glory" (as that martyr said): "In all the days of my life I was never so merry as now I am in this dark dungeon," etc. Wicked men rejoice in appearance, and not in heart (2 Corinthians 5:12); their joy is but skin deep, their mirth frothy and flashy, such as wetteth the mouth, but warmeth not the heart. But David is *totus totus, quantus quantus exultabundus;* his *heart, glory, flesh,* (answerable, as some think to that of the apostle, 1 Thessalonians 5:23; *spirit, soul, and body*) were all overjoyed.—*John Trapp.*

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

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

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

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

"Foure clerkes of Oxford, doctors two, and two
That would be doctors."

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

_________________"They which tell
That Christ hath nere descended into Hell,
But to the grave."

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

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

Verse 10. "In hell." Sheol here, as hades in the New Testament, signifies the
state of the dead, the separate state of souls after death, the invisible world of
souls, where Christ's soul was, though it did not remain there, but on the third
day returned to its body again. It seems best of all to interpret this word of the
grave as it is rendered; Genesis 42:38; Isaiah 38:18.—John Gill.
Verse 10. "Thine Holy One." Holiness preserves the soul from dereliction, in the state of death, and the body of the saint from corruption in the grave. If it be desired by any that doubt of it, to see the clear issue of this from the text, I shall guide them to read this text with a great accent upon that term, "Thine Holy One," that they may take special notice of it, even the quality of that man exempted from these evils. In this the Spirit of God puts an emphasis on holiness, as counter-working and prevailing over death and the grave. It is this and nothing but this, that keeps the man, dead and buried, from desertion in death, and corruption in the grave.—George Hughes.

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

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

Verse 11. In this verse are four things observable:

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

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

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

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

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

"The path." But let us now see what he will show us: "The path." We must know, that as men have many paths out of their highway—the world—but they all end in destruction; so God hath many paths out of his highway, the word, but they all end in salvation. Let us oppose ours to his (as indeed they are opposite), and see how they agree. Ours are not worth marking, his marked with an attendite, to begin withal; ours bloody, his unpolluted; ours crooked, his straight; ours lead to hell, his to heaven. Have not we strayed then? We had need to turn and take another path, and that quickly: we may well say, semitas nostrus, . . . vis tus. Well, here is the Book, and here are the ways before you; and he will show you. Here is semita mandatorum, in the one hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm, verse thirty-five: here is semita pacifica (Proverbs 3:17); here is semita aequitatis (Proverbs 4:11); here is semita justitiae (Psalm 23:3); here is semita judicii (Proverbs 17:23); and many others. These are, every one of them, God's ways; but these are somewhat too many and too far off: we must seek the way where all these meet, and that will bring us into "the path;" these are many, but I will show you yet "a more excellent way," saith Paul. 1 Corinthians 12:31.

We must begin to enter at via mandatorum; for till then we are in the dark and can distinguish no ways, whether they be good or bad. But there we shall meet with a lantern and a light in it. Thy commandment is a lantern, and thy law a light. Proverbs 6:23. Carry this with thee (as a good man should, lex Dei
Psalm 16

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in corde ejus); and it will bring thee into the way. And see how careful our
Guide is; for lest the wind should blow out this light, he hath put it into a
lantern to preserve it. For the fear, or sanction, of the "commandments,
preserves the memory of the law in our hearts, as a lantern doth a light burning
within it. The law is the light, and the commandment the lantern. So that
neither flattering Zephyrus, nor blustering Boreas shall be able to blow it out,
so long as the fear of the sanction keeps it in. This is lucerna pedibus (Psalm
119:105); and will not only show thee where thou shalt tread, but what pace
thou shalt keep. When thou hast this light, take Jeremy's counsel; enquire for
semita antiqua, before thou goest any further. "Stand (saith he) in the ways, and
behold and ask for the old way; which is the good way, and walk therein, and
ye shall find rest for your souls." This will bring you some whither where you
may rest awhile. And whither is that? Trace this path, and you shall find this
"old way" to run quite through all the Old Testament till it end in the New, the
gospel of peace, and there is rest. And that this is so Paul affirms. For the law,
which is the "old way," is but the pedagogue to the gospel. This then is "a more
excellent way" than the law, the ceremonies whereof in respect of this were
called "beggarly rudiments." When we come there, we shall find the way
pleasant and very light, so that we shall plainly see before us that very path,
that only path, "the path of life" (semita vitae), in which the gospel ends, as the
law ends in the gospel. Now what is semita vitae that we seek for? "All the
ways of God are truth," saith David. Psalm 119:151. He doth not say they are
verae, or veritates, but veritas; all one truth. So, all the ways of God end in one
truth. Semita vitae, then, is truth. And so sure a way to life is truth, that John
says, he had "no greater joy: than to hear that his sons "walked in truth." 3 John
1:3. "No greater joy:" for it brings them certainly to a joy, than which there is
none greater. Via veritatis is "the gospel of truth," but semita vitae is the truth
itself. Of these, Esay prophesied, "et erit ibi semita et via," etc. "There shall be
a path, and a way;" and the way shall be called holy, the proper epithet of the
gospel: "the holy gospel," that is the way. But the path is the epitome of this
way (called in our text, by way of excellence, "the path," in the singular); than
which there is no other. "The gospel of your salvation," saith Paul, is "the word
of truth;" and "thy word is truth," saith our Saviour to his Father. Truth, then, is
"the path of life," for it is the epitome of the gospel, which is the way. This is
that truth which Pilate (unhappy man) asked after, but never stayed to be
resolved of. He himself is the word; the word is the truth; and the truth is "the
path of life," trodden by all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and
confessors, that ever went to heaven before us. The abstract of the gospel, the
gate of heaven, semita vitae, "the path of life," even Jesus Christ the righteous,
who hath beaten the way for us, gone himself before us, and left us the prints of
his footsteps for us to follow, where he himself sits ready to receive us. So, the
law is the light, the gospel is the way, and Christ is "the path of life."—William Austin, 1637.

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

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

The saints, entered as it were into the chambers of God's presence, shall have joy to their ears in hearing their own commendating and praise, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21); and in hearing the divine
language of heavenly Canaan; for our bodies shall be *vera et viva*, perfect like Christ's glorious body, who did both hear other and speak himself after his resurrection, as it is apparent in the gospel's history. Now, then, if the words of the wise spoken in due places be like "apples of gold with pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11), if the mellifluous speech of Origen, the silver trumpet of Hillary, the golden mouth of Chrysostom, bewitched as it were their auditory with exceeding great delight; if the gracious eloquence of heathen orators, whose tongues were never touched with a coal from God's altar, could steal away the hearts of their hearers, and carry them up and down whither they would, what a *fulness of joy* will it be to hear not only the sanctified, but also the glorified tongues of saints and angels in the kingdom of glory? . . .

Bonaventure fondly reports at all adventure, that St. Francis hearing an angel a little while playing on a harp, was so moved with extraordinary delight, that he thought himself in another world. Oh! what a *fulness of joy* will it be to hear more than twelve legions of angels, accompanied with a number of happy saints which no man is able to number, all at once sing together, "Hallelujah, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all them that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Revelation 4:8; 5:13. If the voices of mortal men, and the sound of cornet, trumpet, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and other well-tuned instruments of music, passing through our dull ears in this world be so powerful, that all our affections are diversely transported according to the divers kinds of harmony, then how shall we be ravished in God's presence when we shall hear heavenly airs with heavenly ears!

Concerning *fulness of joy* to the rest of the senses, I find a very little or nothing in holy Scriptures, and therefore seeing God's Spirit will not have a pen to write, I may not have a tongue to speak. Divines in general affirm, that the smelling, and taste, and feeling, shall have joy proportionable to their blessed estate, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality; the body which is sown in weakness is to be raised in power; it is sown a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body; buried in dishonour, raised in glory; that is, capable of good, and, as being impassible, no way subject to suffer evil, insomuch that it cannot be hurt if it should be cast into hell fire, no more than Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, were hurt in the burning oven. In one word, God is not only to the souls, but also to the bodies of the saints, *all in all things*; a glass to their sight, honey to their taste, music to their hearing, balm to their smelling.—*John Boys.*
Verse 11. "In thy presence is fulness of joy." The saints on earth are all but viatores, wayfaring men, wandering pilgrims far from home; but the saints in heaven are comprehensores, safely arrived at the end of their journey. All we here present for the present, are but mere strangers in the midst of danger, we are losing ourselves and losing our lives in the land of the dying. But ere long, we may find our lives and ourselves again in heaven with the Lord of life, being found of him in the land of the living. If when we die, we be in the Lord of life, our souls are sure to be bound up in the bundle of life, that so when we live again we may be sure to find them in the life of the Lord. Now we have but a dram, but a scruple, but a grain of happiness, to an ounce, to a pound, to a thousand weight of heaviness; now we have but a drop of joy to an ocean of sorrow; but a moment of ease to an age of pain; but then (as St. Austin very sweetly in his Soliloquies), we shall have endless ease, without any pain, true happiness without any heaviness, the greatest measure of felicity without the least of misery, the fullest measure of joy that may be, without any mixture of grief. Here therefore (as St. Gregory the divine adviseth us), let us ease our heaviest loads of sufferings, and sweeten our bitterest cups of sorrows with the continual meditation and constant expectation of the fulness of joy in the presence of God, and of the pleasure at his right hand for evermore.

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

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

**Verse 11.** "In thy presence is FULNESS of joy." In heaven they are free from
want; they can want nothing there is unless it be want itself. They may find the
want of evil, but never feel the evil of want. Evil is but the want of good, and
the want of evil is but the absence of want. God is good, and no want of good
can be in God. What want then can be endured in the presence of God, where
no evil is, but all good that the fulness of joy may be enjoyed? Here some men
eat their meat without any hunger, whilst others hunger without any meat to
eat, and some men drink extremely without any thirst, whilst others thirst
extremely without any drink. But in the glorious presence of God, not any one
can be pampered with too much, nor any one be pined with too little. They that
gather much of the heavenly manna, "have nothing over;" and "they that gather
little have no lack." They that are once possessed of that presence of God, are
so possessed with it that they can never feel the misery of thirst or hunger.—
**Edward Willan.**

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

**Verse 11.** "Fulness of joy." When a man comes to the sea, he doth not complain
that he wants his cistern of water: though thou didst suck comfort from thy
relations; yet when thou comest to the ocean, and art with Christ, thou shalt
never complain that thou hast left thy cistern behind. There will be nothing to
breed sorrow in heaven; there shall be joy, and nothing but joy: heaven is set
out by that phrase, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Here joy enters into
us, there we enter into joy; the joys we have here are from heaven; the joys that
we shall have with Christ are without measure and without mixture. "In thy
presence is fulness of joy."—**Thomas Watson.**
Psalm 16 345

Verse 11. "In thy presence is fulness of joy." In this life our joy is mixed with sorrow like a prick under the rose. Jacob had joy when his sons returned home from Egypt with the sacks full of corn, but much sorrow when he perceived the silver in the sack's mouth. David had much joy in bringing up the ark of God, but at the same time great sorrow for the breach made upon Uzza. This is the Lord's great wisdom to temper and moderate our joy. As men of a weak constitution must have their wine qualified with water for fear of distemper, so must we in this life (such is our weakness), have our joy mixed with sorrow, lest we turn giddy and insolent. Here our joy is mixed with fear (Psalm 2), "Rejoice with trembling:" the women departed from the sepulchre of our Lord "with fear and great joy." Matthew 28:8. In our regenerate estate, though we have joy from Christ that is "formed in us," yet the impression of the terrors of God before the time of our new birth remains in us; as in a commotion of the sea by a great tempest after a stormy wind hath ceased, yet the impression of the storm remains and makes an agitation. The tender mother recovering her young child from danger of a fall hath joy from the recovery; but with much fear with the impression of the danger; so after we are recovered here from our dangerous falls by the rich and tender mercies of our God, sometime preventing us, sometime restoring us; though we rejoice in his mercy, and in our own recovery out of the snares of Satan, yet in the midst of our joy the remembrance of former guiltiness and danger do humble our hearts with much sorrow, and some trepidation of heart. As our joy here is mixed with fears, so with sorrow also. Sound believers do look up to Christ crucified, and do rejoice in his incomparable love, that such a person should have died such a death for such as were enemies to God by sinful inclinations and wicked works; they look down also upon their own sins that have wounded and crucified the Lord of glory, and this breaketh the heart, as a widow should mourn, who by her froward and lewd behaviour hath burst the heart of a kind and loving husband.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Verse 2, 3.* Evidences of true faith.

- I. Allegiance to divine authority.
- II. Rejection of self-righteousness.
- III. Doing good to the saints.
- IV. Appreciation of saintly excellence.
- V. Delight in their society.
Verse 3. *Excellent of the earth.* May be translated noble, wonderful, magnificent. They are so in their new birth, nature, clothing, attendance, heritage, etc., etc.

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

Verse 3. Collection sermon for poor believers.

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


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

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

Verse 6.

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

Verse 6 (second clause).

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

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

- I. The favour of God with it.
• II. That it is from a Father's hand.
• III. That it comes through the covenant of grace.
• IV. That it is the purchase of Christ's blood.
• V. That it is an answer to prayer, and a blessing from above upon honest endeavours.

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

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

—William Jay.


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

Verse 8. Set the Lord always before you as—

• I. Your protector.
• II. Your leader.
• III. Your example.
• IV. Your observer.

—William Jay.

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

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

Verse 9. (last clause).

• I. The saint's Sabbath (rest).
• II. His sarcophagus (in hope).
• III. His salvation (for which he hopes).
Verses 9, 10. Jesus cheered in prospect of death by the safety of his soul and body; our consolation in him as to the same.

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

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

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

WORKS UPON THE SIXTEENTH PSALM

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


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

"Devotions Augustinianae Flamma; or, Certayne Devout, Godly, and Learned Meditations. Written by the excellently accomplisht gentleman, WILLIAM AUSTIN, of Lincolnes Inne, Esquire. . . . 1637," contains "Notes on the Sixteenth Psalme; more particularly on the last verse." Small folio.


Christ in Gethsemane. An Exposition of Psalm Sixteen. By JAMES FRAME, Minister of Queen Street Chapel, Ratcliff, London: 1858.
Psalm 17

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

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

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

EXPOSITION

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

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

Verse 2. "Let my sentence come forth from thy presence." The psalmist has now grown bold by the strengthening influence of prayer, and he now entreats the Judge of all the earth to give sentence upon his case. He has been libelled, basely and maliciously libelled; and having brought his action before the highest court, he, like an innocent man, has no desire to escape the enquiry, but even invites and sues for judgment. He does not ask for secrecy, but would have the result come forth to the world. He would have sentence pronounced and executed forthwith. In some matters we may venture to be as bold as this; but except we can plead something better than our own supposed innocence, it were terrible presumption thus to challenge the judgment of a sin-hating God. With Jesus as our complete and all-glorious righteousness we need not fear, though the day of judgment should commence at once, and hell open her mouth at our feet, but might joyfully prove the truth of our hymn writer's holy boast—

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

Verse 3, "Thou hast proved mine heart." Like Peter, David uses the argument, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." It is a most assuring thing to be able to appeal at once to the Lord, and call upon our Judge to be a witness for our defence. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." "Thou hast visited me in the night." As if he had said, "Lord, thou hast entered my house at all hours; and thou hast seen me when no one else was nigh; thou hast come upon me unawares and marked my unrestrained actions, and thou knowest whether or no I am guilty of the crimes laid at my door." Happy man who can thus remember the omniscient eye, and the omnipresent visitor, and find comfort in the remembrance. We hope we have had our midnight visits from our Lord, and truly they are sweet; so sweet that the recollection of them sets us longing for more of such condescending communings. Lord, if indeed, we had been hypocrites, should we have had such fellowship, or feel such hungerings after a renewal of it? "Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing." Surely the Psalmist means nothing hypocritical or wicked in the sense in which his slanderers accused him; for if the Lord should put the best of his people into the crucible, the dross would be a fearful sight, and would make penitence open her sluices wide. Assayers very soon detect the presence of alloy, and when the chief of all assayers shall, at the last, say of us he has found nothing, it will be a glorious hour indeed—"They are without fault before the throne of God." Even here, as viewed in our covenant Head, the Lord sees no sin in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel; even the all-detecting glance of Omniscience can see no flaw where the great Substitute covers all with beauty and perfection. "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." Oh those sad lips of ours! we had need purpose to purpose if we would keep them from exceeding their bounds. The number of diseases of the tongue is as many as the diseases of all the rest of the man put together, and
they are more inveterate. Hands and feet one may bind, but who can fetter the lips? iron bands may hold a madman, but what chains can restrain the tongue? It needs more than a purpose to keep this nimble offender within its proper range. Lion-taming and serpent-charming are not to be mentioned in the same day as tongue-taming, for the tongue can no man tame. Those who have to smart from the falsehoods of others should be the more jealous over themselves; perhaps this led the Psalmist to register this holy resolution; and, moreover, he intended thereby to aver that if he had said too much in his own defence, it was not intentional, for he desired in all-respects to tune his lips to the sweet and simple music of truth. Notwithstanding all this David was slandered, as if to show us that the purest innocence will be bemired by malice. There is no sunshine without a shadow, no ripe fruit unpecked by the birds.

Verse 4. "Concerning the works of men." While we are in the midst of men we shall have their works thrust under our notice, and we shall be compelled to keep a corner of our diary headed "concerning the works of men." To be quite clear from the dead works of carnal humanity is the devout desire of souls who are quickened by the Holy Spirit. "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." He had kept the highway of Scripture, and not chosen the bye-paths of malice. We should soon imitate the example of the worst of men if the grace of God did not use the Word of God as the great preservative from evil. The paths of the destroyer have often tempted us; we have been prompted to become destroyers too, when we have been sorely provoked, and resentment has grown warm; but we have remembered the example of our Lord, who would not call fire from heaven upon his enemies, but meekly prayed, "Father, forgive them." All the ways of sin are the paths of Satan,—the Apollyon or Abaddon, both of which words signify the destroyer. Foolish indeed are those who give their hearts to the old murderer, because for the time he panders to their evil desires. That heavenly Book which lies neglected on many a shelf is the only guide for those who would avoid the enticing and entangling mazes of sin; and it is the best means of preserving the youthful pilgrim from ever treading those dangerous ways. We must follow the one or the other; the Book of Life, or the way of death; the word of the Holy Spirit, or the suggestion of the Evil Spirit. David could urge as the proof of his sincerity that he had no part or lot with the ungodly in their ruinous ways. How can we venture to plead our cause with God, unless we also can wash our hands clean of all connection with the enemies of the Great King?

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

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

Verse 7. "Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness." Marvellous in its antiquity, its
distinguishing character, its faithfulness, its immutability, and above all,
marvellous in the wonders which it works. That marvellous grace which has
redeemed us with the precious blood of God's only begotten, is here invoked to
come to the rescue. That grace is sometimes hidden; the text says, "Shew it."
Present enjoyments of divine love are matchless cordials to support fainting hearts. Believer, what a prayer is this! Consider it well. O Lord, shew thy marvellous lovingkindness; shew it to my intellect, and remove my ignorance; shew it to my heart, and revive my gratitude; shew it to my faith, and renew my confidence; shew it to my experience, and deliver me from all my fears. The original word here used is the same which in Psalm 4:3 is rendered *set apart,* and it has the force of, Distinguish thy mercies, set them out, and set apart the choicest to be bestowed upon me in this hour of my severest affliction. *"O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them."* The title here given to our gracious God is eminently consolatory. He is the God of salvation; it is his present and perpetual habit to save believers; he puts forth his best and most glorious strength, using his right hand of wisdom and might, to save all those, of whatsoever rank or class, who trust themselves with him. Happy faith thus to secure the omnipotent protection of heaven! Blessed God, to be thus gracious to unworthy mortals, when they have but grace to rely upon thee! The right hand of God is interposed between the saints and all harm; God is never at a loss for means; his own bare hand is enough. He works without tools as well as with them.

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

Verse 9. *"From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about."* The foes from whom David sought to be rescued were
wicked men. It is hopeful for us when our enemies are God's enemies. They were deadly enemies, whom nothing but his death would satisfy. The foes of a believer's soul are mortal foes most emphatically, for they who war against our faith aim at the very life of our life. Deadly sins are deadly enemies, and what sin is there which hath not death in its bowels? These foes oppressed David, they laid his spirit waste, as invading armies ravage a country, or as wild beasts desolate a land. He likens himself to a besieged city, and complains that his foes compass him about. It may well quicken our business upward, when all around us, every road, is blockaded by deadly foes. This is our daily position, for all around us dangers and sins are lurking. O God, do thou protect us from them all.

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

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

Verse 12. Lions are not more greedy, nor their ways more cunning than are Satan and his helpers when engaged against the children of God. The blood of souls the adversary thirsts after, and all his strength and craft are exerted to the utmost to satisfy his detestable appetite. We are weak and foolish like sheep; but we have a shepherd wise and strong, who knows the old lion's wiles, and is more than a match for his force; therefore will we not fear, but rest in safety in the fold. Let us beware, however, of our lurking foe; and in those parts of the road where we feel most secure, let us look about us lest, peradventure, our foe should leap upon us.

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

Verse 14. Almost every word of this verse has furnished matter for discussion to scholars, for it is very obscure. We will, therefore, rest content with the common version, rather than distract the reader with divers translations. "From men which are thy hand." Having styled the ungodly a sword in his Father's hand, he now likens them to that hand itself, to set forth his conviction that God could as easily remove their violence as a man moves his own hand. He will never slay his child with his own hand. "From men of the world," mere earthworms; not men of the world to come, but mere dwellers in this narrow
sphere of mortality; having no hopes or wishes beyond the ground on which
they tread. "Which have their portion in this life." Like the prodigal, they have
their portion, and are not content to wait their Father's time. Like Passion in the
"Pilgrim's Progress," they have their best things first, and revel during their
little hour. Luther was always afraid lest he should have his portion here, and
therefore frequently gave away sums of money which had been presented to
him. We cannot have earth and heaven too for our choice and portion; wise
men choose that which will last the longest. "Whose belly thou fillest with thy
hid treasure." Their sensual appetite gets the gain which it craved for. God
gives to these swine the husks which they hunger for. A generous man does not
deny dogs their bones; and our generous God gives even his enemies enough to
fill them, if they were not so unreasonable as never to be content. Gold and
silver which are locked up in the dark treasuries of the earth are given to the
wicked liberally, and they therefore roll in all manner of carnal delights. Every
dog has his day, and they have theirs, and a bright summer's day it seems; but
ah! how soon it ends in night! "They are full of children." This was their
fondest hope, that a race from their loins would prolong their names far down
the page of history, and God has granted them this also; so that they have all
that heart can wish. What enviable creatures they seem, but it is only seeming!
"They are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes."
They were fat housekeepers, and yet leave no lean wills. Living and dying they
lacked for nothing but grace and alas! that lack spoils everything. They had a
fair portion within the little circle of time, but eternity entered not into their
calculations. They were penny wise, but pound foolish; they remembered the
present, and forgot the future; they fought for the shell, and lost the kernel.
How fine a description have we here of many a successful merchant, or popular
statesman; and it is, at first sight, very showy and tempting, but in contrast with
the glories of the world to come, what are these paltry molehill joys. Self, self,
self, all these joys begin and end in basest selfishness; but oh, our God, how
rich are those who begin and end in thee! From all the contamination and injury
which association with worldly men is sure to bring us, deliver thou us, O God!

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

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

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

Verse 1. "That goeth not out of feigned lips." There are such things as "feigned lips;" a contraction between the heart and the tongue, a clamour in the voice and scoffing in the soul, a crying to God, "Thou art my father, the guide of my youth;" and yet speaking and doing evil to the utmost of our power (Jeremiah 3:4, 5), as if God could be imposed upon by fawning pretences, and, like old Isaac, take Jacob for Esau, and be cozened by the smell of his garments; as if he could not discern the negro heart under an angel's garb . . . This is an unworthy conceit of God, to fancy that we can satisfy for inward sins, and avert approaching judgments by external offerings, by a loud voice, with a false heart, as if God (like children), would be pleased with the glittering of an empty shell, or the rattling of stones, the chinking of money, a mere voice, and crying without inward frames and intentions of service.—Stephen Charnock.

Verse 1. "Not out of feigned lips." It is observable that the eagle soareth on high, little intending to fly to heaven, but to gain her prey; and so it is that many do carry a great deal of seeming devotion in lifting up their eyes towards heaven; but they do it only to accomplish with more ease, safety, and applause their wicked and damnable designs here on earth; such as without are Catos, within Neros; hear them, no man better; search and try them, no man worse; they have Jacob's voice, but Esau's hands; they profess like saints, but practise like Satans; they have their long prayers, but short prayings; they are like apothecaries' gallipots—having without the title of some excellent preservative, but within are full of deadly poison; counterfeit holiness is their cloak for all manner of villanies, and the midwife to bring forth all their devilish designs. Peter Bales, in Spencer's "Things New and Old."
Verse 1. "Not out of feigned lips." Not only a righteous cause, but a righteous prayer are urged as motives why God should hear. Calvin remarks on the importance of joining prayer to the testimony of a good conscience, lest we defraud God of his honour by not committing all judgments to him.

J. J. Stewart Perowne.

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

Verse 2. David appeals unto God to judge the righteousness of his heart towards Saul—"Let my sentence come forth from thy presence." From Saul and his courtiers there comes a hard sentence; they call me traitor, they call me rebel; but, Lord, leave me not unto their sentence, "Let my sentence come from thy presence;" that I know will be another sentence than what cometh from them, for thou hast proved me, and tried me, and findest nothing in me.—Jeremiah Burroughs.

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

What! take it at adventure, and not try
What metal it is made of? No, not I.
Should I now lightly let it pass,
Take sullen lead for silver, sounding brass,
Instead of solid gold, alas!
What would become of it in the great day
Of making jewels, 'twould be cast away.

The heart thou giv' st me must be such a one,
As is the same throughout. I will have none
But that which will abide the fire.
'Tis not a glitt'ring outside I desire,
Whose seeming shows do soon expire;
But real worth within, which neither dross,
Nor base alloys, make subject unto loss.

If, in the composition of thine heart,
A stubborn, steely willfulness have part,
That will not bow and bend to me,
Save only in a mere formality
Of tinsel-trimm'd hypocrisy,
I care not for it, though it show as fair
As the first blush of the sun-gilded air.

The heart that in my furnace will not melt,
When it the glowing heat thereof hath felt,
Turn liquid, and dissolve in tears
Of true repentance for its faults, that hears
My threat'ning voice, and never fears,
Is not an heart worth having. If it be
An heart of stone, 'tis not an heart for me.

The heart, that, cast into my furnace, spits,
And sparkles in my face, fall into fits
Of discontented grudging, whines
When it is broken of its will, repines
At the least suffering, declines
My fatherly correction, is an heart
On which I care not to bestow mine art.

* * * * * * * * *

The heart that vapours out itself in smoke,
And with these cloudy shadows thinks to cloak
Its empty nakedness, how much
Soever thou esteemest, it is such
As never will endure my touch.

I'll bring it to my furnace, and there see
What it will prove, what it is like to be.
If it be gold, it will be sure
The hottest fire that can be to endure,
And I shall draw it out more pure.
Affliction may refine, but cannot waste
Psalm 17 363

That heart wherein my love is fixed fast.
—Francis Quarles.

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

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

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

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

Verses 3, 4, 5. Where there is true grace, there is hatred of all sin, for hatred is (Greek). Can a man be resolved to commit what he hates? No, for his inward aversion would secure him more against it than all outward obstacles. As this inward purpose of a good man is against all sin, so more particularly against that which doth so easily beset him. David seems in several places to be naturally inclined to lying, but he takes up a particular resolution against it: (verse 3), "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress;" (Heb.)—I have contrived to waylay and intercept the sin of lying when it hath an occasion to approach me. A good man hath not only purposes, but he endeavours to fasten and strengthen those purposes by prayer; so David (verse 5), "Hold up my
Psalm 17

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

Verse 4. "By the word of thy lips," etc. It is a great relief against temptations to have the word ready. The word is called, "The sword of the Spirit." Ephesians 6:17. In spiritual conflicts there is none like to that. Those that ride abroad in time of danger, will not be without a sword. We are in danger, and had need handle the sword of the Spirit. The more ready the Scripture is with us, the greater advantage in our conflicts and temptations. When the devil came to assault Christ, he had Scripture ready for him, whereby he overcame the tempter. The door is barred upon Satan, and he cannot find such easy entrance when the word is hid in our hearts, and made use of pertinently. "I write unto
you, young men, because ye are strong." Where lies their strength? "And the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." 1 John 2:14. Oh, it is a great advantage when we have the word, not only by us, but in us, engraven in the heart; when it is present with us, we are more able to resist the assaults of Satan. Either a man forgets the word, or hath lost his affection to it, before he can be drawn to sin.—Thomas Manton.

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

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

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

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

Verse 6. "I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me." I have cried, says the Psalmist, because thou hast heard me. One would think he should have said
contrariwise; thou hast heard me because I have cried; yet, he says, I have cried because thou hast heard me; to show that crying doth not always go before hearing with God, as it doth with us; but that God will not only hear our cry, but also hear us before we cry, and will help us.—T. Playfere.

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

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

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

Verse 8. Does it not appear to thee to be a work of providence, that considering the weakness of the eye, he has protected it with eyelids, as with doors, which whenever there is occasion to use it are opened, and are again closed in sleep? And that it may not receive injury from the winds, he has planted on it eyelashes like a strainer; and over the eyes has disposed the eyebrows like a penthouse, so that the sweat from the head may do no mischief.—Socrates, in Xenophon.
Verse 9. "From the wicked:" as though he had said, "They are equally enemies to thee and me; not more opposite to me by their cruelty, than by their wickedness they are to thee. Vindicate then, at once, thyself, and deliver me."—John Howe.

Verse 10. "They are inclosed in their own fat," or their fat has inclosed them; either their eyes, that they can hardly see out of them, or their hearts, so that they are stupid and senseless, and devoid of the fear of God; the phrase is expressive of the multitude of their wealth, and increase of power, by which they were swelled with pride and vanity, and neither feared God nor regarded man; so the Targum paraphrases it, "their riches are multiplied, their fat covers them."—John Gill.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

John Milton.

Verse 12. We were consulting as to the best means of getting at a rhinoceros cow which we saw standing at some distance under a tree, when a troop of impalas came charging down, with a fine old lioness after them. We went and saw her lying down, but so flat to the ground, head and all, that no man could shoot with any certainty; and she never for a moment took her eyes from us. When we got up to her, she was lying down flat as a plate to the ground; but her head might have been on a pivot, as her watchful eye glared on us all round, without appearing to move her body, as we decreased the circle, in the hopes she would stand up and give us a fair chance of a shot behind the shoulder. . . I looked for a tree to climb up, near enough to make tolerably sure of my shot, and was just getting up one, when the lioness made off.—William Charles Baldwin, F.R.G.S., in "African Hunting," 1863.

Verse 13. "The wicked, which is thy sword." The devil and his instruments both are God's instruments, therefore "the wicked" are called his "sword," his "axe" (Psalm 17:13; Isaiah 10:15); now let God alone to wield the one, and handle the other. He is but a bungler that hurts and hackles his own legs with his own axe; which God should do if his children should be the worse for Satan's temptations. Let the devil choose his way, God is a match for him at every weapon. If he will try it by force of arms, and assaults the saints by persecution, as the "Lord of hosts" he will oppose him. If by policy and subtlety, he is ready there also. The devil and his whole council are but fools to God; nay, their wisdom foolishness.—William Gurnall.
Verses 13, 14. "Thy sword . . . thy hand." Thou canst as easily command and manage them, as a man may wield his sword, or move his hand. Wilt thou suffer thine own sword, thine own hand, to destroy thine own servant?—J. Howe

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

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

Verse 14. "Men which are thy hand," etc. What shall we say then? Because God maketh use of thy sins, art thou excused? Is not thine evil evil, because he picketh good out of it? Deceive not thyself therein. When thou hast done such service to thy Master and Maker, though seven and seven years, as Jacob did service to Laban, thou shalt lose thy wages and thy thanks too. Oh, well were thou if thou didst but lose, for thou shalt also gain a sorrowful advantage. It is unprofitable, nay, miserable service which thou hast thus bestowed. Babylon shall be the hammer of the Lord a long time to bruise the nations, himself afterwards bruised; Asshur his rod to scourge his people, but Asshur shall be more scourged. These hammers, rods, axes, saws, other instruments, when they have done their offices, which they never meant, shall be thrown themselves into the fire, and burnt to ashes. Satan did service to God, it cannot be denied, in the afflicting of Job, winnowing of Peter, buffetting of Paul, executing of Judas, and God did a work in all these either to prove patience, or to confirm faith, or to try strength, or to commend justice; yet is Satan "reserved in chains under darkness, to the retribution of the great day." Judas did service to God, in getting honour to his blessed name for the redemption of mankind, whilst the worlds endureth, yet was his wages an alder-tree to hang himself upon, and, what is worse, he hangeth in hell for eternal generations. He had his wages, and lost his wages. That which the priest gave him, he lost, and lost his apostleship, but gained the recompense of everlasting unhappiness, and lies in the lowest lake, for the worm and death to gnaw upon without ceasing.—John King.

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

Verse 14. "Men of the world, which have their portion in this life." The large portion of the wicked in the things of this world, may tell the righteous of how little value this is, in the account of God; in that these things are often given to his enemies plentifully, when denied in such a measure to his children. Now this cannot be because he loves or favours his enemies most; but because these lower things, given them in what degree soever, are so mean in his account, as that his chosen may learn by his distribution of them, to regard them as he does; namely, as no part of their felicity, but as common favours to all his creatures, good or bad, enemies or friends.—Daniel Wilcox.

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

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

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

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

Verse 14. "This life." There is yet another thing to be seen far more monstrous in this creature; that whereas he is endued with reason and counsel, and knoweth that this life is like unto a shadow, to a dream, to a tale that is told, to a watch in the night, to smoke, to chaff which the wind scattereth, to a water-bubble, and such-like fading things; and that life to come shall never have end; he yet nevertheless setteth his whole mind most carefully upon this present life, which is to-day, and to-morrow is not; but of the life which is everlasting he doth not so much as think. If this be not a monster, I know not what may be called monstrous.—Thomas Tymme.
Verse 14. What wicked men possess of this world is all that ever they can hope for: why should we grudge them filled bags, or swelling titles! it is their whole portion; they now receive their good things. Hast thou food and clothing? that is children's fare; envy not ungodly men, who flaunt it in the gallantry of the world: they have more than you; but it is all they are like to have: the psalmist gives us an account of their estate. They are the men of this world, which have their portion in this life, and whose bellies God filleth with his hid treasure. Whereas thou, O Christian, who possessest nothing, art heir-apparent of heaven, co-heir with Jesus Christ, who is the heir of all things, and hast an infinite mass of riches laid up for thee; so great and infinite, that all the stars of heaven are too few to account it by: you have no reason to complain of being kept short; for all that God hath is yours, whether prosperity or adversity, life or death, all is yours. What God gives is for your comfort; what he denies or takes away is for your trial: it is for the increase of those graces which are far more gracious than any temporal enjoyment. If, by seeing wicked and ungodly men flow in wealth and ease, when thou art forced to struggle against the inconveniences and difficulties of a poor estate, thou hast learnt a holy contempt and disdain of the world, believe it, God hath herein given thee more than if he had given thee the world itself.—Ezekiel Hopkins.

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

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

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

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

Verse 14. "Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure." The hearts of saints only are filled with the "hidden manna," but the bellies of the wicked are often filled with hidden treasure; that is, with those dainties and good things which are virtually hidden in, and formally spring out of, the belly and bowels of the earth. The Lord easily grants them their wish in such things, and gives them "their portion," which is all their portion, "in this life." For as they are but common professors, so these are but common mercies, such as many of his enemies receive, who are but fatted as oxen for the slaughter, and fitted for destruction. True happiness is not to be judged by lands or houses, by gold or silver. The world is a narrow bound: unless we get beyond the creature, and set our hopes above this world, we cannot be happy. As hypocrites desire, so they obtain much of the world, but they shall attain no more, how much soever they seem to desire it.—Joseph Caryl.

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

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

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

Richard Mant.

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

Verses 14. "They are full of children." Margin, _their children are full_. The margin probably expresses the sense of the Hebrew better than the text. The literal rendering would be, "satisfied are their sons;" that is, they have enough to satisfy the wants of their children. The expression, "they are full of children," is harsh and unnatural, and is not demanded by the original, or by the main thought in this passage. The obvious signification is, that they have enough for themselves and for their children.—Albert Barnes.

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

Verse 15. "I will behold," etc.—In the words we have, 1. The time of his complete and consummate happiness—"When I awake." 2. The matter of his happiness, and the manner of enjoying it; the matter and object—"God's face, or likeness;" the manner of enjoying—"I will behold thy face." 3. His perfect disposition and condition in the state of happiness—"I shall behold in righteousness," having my heart perfectly conformed to the will of God, the perfect and adequate rule of righteousness. 4. The measure of his happiness—"I shall be satisfied;" my happiness will be full in the measure, without want of
Psalm 17

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

Verse 15. "I shall be satisfied," etc. The fulness of the felicity of heaven may appear if we compare it with the joys and comforts of the Holy Spirit. Such they are, as that the Scripture styles them strong consolations (Hebrews 6:17); full joys (John 15:11); joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8); abounding consolations. 2 Corinthians 1:5. And yet all the joy and peace that believers are partakers of in this life is but as a drop to the ocean, as a single cluster to the whole vintage, as the thyme or honey upon the thigh of a bee to the whole hive fully fraught with it, or as the break and peep of day to the bright noontide. But yet these tastes of the water, wine, and honey of this celestial Canaan, with which the Holy Spirit makes glad the hearts of believers, are both far more desirable and satisfactory than the overflowing streams of all earthly felicities. And there are none who have once tasted of them, but say as the Samaritan woman did, "Lord, give me that water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." John 4:15. So also the first and early dawning of the heavenly light fill the soul with more serenity, and ravish it with more pure joy, than the brightest sunshine of all worldly splendour can ever do. I have read of a devout person who but dreaming of heaven, the signatures and impressions it made upon his fancy were so strong, as that when he awaked he knew not his cell, could not distinguish the night from the day, nor difference by his taste, oil from wine; still he was calling for his vision and saying, Redde mihi campos floridos, columnam auream, comitem Hieronymum, assistentes angelos: give me my fresh and fragrant fields again, my golden pillar of light, Jerome my companion, angels my assistants. If heaven in a dream produce such ecstasies as drown and overwhelm the exercises of the senses to inferior objects, what
trances and complacencies must the fruition of it work in those who have their whole rational appetite filled, and their body beautified with its endless glory?—William Spurstow, 1656.

Verse 15. "I shall be satisfied." Have you never seen how when they were finishing the interior of buildings they kept the scaffolding up? The old Pope, when he had Michael Angelo employed in decorating the interior of that magnificent structure, the Sistine Chapel, demanded that the scaffolding should be taken down so that he could see the glowing colours that with matchless skill were being laid on. Patiently and assiduously did that noble artist labour, toiling by day, and almost by night, bringing out his prophets and sibyls and pictures wondrous for their beauty and significance, until the work was done. The day before it was done, if you had gone into that chapel and looked up, what would you have seen? Posts, planks, ropes. lime, mortar, slop, dirt. But when all was finished, the workmen came, and the scaffolding was removed. And then, although the floor was yet covered with rubbish and litter, when you looked up, it was as if heaven itself had been opened, and you looked into the courts of God and angels. Now, the scaffolding is kept around men long after the fresco is commenced to be painted; and wondrous disclosures will be made when God shall take down this scaffolding body, and reveal what you have been doing. By sorrow and by joy; by joys which are but bright colours, and by sorrows which are but shadows of bright colours; by prayer; by the influences of the sanctuary; by your pleasures; by your business; by reverses; by successes and by failures; by what strengthened your confidence, and by what broke it down; by the things that you rejoiced in, and by the things that you mourned over—by all that God is working in you. And you are to be perfected, not according to the things that you plan, but according to the divine pattern. Your portrait and mine are being painted, and God by wondrous strokes and influences is working us up to his own ideal. Over and above what you are doing for yourself; God is working to make you like him. And the wondrous declaration is, that when you stand before God, and see what has been done for you, you shall be "satisfied." Oh, word that has been wandering solitary and without a habitation ever since the world began, and the morning stars sang together for joy! Has there ever been a human creature that could stand on earth while clothed in the flesh, and say, "I am satisfied?" What is the meaning of the word? Sufficiently filled; filled full; filled up in every part. And when God's work is complete, we shall stand before him, and, with the bright ideal and glorified conception of heavenly aspiration upon us, looking up to God, and back on ourselves, we shall say, "I am satisfied:" for we shall be like him. Amen. Why should we not be satisfied?—Henry Ward Beecher, in "Royal Truths," 1862.
Verse 15. "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." He speaks here of the resurrection; he calls it an awaking, for you know death is called a sleep. "Those that are asleep in the Lord shall rise first." He had spoken before of those that had put their happiness in the comforts of this life, suitable to their bodies, to the animal state of their bodies; that is clear by the fourteenth verse, "Deliver me from the men that are thine hand, O Lord, who have their portion in this life, whose belly thou fillest with thy treasure: they are full of children, and leave to them outward things," bodily things. "But as for me," saith he, "I will behold thy face in thy righteousness" (there is the vision of God which is his happiness in his soul): "and I shall be satisfied when I awake" (when I rise again), "with thine image." It is not the image of God only upon himself that he means here. Why? Because that doth not satisfy a holy heart, but it is that image of the invisible God which the human nature of Jesus Christ is, who, in opposition to all these outward pleasures, will be all in all to us; he is a spiritual creature, his human nature is spiritualised, made glorious, and our bodies shall be made spiritual likewise. "The body is made for the Lord, and the Lord for the body," and this when they are both raised up; Christ is raised up already, and because he hath ordained the one to be serviceable to the other, he will also raise up our bodies; and when he doth raise me up, saith David, though other men have their bellies full here, and have animal pleasures they delight in; yet when I shall awake at latter day, and shall see this image of thine, shall see thy Son, I shall be satisfied: "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thine image."—Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 15. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." In this Psalm holy David's afflictions are neither few nor small; his innocence that is wounded by malicious slanderers, his life that is in jeopardy by deadly enemies that compass him about; his present condition that is embittered unto him by the pressing wants of a barren wilderness, while his foes live deliciously in Saul's court. And yet under the weight and combination of so many sore evils, David carries himself as one that is neither hopeless nor forsaken, yea, lays his estate in the balance against theirs, and in this low ebb of his, vies with them for happiness; and at last shutting up the Psalm with a triumphant epiphonema, concludes himself to be by far the better man. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." They, 'tis true, enjoy the face of their king, whose favour is as a cloud of latter rain promising a fruitful harvest of many blessings, "but I," saith he, "shall behold the face of God in righteousness," whose lovingkindness is better than life, clothed with all its royalties. They have their bellies filled with hidden treasure, having more than a common hand of bounty opened unto them; but I have more gladness put into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine
increased. They have their portion in hand, and as being men of this world; but I have mine laid up in the other: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." In these words we have his and every believer's eternal happiness in the other life, set forth in three particulars as a most effectual antidote against present troubles and temptations that arise from the malice of wicked men against them.—William Spurstow.

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

Verse 15. "I shall be satisfied . . . . . with thy likeness." Let a man who is thirsty be brought to an ocean of pure water, and he has enough. If there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, then sure there is enough to satisfy us. The soul is but finite, but God is infinite. Though God be a good that satisfies, yet he does not surfeit. Fresh joys spring continually from his face; and he is as much to be desired after millions of years by glorified souls as at the first moment. There is a fulness in God that satisfies, and yet so much sweetness that the soul still desires. God is a delicious good. That which is the chief good must ravish the soul with pleasure; there must be in it rapturous delight and quintessence of joy. In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima immo rapitur: the love of God drops such infinite suavity into the soul as is unspeakable and full of glory. If there be so much delight in God, when we see him only by faith (1 Peter 1:8), what will the joy of vision be, when we shall see him face to face! If the saints
have found so much delight in God while they were suffering, oh, what joy and
delight will they have when they are being crowned! If flames are beds of
roses, what will it be to lean on the bosom of Jesus! What a bed of roses that
will be! God is a superlative good. He is better than anything you can put in
competition with him; he is better than health, riches, honour. Other things
maintain life, he gives life. Who would put anything in balance with the Deity?
Who would weigh a feather against a mountain of gold? God excels all other
things more infinitely than the sun the light of a taper. God is an eternal good.
He is the Ancient of days, yet never decays, nor waxes old. Daniel 7:9. The joy
he gives is eternal, the crown fadeth not away. 1 Peter 5:4. The glorified soul
shall be ever solacing itself in God, feasting on his love, and sunning itself in
the light of his countenance. We read of the river of pleasure at God's right
hand; but will not this in time be dried up? No. There is a fountain at the
bottom which feeds it. Psalm 36:9. "With the Lord is a fountain of life." Thus
God is the chief good, and the enjoyment of God for ever is the highest felicity
of which the soul is capable.—Thomas Watson.

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

Verse 15. "When I awake." How apt and obvious is the analogy between our
awakening out of natural sleep, and the holy soul's rising up out of the darkness
and torpor of its present state into the enlivening light of God's presence? It is
truly said so to awake at its first quitting these darksome regions, when it lays
aside its cumbersome night-veil. It doth so more perfectly in the joyful morning
of the resurrection-day when mortality is swallowed up in life, and all the yet
hovering shadows of it are vanished and fled away. And how known and usual an application this is of the metamorphical terms of sleeping and awaking in Holy Writ, I need not tell them who have read the Bible. Nor doth this interpretation less fitly accord to the other contents of this verse; for to what state do the sight of God's face, and satisfaction with his likeness, so fully agree, as to that of future blessedness in the other world? But then the contexture of discourse in this and the foregoing verse together, seems plainly to determine us to this sense: for what can be more conspicuous in them, than a purposed comparison, an opposition of two states of felicity mutually to each other? That if the wicked whom he calls men of time (as the words Hebrew are rendered by Pagninus—Hominis de tempore—and do literally signify) and whose portion, he tells us, is in this life: and the righteous man's, his own; which he expected not to be till he should awake, that is, not till after this life.—John Howe.

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

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

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

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

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

Verse 2. "Let my sentence come forth from thy presence."
   I. When it will come.
   II. Who dare meet it now.
   III. How to be among them.

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

Verse 3. "Thou hast visited me in the night."
   I. Glorious visitor.
   II. Favoured individual.
   III. Peculiar season.
   IV. Refreshing remembrance.
   V. Practical result.

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

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

Verse 5. "Hold up."
   I. Who? God.
   II. What? "My goings."
   III. When? Present tense.
IV. Where? "In thy paths."

V. Why? "That my footsteps slip not."

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

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

1. The path of his commands.
2. The path of his ordinances.
3. The path of his dispensations.

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

1. Conviction;
2. of apprehension;
3. of weakness;
4. of confidence.

—William Jay.

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


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

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

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

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

Verse 15. This is the language

1. of a man whose mind is made up; who has decided for himself; who does not suspend his conduct upon the resolution of others.
(2). Of a man rising in life, and with great prospects before him.
(3). It is the language of a Jew.

Verse 15. The beholding of God's face signifies two things.
   I. The enjoyment of his favour.
   II. Intimate communions with him.—William Jay.

   I. The Spirit of this utterance.
   II. The matter of it.
   III. The contrast implied in it.

   Verse 15. To see God and to be like him, the believer's desire.—J. Fawcett.
Psalm 18

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

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

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

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

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "I will love thee, O Lord." With strong, hearty affection will I cling to thee; as a child to its parent, or a spouse to her husband. The word is intensely forcible, the love is of the deepest kind. "I will love heartily, with my inmost bowels." Here is a fixed resolution to abide in the nearest and most intimate union with the Most High. Our triune God deserves the warmest love of all our hearts. Father, Son and Spirit have each a claim upon our love. The solemn purpose never to cease loving naturally springs from present fervour of
affection. It is wrong to make rash resolutions, but this when made in the strength of God is most wise and fitting. "My strength." Our God is the strength of our life, our graces, our works, our hopes, our conflicts, our victories. This verse is not found in 2 Samuel 22, and is a most precious addition, placed above all and after all to form the pinnacle of the temple, the apex of the pyramid. Love is still the crowning grace.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 7. There was no great space between the cry and its answer. The Lord is
not slack concerning his promise, but is swift to rescue his afflicted. David has
in his mind's eye the glorious manifestations of God in Egypt, at Sinai, and on
different occasions to Joshua and the judges; and he considers that his own case
exhibits the same glory of power and goodness, and that, therefore, he may
accommodate the descriptions of former displays of the divine majesty into his
hymn of praise. "Then the earth shook and trembled." Observe how the most
solid and immovable things feel the force of supplication. Prayer has shaken
houses, opened prison doors, and made stout hearts to quail. Prayer rings the
alarm bell, and the Master of the house arises to the rescue, shaking all things
beneath his tread. "The foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken,
because of his wrath." He who fixed the world's pillars can make them rock in
their sockets, and can upheave the corner-stones of creation. The huge roots of
the towering mountains are torn up when the Lord bestirs himself in anger to
smite the enemies of his people. How shall puny man be able to face it out with
God when the very mountains quake with fear? Let not the boaster dream that
his present false confidence will support him in the dread day of wrath.

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

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

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

"He on the wings of cherubim
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
Far into chaos."

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

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

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

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

Verse 14. The lightnings were darted forth as forked arrows upon the hosts of the foe, and speedily "scattered them." Boastful sinners prove to be great cowards when Jehovah enters the lists with them. They despise his words, and are very tongue-valiant, but when it comes to blows they fly apace. The glittering flames, and the fierce bolts of fire "discomfited them." God is never at a loss for weapons. Woe be unto him that contendeth with his Maker! God's arrows never miss their aim; they are feathered with lightning, and barbed with everlasting death. Fly, O sinner, to the rock of refuge before these arrows stick fast in thy soul.

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

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

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

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

Verse 19. "He brought me forth also into a large place." After pining awhile in the prison-house Joseph reached the palace, and from the cave of Adullam David mounted to the throne. Sweet is pleasure after pain. Enlargement is the more delightful after a season of pinching poverty and sorrowful confinement. Besieged souls delight in the broad fields of the promise when God drives off the enemy and sets open the gates of the environed city. The Lord does not leave his work half done, for having routed the foe he leads out the captive into liberty. Large indeed is the possession and place of the believer in Jesus, there need be no limit to his peace, for there is no bound to his privilege. "He delivered me, because he delighted in me." Free grace lies at the foundation. Rest assured, if we go deep enough, sovereign grace is the truth which lies at the bottom of every well of mercy. Deep sea fisheries in the ocean of divine bounty always bring the pearls of electing, discriminating love to light. Why
Jehovah should delight in us is an answerless question, and a mystery which angels cannot solve; but that he does delight in his beloved is certain, and is the fruitful root of favours as numerous as they are precious. Believer, sit down, and inwardly digest the instructive sentence now before us, and learn to view the uncaused love of God as the cause of all the loving-kindness of which we are the partakers.

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

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

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

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

Verse 24. God first gives us holiness, and then rewards us for it. We are his workmanship; vessels made unto honour; and when made, the honour is not withheld from the vessel; though, in fact, it all belongs to the Potter upon whose wheel the vessel was fashioned. The prize is awarded to the flower at the show, but the gardener reared it; the child wins the prize from the schoolmaster, but the real honour of his schooling lies with the master, although instead of receiving he gives the reward.

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

Verse 26. "With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward." The sinner's frowardness is sinful and rebellious, and the only sense in which the term can be applied to the Most Holy God is that of judicial opposition and sternness, in which the Judge of all the earth will act at cross-purposes with the offender, and let him see that all things are not to be made subservient to wicked whims and wilful fancies. Calvin very forcibly says, "This brutish and monstrous stupidity in men compels God to invent new modes of expression, and as it were to clothe himself with a different character." There is a similar sentence in Leviticus 26:21-24, where God says, "and if ye walk contrary unto (or perversely with) me, then I will also walk contrary unto (or perversely, or roughly, or at random with) you." As if he had said that their obstinacy and stubbornness would make him on his part forget his accustomed forbearance and gentleness, and cast himself recklessly or at random against them. We see then what the stubborn at length gain by their obduracy; it is this, that God hardens himself still more to break them in pieces, and if they are of stone, he causes them to feel that he has the hardness of iron." The Jewish tradition was that the manna tasted according to each man's mouth; certainly God shows himself to each individual according to his character.
Verse 27. "For thou wilt save the afflicted people." This is a comforting assurance for the poor in spirit whose spiritual griefs admit of no sufficient solace from any other than a divine hand. They cannot save themselves nor can others do it, but God will save them. "But will bring down high looks." Those who look down on others with scorn shall be looked down upon with contempt ere long. The Lord abhors a proud look. What a reason for repentance and humiliation! How much better to be humble than to provoke God to humble us in his wrath! A considerable number of clauses occur in this passage in the future tense; how forcibly are we thus brought to remember that our present joy or sorrow is not to have so much weight with us as the great and eternal future!

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

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

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

Verse 30. "As for God, his way is perfect." Far past all fault and error are God's dealings with his people; all his actions are resplendent with justice, truth, tenderness, mercy, and holiness. Every way of God is complete in itself, and all his ways put together are matchless in harmony and goodness. Is it not very consolatory to believe that he who has begun to bless us will perfect his work, for all his ways are "perfect." Nor must the divine "word" be without its song of praise. "The word of the Lord is tried," like silver refined in the furnace. The doctrines are glorious, the precepts are pure, the promises are faithful, and the whole revelation is superlatively full of grace and truth. David had tried it, thousands have tried it, we have tried it, and it has never failed. It was meet that when way and word had been extolled, the Lord himself should be magnified; hence it is added, "He is a buckler to all those that trust in him." No armour of proof or shield of brass so well secures the warrior as the covenant God of Israel protects his warring people. He himself is the buckler of trustful ones; what a thought is this! What peace may every trusting soul enjoy!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 45. "The strangers shall fade away." Like sear leaves or blasted trees our foes and Christ's foes shall find no sap and stamina remaining in them. Those who are strangers to Jesus are strangers to all lasting happiness; those must soon fade who refuse to be watered from the river of life. "And be afraid out of their close places." Out of their mountain fastnesses the heathen crept in fear to own allegiance to Israel's king, and even so, from the castles of self-confidence and the dens of carnal security, poor sinners come bending before the Saviour, Christ the Lord. Our sins which have entrenched themselves in our flesh and
blood as in impregnable forts, shall yet be driven forth by the sanctifying 
energy of the Holy Spirit, and we shall serve the Lord in singleness of heart. 
Thus with remembrance of conquests in the past, and with glad 
anticipations of victories yet to come, the sweet singer closes the description, 
and returns to exercise of more direct adoration of his gracious God.

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

Jehovah lives, my rock be blessed! 
Praised be the God who gives me rest!

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

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

Verse 48. From all enemies, and especially from one who was pre-eminent in 
vviolence, the Lord's anointed was preserved, and at the last over the head of 
Saul and all other adversaries he reigned in honour. The like end awaits every 
saint, because Jesus who stooped to be lightly esteemed among men is now 
made to sit far above all principalities and powers.
Verse 49. Paul cites this verse (Romans 15:9): "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." This is clear evidence that David's Lord is here, but David is here too, and is to be viewed as an example of a holy soul making its boast in God even in the presence of ungodly men. Who are the despisers of God that we should stop our mouths for them? We will sing to our God whether they like it or no, and force upon them the knowledge of his goodness. Too much politeness to traitors may be treason to our King.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. The general argument of the Psalm may be thus stated: it is a magnificent eucharistic ode. It begins with a celebration of the glorious perfections of the Divinity, whose assistance the speaker has so often experienced. He describes, or rather, he delineates, his perils, the power of his enemies, his sudden deliverance from them, and the indignation and power of his divine deliverer manifested in their overthrow. He paints these in so lively colours, that while we read we seem to see the lightning, to hear the thunders, to feel the earthquake. He afterwards describes his victories, so that we seem to be eye-witnesses of them, and take part in them. He predicts a wide-extended empire, and concludes with a lofty expression of grateful adoration of Jehovah, the Author of all his deliverances and triumphs. The style is highly oratorical and poetical, sublime, and full of uncommon figures of speech. It is the natural language of a person of the highest mental endowments, under a divine inspiration, deeply affected by remarkable divine benefits, and filled with the most lofty conceptions of the divine character and dispensations.—John Brown, D.D., 1853.
Whole Psalm. Kitto, in "The Pictorial Bible," has the following note upon 2 Samuel 22:—"This is the same as the eighteenth Psalm. . . . The Rabbins reckon up seventy-four differences between the two copies, most of them very minute. They probably arose from the fact that the poem was, as they conjecture, composed by David in his youth, and revised in his later days, when he sent it to the chief musician. The present is, of course, to be the earlier copy."

Whole Psalm. The eighteenth Psalm is called by Michaelis more artificial, and less truly terrible, than the Mosaic odes. In structure it may be so, but surely not in spirit. It appears to many besides us, one of the most magnificent lyrical raptures in the Scriptures. As if the poet had dipped his pen in "the brightness of that light which was before his eye," so he describes the descending God. Perhaps it may be objected that the *nodus* is hardly worthy of the *vindex*—to deliver David from his enemies, could Deity ever be imagined to come down? But the objector knows not the character of the ancient Hebrew mind. God in its view had not to descend from heaven; he was nigh—a cloud like a man's hand might conceal—a cry, a look might bring him down. And why should not David's fancy clothe him, as he came, in a panoply befitting his dignity, in clouds spangled with coals of fire? If he was to descend, why not in state? The proof of the grandeur of this Psalm is in the fact that it has borne the test of almost every translation, and made doggerel erect itself, and become divine. Even Sternhold and Hopkins its fiery whirlwind lifts up, purifies, touches into true power, and then throws down, helpless and panting, upon their ancient common. Perhaps the great charm of the eighteenth, apart from the poetry of the descent, is the exquisite and subtle alternation of the *I* and the *Thou*. We have spoken of parallelism, as the key to the mechanism of Hebrew song. We find this as existing between David and God—the delivered and the deliverer—beautifully pursued throughout the whole of this Psalm. "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised." "He sent from above; he took me; he drew me out of many waters." "Thou wilt light my candle." "Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation." "Thou hast girded me with strength unto battle." "Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies." "Thou hast made me the head of the heathen." It has been ingeniously argued, that the existence of the *I* suggests, inevitably as a polar opposite, the thought of the *Thou*, that the personality of man proves thus the personality of God; but, be this as it may, David's perception of that personality is nowhere so intense as here. He seems not only to see, but to feel and touch, the object of his gratitude and worship.—George Gilfillan, in "The Bards of the Bible," 1852.
Whole Psalm. He that would be wise, let him read the Proverbs; he that would by holy, let him read the Psalms. Every line in this book breathes peculiar sanctity. This Psalm, though placed among the first, was penned among the last, as the preface assures us, and is left as the epitome of the general history of David's life. It is twice recorded in the Scripture (2 Samuel 22, and in this book of Psalms), for the excellency and sweetness thereof; surely that we should take double notice of it. Holy David, being near the shore, here looks on his former dangers and deliverances with a thankful heart, and writes this Psalm to bless the Lord: as if each of you that are grown into years should review your lives and observe the wonderful goodness and providence of God towards you; and then sit down and write a modest memorial of his most remarkable mercies, for the comfort of yourselves and posterity; an excellent practice. What a comfort would it be for you to read how good your God was to you father or grandfather, that are dead and gone! So would your children rejoice in the Lord upon the reading of his goodness to you; and you cannot have a better pattern for this than holy David, who wrote this Psalm when he was threescore and seven years old; when he had outlived most of his troubles, and almost ready for his journey to his Father in heaven, he resolves to leave this good report of him upon earth. And I pray mark how he begins: he sets not up trophies to himself, but triumphs in his God—"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." As the love of God is the beginning of all our mercies, so love to God should be the end and effect of them all. As the stream leads us to the spring, so all the gifts of God must lead us to the giver of them. Lord, thou hast saved me from sickness, "I will love thee;" from death and hell, "I will love thee;" on me thou hast bestowed grace and comfort, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." And after he had heaped on God all the sweet names he could devise (verse 2), as the true saint thinks he can never speak too well of God, or too ill of himself, then he begins his narrative. 1. Of his dangers (verse 4); "Snares of death," "Floods of ungodly men," "Sorrows of hell." Hell and earth are combined against each holy man, and will trouble sufficiently in this world, if they cannot keep him out of a better. 2. Of his retreat, and that was, earnest prayer to God (verse 6), "I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God." When our prayers are cries ardent and importunate, then they speed: "My cry came before him, even into his ears." The mother trifles while the child whimpers, but when he raises his note—strains every nerve and cries every vein—then she throws all aside, and gives him his desire. While our prayers are only whispers, our God can take his rest; but when we fall to crying, "Now will I arise, saith the Lord." 3. Of his rescue (verses 7 to 20), by the powerful and terrible arm of the Lord, who is in a lofty strain brought in to his servant's help, as if he would mingle heaven and earth together, rather than leave his child in the lion's paws. 4. Of the reason of this gracious dealing of God with him (verse 20, etc.). He was a
righteous person, and he had a righteous cause. And thereupon he turns to God, saying, Thou hast dealt with me just as thou art wont to do, "with the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright."—Richard Steele's "Plain Discourse upon Uprightness," 1670.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 2. "My deliverer." He who betook himself to one of these inaccessible retreats, was sometimes obliged by famine to surrender to his enemy, who lay in wait for him beneath; but Jehovah gives him not only security but liberty; not only preserves him, as it were, in an inaccessible retreat, but at the same time enables him to go forth in safety.—Jarchi.
Verse 2. "The horn of my salvation." The allusion here is doubtful. Some have supposed the reference to be to the horns of animals, by which they defend themselves and attack their enemies. "God is to me, does for me, what their horns do for them." Others consider it as referring to the well-established fact, that warriors were accustomed to place horns, or ornaments like horns, on their helmets. The horn stands for the helmet; and "the helmet of salvation" is an expression equivalent to "a saving, a protecting helmet." Others consider the reference as to the corners or handles of the altar in the court of the tabernacle or temple, which are called its horns. Others suppose the reference to be to the highest point of a lofty and precipitous mountain, which we are accustomed to call its peak. No doubt, in the Hebrew language, horn is used for mountain as in Isaiah 5:1. A very fertile mountain is called a horn of oil. The sense is substantially the same, whichever of these views we take; though, from the connection with "shield" or "buckler," I am induced to consider the second of these views as the most probable. It seems the same idea as that expressed, Psalm 140:7, "Thou hast covered," and thou wilt cover "my head in the day of battle."—John Brown.

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

Verse 2. "The Lord is my high tower." If a man do run to a tower, yet if that be a weak and an insufficient tower, without men and munition, and a ruinous shaken tower; or if a man do make choice of a tower, a strong sufficient tower, yet if in his danger he betakes not himself to that tower, but he sit still; or if he sit not still, yet he but only go and walk on easily towards it, he may well be met withal, and a danger may arrest him, surprise him, and cut him off before he get the tower over his head. But the man that will be safe, as he must choose a strong tower, so he must go to, nay, run into that tower. Running will not secure a man unless the tower be strong. . . . David was got unto his tower, and
in that tower there was thundering ordnance, and David put fire to them by prayer, verse 6, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even unto his ears." Here David prays and gives fire to the cannon, and what followed? See verses 7, 8, 13, 14. "Then the earth shook and trembled," etc. "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils," etc. "The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them." There were no guns nor ordnance invented and in use in David's time, and yet David's prayers being in this tower, did him as good service against his enemies as all the ordnance and cannons in the world have done. David had thundering ordnance, and with them discomfited his enemies long before powder and guns were invented. It is a memorable and well known story of that Christian legion that was in Marcus Aurelius's army: the enemy being in great straits, those Christian soldiers did by their prayers not only procure rain, by which his languishing army was refreshed, but also obtained hail mixed with thunderbolts against his enemies, upon which he honoured them with the name Legio fulminatrix, the Thundering Legion. They used David's cannon against the enemy, and discharged that thundering ordnance by their prayers, and that to the confusion of their enemies.—Jeremiah Dyke's "Righteous Man's Tower," 1639.

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

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

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

Verse 4. "Sorrows of death." It is heaven's peculiar to be the land of the living; all this life is at most but the shadow of death, the gate of death, the sorrows of death, the snares of death, the terrors of death, the chambers of death, the sentence of death, the savour of death, the ministration of death, the way of death.—Matthew Griffith, 1634.
Verse 4. "The bands or cords of death encompassed me." It is not very easy to fix the precise meaning of the phrase, "bands" or "cords" of death. It may either be considered as equivalent to "the bands by which the dead are bound," in which case, to be encircled with the bands of death is just a figurative expression for being dead; or it may be considered as equivalent to the bands in which a person is bound in the prospect of a violent death, and by which his violent death is secured, he being prevented from escaping. It has been supposed by some, that the allusion is to the ancient mode of hunting wild animals. A considerable tract of country was surrounded with strong ropes. The circle was gradually contracted till the object of pursuit was so confined as to become an easy prey to the hunter. These cords were the cords of death, securing the death of the animal. The phrase is applicable to our Lord in both senses; but as "the floods" of wickedness, or the wicked, are represented as making him afraid subsequently to his being encircled with the cords of death, I am disposed to understand it in the latter of these two senses.—John Brown.

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

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

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

Verse 6. "I called upon the Lord and cried." Prayer is not eloquence, but
earnestness; not in the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; it is the
cry of faith to the ear of mercy.—Hannah Moore, 1745-1833.

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

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

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

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

*Verse 7.* Let no appearing impossibilities make you question God's accomplishment of any of his gracious words. Though you cannot see how the thing can be done, 'tis enough if God hath said that he will do it. There can be no obstructions to promised salvation which we need to fear. He who is the God of this salvation and the Author of the promise will prepare his own way for the doing of his own work, so that "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low." Luke 3:5. Though the valleys be so deep that we cannot see the bottom, and the mountains so high that we cannot see the tops of them, yet God knows how to raise the one and level the other. Isaiah 63:1. "I that speak in righteousness (or faithfulness) am mighty to save." If anything would keep back the kingdom of Christ, it would be our infidelity; but he will come though he should find no faith on the earth. See Romans 3:3. Cast not away your confidence because he defers his performances. Though providences run cross, though they move backwards and forwards, you have a sure and faithful word to rely upon. Promises, though they be for a time seemingly delayed, cannot be finally frustrated. Dare not to harbour such a thought within yourselves as Psalm 77:8; "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" The being of God may as well fail as the promise of God. That which does not come in your time, will be hastened in his time, which is always the more convenient season. Accuse him not of slowness who hath said, "I come quickly," that is, he comes as soon as all things are ready and ripe for his appearance. 'Tis as true that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise" (2 Peter 3:9), as that he is never guilty of breaking his promise. Wait, therefore, how long soever he tarry; do not give over expecting: the heart of God is not turned though his face be hid; and prayers are not flung back, though they be not instantly answered.—*Timothy Cruso*.

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

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

Verses 7-9. In the night in which the Idumaeans lay before Jerusalem, there arose a prodigious tempest and fierce winds, with most vehement rains, frequent lightnings, and terrible thunderings, and great roarings of the shaken earth; and it was manifest that the state of the universe was disordered at the slaughter of men; so one might guess that these were signs of no small calamity. . . . At the day of Pentecost, when the priests, by night, went into the inner temple, according to their custom, to execute their office, they said they perceived, first of all, a shake and a noise, and after that a sudden voice, "Let us go hence." . . . A few days after the feast of unleavened bread, a strange and almost incredible sight was seen which would, I suppose, be taken for a mere fable, were it not related by such as saw it, and did not the miseries which followed appear answerable to the signs; for, before the sun set, were seen on high, in the air, all over the country, chariots and armed regiments moving swiftly in the clouds, and encompassing the city.—Flavius Josephus, 37-103.

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

Verses 8-19. David calls the full force of poetical imagery to aid, to describe in a becoming manner the marvels of his deliverances. He means to say that they were as manifest as the signs of heaven and earth, as sudden and powerful as
the phenomena in the kingdom of nature surprise terrified mortals. Deliverance being his theme, he might have taken the figure from the peaceable phenomena of the heavens. But since man heeds heaven more in anger than in blessing, and regards God more when he descends on earth in the storm than in the rainbow, David describes the blessed condescension of God by the figure of a tempest. In order to thoroughly appreciate the beauty and truthfulness of this figure, we should endeavour to realise the full power of an Oriental storm, as it is described in Psalm 29. Solitary lightning precedes the discharge—this is meant by the coals in verse 8: the clouds approach the mountain summits—the heavens bow, as verse 9 has it; the storm shakes its pinions; enwrapped in thick clouds as in a tent, God descends to the earth; hail (not unfrequently attending Eastern storms) and lightning issue from the black clouds, through the dissolving layers of which is seen the fiery splendour which hides the Lord of nature. He speaks, and thunder is his voice; he shoots, and flashes of lightning are his arrows. At his rebuke, and at the blast of his breath the earth recedes—the sea foams up, and its beds are seen—the land bursts, and the foundations of the world are discovered. And lo! an arm of deliverance issues forth from the black clouds, and the destructive fire grasps the wretched one who had cried out from the depths, pulls him forth, and delivers him from all his enemies! Yes, the hand of the Lord has done marvellous things in the life of David. But the eye of faith alone could perceive in them all the hand of God. Thousands whose experiences of the delivering hand of God are not less signal than those of David, stop short at the powers of nature, and instead of bending the knee before the All-merciful God, content themselves to express with cold hearts their admiration of the changes of the destiny of man.—Augustus F. Tholuck, D.D., Ph.D.—1856.

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

Verses 9-11:
"He also bowed the heavens,  
And thence he did descend;  
And thickest clouds of darkness did  
Under his feet attend.

And he upon a cherub rode,  
And thereon he did fly;  
Yea, on the swift wings of the wind,  
His flight was from on high.

He darkness made his secret place;  
About him for his tent  
Dark waters were, and thickest clouds  
Of the airy firmament."

Scotch Version, 1649.

Verses 9-12:—

"In his descent, bow'd heaven with earth did meet,  
And gloomy darkness roll'd beneath his feet;  
A golden winged cherub he bestrid,  
And on the swiftly flying tempest rid.

He darkness made his secret cabinet;  
Thick fogs and dropping clouds about him set;  
The beams of his bright presence these expel,  
Whence showers of burning coals and hailstones fell."

George Sandys, 1577-1643.

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

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

Verse 10. "Cherub."—

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

John Milton.

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

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

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

Verse 14. "Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them," etc. O that you who are now strangers to God would but consider these things! O that you would but think what this battle may be, where the combatants are so unequal! Stand still, O sun, in the valley of Ajalon, till the Lord have avenged him of his enemies! Muster yourselves, O ye stars, and fight in your courses against those miserable sinners that have waged war against their Maker; plant your mighty cannons, shoot down huge hailstones, arrows of fire, and hot thunderbolts! Oh, how do the wounded fall! How many are the slain of the Lord, multitudes in the Valley of Decision, for the day of the Lord is terrible. Behold God's enemies falling by thousands, behold the garments rolling in blood, hear the prancing of his terrible ones, the mountains are covered with horses and chariots of fire. God's soldiers run from one place to another with their flaming swords in their hands, armed with the justice of God, jealousy, power, and indignation! Oh, the dreadful slaughter that is made! Millions, millions fall; they are not able to stand; not one of them can lift up his hand; their hearts fail them; paleness and
trembling hath seized upon the stoutest of them all. The bow of the Lord is
strong; from the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of the
Lord turneth not back, the sword of the Almighty returns not empty. How do
the mighty ones fall in this battle! A hot battle indeed, in which none escape!
Who is he that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? He that
is glorious in his apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine fat? I
have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me.
For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and I will
bring down their strength to the earth: the hand of the Lord shall be known, the
power of the mighty Jehovah shall be felt, and his indignation toward his
enemies. For behold he will come with fire and with chariots like a whirlwind,
to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire; for by fire and
by his sword will he plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be
many, and the saints shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that
have transgressed against me. For their worm shall not die, neither shall their
fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. Upon the
wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest. This
shall be the portion of their cup! This it is to fight against God! This it is to defy
the Lord of Hosts!—James Janeway.

Verse 14. "He shot out his lightnings." (Heb.) LXX astrapus ephyune. Falgura
multiplicavit: Vulgate, and so all the versions. He multiplied his thunderbolts;
or, shot them out thick one after another; as the word properly signifies.
(Heb.) And discomfited them, as we render the word; or rather, as I think it
should be translated, and melted them; namely, the heavens.—Samuel
Chandler.

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

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

Verse 15. The Lord interposed with the same notoriety of his presence, as when
the waters of the sea were driven back by a strong east wind, and the deep
turned into dry ground (Exodus 14:21, 22), to give the Israelites a safe passage
out of their thraldom, and to drown the Egyptians.—Henry Hammond.
Verse 16. "He sent from above," etc. He "sent" angels, or assistance otherwise.—Matthew Poole.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 21 "I have not wickedly departed from my God;" that is, with a purpose and resolution of heart to continue in a way of sinning; and that is the property
of sincerity. A man may indeed be overtaken and surprised by a temptation, but it is not with a resolution to forsake God and to cleave unto the sin, or rest in it. He will not sleep in it, spare it, or favour it; that is, to do wickedly against God, to have a double heart and a double eye; to look upon two objects, partly at God and partly at sin; so to keep God, as to keep some sin also, as it is with all false-hearted men in the world. They look not upon God alone, let them pretend to religion never so much, yet they look not unto God alone, but upon something else together with God; as Herod regarded John, but regarded his Herodias more; and the young man in the gospel, comes to Christ, yet he looks after his estate; and Judas followed Christ, yet looks after the bag; this is to depart wickedly from God.—William Strong, 1650.

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

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

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

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

Verse 23. "I was upright." etc. An upright Christian will not allow himself in any known sin; he dares not touch the forbidden fruit. Genesis 39:9. "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Though it be a complexion-sin, he disinherits it. There is no man but doth propend and incline more to one sin than another; as in the body there is one humour predominant, or as in the hive there is one master-bee; so in the heart there is one master-sin; there is one sin which is not only near to a man as the garment, but dear to him as the right eye. This sin is Satan's fort-royal, all his strength lies here; and though we beat down his out-works, gross sin, yet if we let him hold this fort of complexion-sin, it is as much as he desires. The devil can hold a man as fast by this one link, as by a whole chain of vices. The fowler hath the bird fast enough by one wing. Now, an upright Christian will not indulge himself in this complexion-sin: "I was upright before him, and kept myself from mine iniquity." An upright Christian takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through his dearest sin. Herod did many things, but there was one sin so dear to him, that he would sooner behead the prophet, than behead that sin. Herod would have a gap for his incest. An upright heart is not only angry with sin (which may admit of reconciliation), but hates sin; and if he sees this serpent creeping into his bosom, the nearer it is the more he hates it.—Thomas Watson.

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

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

Verse 23. "Mine iniquity." A man's darling sin may change with the change of a man's condition, and some occasion that may present itself. What was Saul's and Jehu's sin before they came into the crown we know not; but surely it was wherein their lust did afterwards run out—the establishing a kingdom upon their posterity. Wantonness may be the darling of a man's youth, and worldliness the darling of his age; and a man's being raised unto honour, and having the opportunities that he had not in times past, the lust may run in another channel, he having now such an opportunity as before he never expected.—William Strong.

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

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

Verse 23. Growth in mortification. . . . Men may deceive themselves when they estimate their progress herein by having overcome such lusts as their natures are not so prone unto. The surest way is to take a judgment of it from the decay of a man's bosom-sin, even as David did estimate his uprightness by his "keeping himself from his iniquity;" so a man of his growth in uprightness. When physicians would judge of a consumption of the whole, they do it not by the falling away of any part whatever, as of the flesh in the face alone, or any the like; such a particular abatement of flesh in some one part may come from some other cause; but they use to judge by the falling away of the brawn of the hands, or arms and thighs, etc., for these are the more solid parts. The like judgments do physicians make upon other diseases, and of the abatement of them from the decrease in such symptoms as are pathognomical, and proper,
and peculiar to them. In like manner also the estimate of the progress of the victories of a conqueror in an enemy's kingdom is not taken from the taking or burning of a few villages or dorps, but by taking the forts and strongest holds, and by what ground he hath won upon the chief strength, and by what forces he hath cut off of the main army. Do the like in the decrease of, and victory over, your lusts.—Thomas Goodwin.

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

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

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

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

"*Man.*" This substantive the Hebrews use to drown in the adjective, but here the Holy Ghost exhibits a word, and a choice one too, signifying *a strong, valiant man;* the same word (Psalm 45:3), "O mighty man!" that's meant of our Lord Christ, who was a most strong and valiant man, that could meet the wrath of God, the malice of the devil, and the sin of man, in the face, and come off with triumph. And so the Dutch translate this clause in 2 Samuel 22.: "*With the*
right valiant person, thou behavest thyself upright." In short, if the words were literally translated, they run thus:—a man of uprightness: that is, every way you behold him, an upright man: like an even die, cast him which way you will he will be found square and right; a stiff and strong man to tread down both lusts within and temptations without; an Athanasius contra mundum, a Luther contra Roman; this is a man of an excellent spirit, and such is our upright man. "Thou wilt shew thyself upright," or, "wilt be upright with him;" for one word in the Hebrew makes all these six, "Thou wilt upright it with him." If men will deal plainly with God, he will deal plainly with them. He that is upright in performing his duty shall find God upright in performing his promises. It is God's way to carry to men as they carry to him. If thou hast a design to please him, he will have a design to please thee; if thou wilt echo to him when he calls, he'll echo to thee when thou callest. On the other side: if a man will wrestle with God, he will wrestle with him; if thou wilt be fast and loose with him, and walk frowardly towards him, thou shalt have as good as thou bringest; if thou wilt provoke him with never-ending sins, he will pursue thee with never-ending torments; if thou wilt sin in tuo eterno, thou must suffer in suo eterno, and every man shall find like for like. . . . An upright heart is single without division. Unto an hypocrite there be "gods many and lords many," and he must have an heart for each; but to the upright there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, and one heart will serve them both. He that fixes his heart upon the creatures, for every creature he must have an heart, and the dividing of his heart destroys him. Hosea 10:2. Worldly profits knock at the door, he must have an heart for them; carnal pleasures present themselves, he must have an heart for them also; sinful preferments appear, they must have an heart too—Necessariorum numerus parvus, opinionum nullus; of necessary objects the number is few, of needless vanities the number is endless. The upright man hath made choice of God and hath enough.—Richard Steele.

Verse 25. "With the merciful," etc. In Jupiter's hall-floor there are set two barrels of gifts, the one of good gifts or blessings, the other of evil gifts or plagues. Thus spake Homer falsely of Jupiter; it may truly be spoken of the true God, Jehovah; that he hath in his hand two cups, the one of comforts, the other of crosses, which he poureth out indifferently for the good and for the bad; "with the kind (or merciful) he will shew himself kind, and with the froward, froward." Now this is not to make God the author of evil, but of justice, which is good; qrorum deus non est author eorum est justus ulter, saith Augustine; "God is not the author of sin, but he punisheth the sinner justly."—Miles Smith (Bishop), 1632.
Verse 26. "With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure," etc. But doth the Lord take colour from every one he meets, or change his temper as the company changes? That's the weakness of sinful man: he cannot do so with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of changing. God is pure and upright with the unclean and hypocritical, as well as with the pure and upright, and his actions show him to be so. God shows himself froward with the froward when he deals with him as he hath said he will deal with the froward—deny them and reject them. God shows himself pure with the pure, when he deals with them as he hath said he will—hear them and accept them. Though there be nothing in purity and sincerity which deserveth mercy, yet we cannot expect mercy without them. Our comforts are not grounded upon our graces, but our comforts are the fruits or consequences of our graces.—Joseph Caryl.

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

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

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

Verse 27. "The afflicted people." The word rendered "afflicted," properly signifies "poor," or "needy." The persons spoken of are obviously afflicted ones, for they need to be saved or delivered; but it is not their affliction, so much as their poverty, that is indicated by the epithet here given them; and, from the poor being contrasted, not with the wealthy, but with the proud—for that is the meaning of the figurative expression, "the man of high looks"—it seems plain that, though the great body of the class referred to have always been found among the comparatively "poor in this world," the reference is to those poor ones whom our Lord represents as "poor in spirit."—John Brown.

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

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

Verse 28 (first clause). "Thou also shalt"—when none else can. And notice, too, how here, and often elsewhere, the psalmist begins with speaking of God, and ends with speaking to him. So the bride in the Canticles, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine."—Dionysius the Carthusian (1471), quoted by J. M. Neale.
Verse 29. "By thee have I run through a troop," etc. David ascribes his victories to God, declaring that, under his conduct, he had broken through the wedges or phalanxes of his enemies, and had taken by storm their fortified cities. Thus we see that, although he was a valiant warrior, and skilled in arms, he arrogates nothing to himself.—John Calvin.

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

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

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

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

Verse 33. "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places:" that is, he doth give swiftness and speed to his church; as Augustine interpreteth it, transcendendo spinosa, et umbrosa implacamenta hujus saeculi, passing lightly through the thorny and shady incumbrances of this world. "He will make me walk upon my high places." David saith, "He setteth me upon high places." For, consider David, as he then was, when he composed this Psalm, it was at the time when God had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. For then God set his feet on high places, setting his kingdom, and establishing him in the place of Saul.—Edward Marbury.

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

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

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

Verse 34. "Steel." The word so rendered in the authorised version, properly means "copper" (Heb.) It is doubtful if the Hebrews were acquainted with the process of hardening iron into steel, for though the "northern iron" of Jeremiah 15:12, has been supposed by some to be steel, this is by no means certain; it may have only been a superior sort of iron.—William Lindsay Alexander, in "Kitto's Cyclopaedia."

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

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

Alexander Pope, 1688-1744 Translation of Homer.
Verses 37, 38:—

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

William Cowper, 1731-1800.

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

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

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

Verse 41. "They shall cry, but there shall be none to help them," etc. Sad examples enough there are of the truth of this prophecy. Of Esau it is written that he "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Hebrews 12:17. Of Antiochus, though he vowed in his last illness, "that also he would become a Jew himself, and go through all the world that was inhabited, and declare the power of God, yet," continues the historian, "for all this his pains would not cease, for the just judgment of God was come upon him." 2 Maccabees 9:17, 18. But most appropriately to this passage, it is written of Saul, "When he enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." 1 Samuel 28:6. And therefore, the prophet warns us: "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains (Jeremiah 13:16): as Saul's feet, indeed stumbled on the dark mountains of Gilboa. "Even unto the
Psalm 18

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

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

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

Verse 45. The first clause is comparatively easy. "The strangers shall fade away"—"shall gradually wither and disappear;" but the second clause is very difficult, "They shall be afraid out of their close places." One Jewish scholar interprets it, "They shall fear for the prisons in which I will throw them and keep them confined." (Jarchi). Another, "They shall tremble in their castles to which they have betaken themselves for fear of me." Another (Abenezra), "They shall surrender themselves from their fortresses." The general meaning is plain enough. The class referred to are represented as reduced to a state of complete helpless subjugation. As to the event referred to, if we keep to the rendering of our translators the meaning may be, "The Pagans, retired now generally to villages and remote places, shall gradually dwindle away, and fearfully anticipate the complete extinction of their religion." This exactly accords with history. If with some interpreters we read, "The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid because of their prisons," then the meaning may be, "that they who only feigned submission, when persecution for the word should
Psalm 18

Verse 43. "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted." This, too, would be found consonant with fact. The first of these interpretations seems the more probable.—John Brown.

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

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

Verse 47. "It is God." Sir, this is none other than the hand of God; and to him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with him. The General served you with all faithfulness and honour; and the best commendation I can give him is that I dare say he attributes all to God, and would rather perish than assume to himself.—Written to the Speaker of the House of Commons, after the battle of Naseby, June 14, 1645, by OLIVER CROMWELL.
Verse 49. I admire King David a great deal more when I see him in the quire than when I see him in the camp; when I see him singing as the sweet singer of Israel, than when I see him fighting as the worthy warrior of Israel. For fighting with others he did overcome all others; but singing, and delighting himself, he did overcome himself.—*Thomas Playfere.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


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

Verse 17. The saint's paean of victory over Satan, and all other foes.
Verse 17 (last clause). Singular but sound reason for expecting divine help.

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

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

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

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


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

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


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

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

Verse 28. A comfortable hope for an uncomfortable state.


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

   I. To the gods. World, pleasure, etc. Which among these deserve the name?
   II. To the rocks, self-confidence, superstition, etc. On which can we trust?

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WORKS UPON THE EIGHTEENTH PSALM


Psalm 19

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

SUBJECT. It would be idle to enquire into the particular period when this delightful poem was composed, for their is nothing in its title or subject to assist us in the enquiry. The heading, "To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David," informs us that David wrote it, and that it was committed to the Master of the service of song in the sanctuary for the use of the assembled worshippers. In his earliest days the psalmist, while keeping his father's flock, had devoted himself to the study of God's two great books—nature and Scripture; and he had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of these two only volumes in his library that he was able with a devout criticism to compare and contrast them, magnifying the excellency of the Author as seen in both. How foolish and wicked are those who instead of accepting the two sacred tomes, and delighting to behold the same divine hand in each, spend all their wits in endeavouring to find discrepancies and contradictions. We may rest assured that the true "Vestiges of Creation" will never contradict Genesis, nor will a correct "Cosmos" be found at variance with the narrative of Moses. He is wisest who reads both the world-book, and the Word-book as two volumes of the same work, and feels concerning them, "My Father wrote them both."

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

EXPOSITION

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

The heavens are plural for their variety, comprising the watery heavens with their clouds of countless forms, the aerial heavens with their calms and tempests, the solar heavens with all the glories of the day, and the starry heavens with all the marvels of the night; what the Heaven of heavens must be hath not entered into the heart of man, but there in chief all things are telling the glory of God. Any part of creation has more instruction in it than human mind will ever exhaust, but the celestial realm is peculiarly rich in spiritual
lore. The heavens declare, or are declaring, for the continuance of their testimony is intended by the participles employed; every moment God's existence, power, wisdom and goodness, are being sounded abroad by the heavenly heralds which shine upon us from above. He who would guess at divine sublimity should gaze upward into the starry vault; he who would imagine infinity must peer into the boundless expanse; he who desires to see divine wisdom should consider the balancing of the orbs; he who would know divine fidelity must mark the regularity of the planetary motions; and he who would attain some conceptions of divine power, greatness, and majesty, must estimate the forces of attraction, the magnitude of the fixed stars, and the brightness of the whole celestial train. It is not merely glory that the heavens declare, but the "glory of God," for they deliver to us such unanswerable arguments for a conscious, intelligent, planning, controlling, and presiding Creator, that no unpredisposed person can remain unconvinced by them. The testimony given by the heavens is no mere hint, but a plain, unmistakable declaration; and it is a declaration of the most constant and abiding kind. Yet for all this, to what avail is the loudest declaration to a deaf man, or the clearest showing to one spiritually blind? God the Holy Ghost must illuminate us, or all the suns in the milky way never will.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 4. "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Although the heavenly bodies move in solemn silence, yet in reason's ear they utter precious teachings. They give forth no literal words, but yet their instruction is clear enough to be so described. Horne says that the phrase employed indicates a language of signs, and thus we are told that the heavens speak by their significant actions and operations. Nature's words are like those of the deaf and dumb, but grace tells us plainly of the Father. By their line is probably meant the measure of their domain which, together with their testimony, has gone out to the utmost end of the habitable earth. No man living beneath the copes of heaven dwells beyond the bounds of the diocese of God's Court-preachers; it is easy to escape from the light of ministers, who are as stars in the right hand of the Son of Man; but even then men, with a conscience yet unseared, will find a Nathan to accuse them, a Jonah to warn them, and an Elijah to threaten them in the silent stars of night. To gracious souls the voices of the heavens are more influential far, they feel the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and are drawn towards their Father God by the bright bands of Orion. "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun." In the heavens the sun encamps, and marches like a mighty monarch on his glorious way. He has no fixed abode, but as a traveler pitches and removes his tent, a tent which will soon be taken down and rolled together as a scroll. As the royal pavilion stood in the centre of the host, so the sun in his place appears like a king in the midst of attendant stars.

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

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

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

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

In the three following verses (7, 8, 9) we have a brief but instructive hexapla containing six descriptive titles of the word, six characteristic qualities mentioned and six divine effects declared. Names, nature, and effect are well set forth.
Verse 7. "The law of the Lord is perfect;" by which he means not merely the law of Moses but the doctrine of God, the whole run and rule of sacred Writ. The doctrine revealed by God he declares to be perfect, and yet David had but a very small part of the Scriptures, and if a fragment, and that the darkest and most historical portion, be perfect, what must the entire volume be? How more than perfect is the book which contains the clearest possible display of divine love, and gives us an open vision of redeeming grace. The gospel is a complete scheme or law of gracious salvation, presenting to the needy sinner everything that his terrible necessities can possibly demand. There are no redundancies and no omissions in the Word of God, and in the plan of grace; why then do men try to paint this lily and gild this refined gold? The gospel is perfect in all its parts, and perfect as a whole: it is a crime to add to it, treason to alter it, and felony to take from it.

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

"The testimony of the Lord is sure." God bears his testimony against sin, and on behalf of righteousness; he testifies of our fall and of our restoration; this testimony is plain, decided, and infallible, and is to be accepted as sure. God's witness in his Word is so sure that we may draw solid comfort from it both for time and eternity, and so sure that no attacks made upon it however fierce or subtle can ever weaken its force. What a blessing that in a world of uncertainties we have something sure to rest upon! We hasten from the quicksands of human speculations to the terra firma of Divine Revelation.

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

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

"Retire and read thy Bible to be gay."

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

Verse 9. "The fear of the Lord is clean." The doctrine of truth is here described by its spiritual effect, viz., inward piety, or the fear of the Lord; this is clean in itself, and cleanses out the love of sin, sanctifying the heart in which it reigns. Mr. Godly-fear is never satisfied till every street, lane, and alley, yea, and every house and every corner of the town of Mansoul is clean rid of the Diablolonians who lurk therein. "Enduring for ever." Filth brings decay, but cleanness is the great foe of corruption. The grace of God in the heart being a pure principle, is also an abiding and incorruptible principle, which may be crushed for a time, but cannot be utterly destroyed. Both in the Word and in the heart, when the Lord writes, he says with Pilate, "What I have written, I have written;" he will make no erasures himself, much less suffer others to do so. The revealed will of God is never changed; even Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfil, and even the ceremonial law was only changed as to its shadow, the substance intended by it
is eternal. When the governments of nations are shaken with revolution, and ancient constitutions are being repealed, it is comforting to know that the throne of God is unshaken, and his law unaltered.

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

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

Verse 11. "Moreover by them is thy servant warned." We are warned by the Word both of our duty, our danger, and our remedy. On the sea of life there would be many more wrecks, if it were not for the divine storm-signals, which give to the watchful a timely warning. The Bible should be our Mentor, our Monitor, our Memento Mori, our Remembrancer, and the Keeper of our Conscience. Alas, that so few men will take the warning so graciously given; none but servants of God will do so, for they alone regard their Master's will. Servants of God not only find his service delightful in itself, but they receive good recompense; "In keeping of them there is great reward." There is a wage, and a great one; though we earn no wages of debt, we win great wages of grace. Saints may be losers for a time, but they shall be glorious gainers in the long
run, and even now a quiet conscience is in itself no slender reward for obedience. He who wears the herb called heart's-ease in his bosom is truly blessed. However, the main reward is yet to come, and the word here used hints as much, for it signifies the heel, as if the reward would come to us at the end of life when the work was done;—not while the labour was in hand, but when it was gone and we could see the heel of it. Oh the glory yet to be revealed! It is enough to make a man faint for joy at the prospect of it. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Then shall we know the value of the Scriptures when we swim in that sea of unutterable delight to which their streams will bear us, if we commit ourselves to them.

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

Verse 13. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." This earnest and humble prayer teaches us that saints may fall into the worst of sins unless restrained by grace, and that therefore they must watch and pray lest they enter into temptation. There is a natural proneness to sin in the best of men, and they must be held back as a horse is held back by the bit or they will run into it. Presumptuous sins are peculiarly dangerous. All sins are great sins, but yet some sins are greater than others. Every sin has in it the very venom of rebellion, and is full of the essential marrow of traitorous rejection of God; but there be some sins which have in them a greater development of the essential mischief of rebellion, and which wear upon their faces more of the brazen pride which defies the Most High. It is wrong to suppose that because all sins will condemn us, that therefore one sin is not greater than another. The fact is, that while all transgression is a greatly grievous and sinful thing, yet there are some transgressions which have a deeper shade of blackness, and a more double scarlet-dyed hue of criminality than others. The presumptuous sins of our text are the chief and worst of all sins; they rank head and foremost in the list of iniquities. It is remarkable that though an atonement was provided under the Jewish law for every kind of sin, there was this one exception: "But the soul that sinneth presumptuously shall have no atonement; it shall be cut off from the midst of the people." And now under the Christian dispensation, although in the sacrifice of our blessed Lord there is a great and precious atonement for presumptuous sins, whereby sinners who have erred in this manner are made clean, yet without doubt, presumptuous sinners, dying without pardon, must expect to receive a double portion of the wrath of God, and a more terrible portion of eternal punishment in the pit that is digged for the wicked. For this reason is David so anxious that he may never come under the reigning power of these giant evils. "Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." He shudders at the thought of the unpardonable sin. Secret sin is a stepping-stone to presumptuous sin, and that is the vestibule of "the sin which is unto death." He who is not wilful in his sin, will be in a fair way to be innocent so far as poor sinful man can be; but he who tempts the devil to tempt him is in a path which will lead him from bad to worse, and from the worse to the worst.

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

### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 1. "The heavens declare the glory of God," etc.—The eminent saints of
ancient times were watchful observers of the objects and operations of nature.
In every event they saw the agency of God; and, therefore, they took delight in
its examination. For they could not but receive pleasure from witnessing the
manifestations of his wisdom and beneficence, whom they adored and loved.
They had not learned, as we have in modern times, to interpose unbending laws
between the Creator and his works; and then, by giving inherent power to these
laws, virtually to remove God away from his creation into an ethereal
extramundane sphere of repose and happiness. I do not say that this is the
universal feeling of the present day. But it prevails extensively in the church,
and still more in the world. The ablest philosophers of modern times do,
indeed, maintain that a natural law is nothing more than the uniform mode in
which God acts; and that, after all, it is not the efficiency of the law, but God's
own energy, that keeps all nature in motion; that he operates immediately and
directly, not remotely and indirectly, in bringing about every event, and that
every natural change is as really the work of God as if the eye of sense could
see his hand turning round the wheels of nature. But, although the ablest
philosophy of modern times has reached this conclusion, the great mass of the
community, and even of Christians, are still groping in the darkness of that
mechanical system which ascribes the operation of this natural world to nature's
laws instead of nature's God. By a sort of figure, indeed, it is proper, as the
advocates of this system admit, to speak of God as the author of its natural
events, because he originally ordained the laws of nature. But they have no idea
that he exerts any direct and immediate agency in bringing them about; and,
therefore, when they look upon these events they feel no impression of the
presence and active agency of Jehovah.

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

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

Verse 1. I have often been charmed and awed at the sight of the nocturnal
heavens, even before I knew how to consider them in their proper
circumstances of majesty and beauty. Something like magic has struck my
mind, on transient and unthinking survey of the aethreal vault, tinged
throughout with the purest azure, and decorated with innumerable starry lamps.
I have felt, I know not what, powerful and aggrandising impulse, which seemed
to snatch me from the low entanglements of vanity, and prompted an ardent
sigh for sublimer objects. Methought I heard, even from the silent spheres, a
commanding call to spurn the abject earth, and pant after unseen delights.
Henceforth I hope to imbibe more copiously this moral emanation of the skies, when, in some such manner as the proceeding, they are rationally seen, and the sight is duly improved. The stars, I trust, will teach as well as shine, and help to dispel both nature's gloom and my intellectual darkness. To some people they discharge no better a service than that of holding a flambeau to their feet, and softening the horrors of their night. To me and my friends may they act as ministers of a superior order, as counsellors of wisdom, and guides to happiness! Nor will they fail to execute this nobler office, if they gently light our way into the knowledge of their adored Maker—if they point out with their silver rays our path to his beatific presence.—James Hervey, A.M., 1713-1758.

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

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

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

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

*Verse 1.* During the French revolution Jean Bon St. Andrè, the Vendean revolutionist, said to a peasant, "I will have all your steeples pulled down, that you may no longer have any object by which you may be reminded of your old
superstitions." "But," replied the peasant, "you cannot help leaving us the stars."—John Bate's "Cyclopaedia of Moral and Religious Truths," 1865.

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

How beautiful this dome of sky,  
And the vast hills in fluctuation fixed  
At thy command, how awful! Shall the soul,  
Human and rational, report of Thee  
Even less than these? Be mute who will, who can,  
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice.  
My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd,  
Cannot forget thee here, where thou hast built  
For thine own glory, in the wilderness!  
*William Wordsworth, 1770-1850.*

Verse 1. "The firmament sheweth his handiwork"—

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

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

Verses 1, 2. In order more fully to illustrate the expressive richness of the Hebrew, I would direct the attention of my reader to the beautiful phraseology of the XIX. Psalm. The literal reading of the first and second verses may be thus given:—
"The heavens are telling the glory of God,
The firmament displaying the work of his hands;
Day unto day welleth forth speech,
Night unto night breatheth out knowledge."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*John Cragge, 1557.*

*Verse 4. "Their line is gone out through all the earth,"* etc. The molten sea did stand upon twelve oxen, that is, as Paul doth interpret it, upon twelve apostles (1 Corinthians 9:10); which in that they looked four ways, east, west, north, and south, they did teach all nations. And in that they looked three and three together, they did represent the blessed Trinity. Not only teaching all nations, but also in that sea of water, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, though the two kine which carried the ark wherein were the tables of the law, went straight and kept one path, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left; yet these twelve oxen which carried the molten sea, signifying the doctrine of the gospel, went not straight, neither kept one path, but turned into the way of the Gentiles; yea, they looked all manner of ways, east, west, north, and south. And these two kine stood still and lowed no more when they came to the field of Joshua, dwelling in Bethshemesh, that is, the house of the sun. To note, that all the kine, and calves, and sacrifices, and ceremonies of the old law were to cease and stand still when they came to Jesus, who is the true Joshua, dwelling in heaven, which is the true Bethshemesh. But these twelve oxen were so far from leaving off, either to go, or to low, when they came to Christ, that even then they went much faster and lowed much louder; so that now "their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words to the end of the world;" and "in them hath God set" Bethshemesh, that is, a house or "tabernacle for the sun." Therefore, as the material sun, through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, goeth forth from the uttermost parts of the heaven, and runneth about to the end of it again: in like sort, the spiritual *Sun of Righteousness,* by the twelve apostles, as by twelve signs, hath been borne round about the world, that he might be not only "the glory of his people Israel," but also "a light to lighten the Gentiles;" and that all, "all the ends of the earth might see the salvation of our God."—*Thomas Playfere.*
Verses 4-6. It appears to me very likely that the Holy Ghost in these expressions which he most immediately uses about the rising of the sun, has an eye to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness from the grave, and that the expressions that the Holy Ghost here uses are conformed to such a view. The times of the Old Testament are times of night in comparison of the gospel day, and are so represented in Scripture, and therefore the approach of the day of the New Testament dispensation in the birth of Christ, is called the day-spring from on high visiting the earth (Luke 1:78), "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us;" and the commencing of the gospel dispensation as it was introduced by Christ, is called the Sun of Righteousness rising. Malachi 4:2. But this gospel dispensation commences with the resurrection of Christ. Therein the Sun of Righteousness rises from under the earth, as the sun appears to do in the morning, and comes forth as a bridegroom. He rose as the joyful, glorious bridegroom of his church; for Christ, especially as risen again, is the proper bridegroom, or husband, of his church, as the apostle teaches (Romans 7:4), "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." He that was covered with contempt, and overwhelmed in a deluge of sorrow, has purchased and won his spouse, for he loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself; now he comes forth as a bridegroom to bring home his purchased spouse to him in spiritual marriage, as he soon after did in the conversion of such multitudes, making his people willing in the day of his power, and hath also done many times since, and will do in a yet more glorious degree. And as the sun when it rises comes forth like a bridegroom gloriously adorned, so Christ in his resurrection entered on his state of glory. After his state of sufferings, he rose to shine forth in ineffable glory as the King of heaven and earth, that he might be a glorious bridegroom, in whom his church might be unspeakably happy. Here the psalmist says that God has placed a tabernacle for the sun in the heavens: so God the Father had prepared an abode in heaven for Jesus Christ; he had set a throne for him there, to which he ascended after he rose. The sun after it is risen ascends up to the midst of heaven, and then at that end of its race descends again to the earth; so Christ when he rose from the grave ascended up to the height of heaven, and far above all heavens, but at the end of the gospel day will descend again to the earth. It is here said that the risen sun "rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." So Christ, when he rose, rose as a man of war, as the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle; he rose to conquer his enemies, and to show forth his glorious power in subduing all things to himself, during that race which he had to run, which is from his resurrection to the end of the world, when he will return to the earth again. . . . That the Holy Ghost
here has a mystical meaning, and has respect to the light of the Sun of Righteousness, and not merely the light of the natural sun, is confirmed by the verses that follow, in which the psalmist himself seems to apply them to the word of God, which is the light of that Sun, even of Jesus Christ, who himself revealed the word of God: see the very next words, "The law of the Lord is perfect," etc.—Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758.

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

Verse 5. "Which is as a bridegroom," etc. The Sun of Righteousness appeared in three signs especially; Leo, Virgo, Libra. 1. In Leo, roaring as a lion, in the law; so that the people could not endure his voice. 2. In Virgo, born of a pure virgin in the gospel. 3. In Libra, weighing our works in his balance at the day of judgment. Or as Bernard distinguisheth his threefold coming aptly—venit ad homines, venit in homines, venit contra homines: in the time past he came unto men as upon this day (The Nineteenth Psalm is one "appointed to be read" on Christmas Day); in the time present, he comes by his spirit into men every day; in the time future, he shall come against men at the last day. The coming here mentioned is his coming in the flesh—for so the fathers usually gloss the text—he came forth of the virgin's womb, "as a bridegroom out of his chamber." As a bridegroom, for the King of heaven at this holy time made a great wedding for his Son. Matthew 22:1. Christ is the bridegroom, man's nature the bride, the conjunction and blessed union of both in one person is his marriage. The best way to reconcile two disagreeing families is to make some marriage between them: even so, the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us in the world that he might hereby make our peace, reconciling God to man and man to God. By this happy match the Son of God is become the Son of Man, even flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones; and the sons of men are made the sons of God, "of his flesh and of his bones," as Paul saith, Ephesians 5:30. So that now the church being Christ's own spouse, saith, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." Canticles 6:3. My sin is his sin, and his righteousness is my righteousness. He who knew no sin, for my sake was made sin; and I,
contrariwise, having no good thing, am made the righteousness of God in him: 
I which am brown by persecution, and black by nature (Canticles 1:5), so foul 
as the sow that walloweth in the mire, through his favour am comely, without 
spot or wrinkle, so white as the snow, like a lily among thorns, even the fairest 
among women. Canticles 2:2. This happy marriage is not a mar age, but it 
make's a merry age, being "the consolation of Israel," and comfort of 
Jerusalem's heart. Indeed, Christ our husband doth absent himself from us in 
his body for a time; but when he did ascend into heaven he took with him our 
pawn, namely his flesh; and he gave us his pawn, namely, his Spirit, assuring 
us that we shall one day, when the world is ended, enter with him into the 
wedding chamber, and there feast with him, and enjoy his blessed company for 
evermore.—John Boys.

Verse 6. "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof." This is literally the case. 
The earth receives its heat from the sun, and by conduction, a part of it enters 
the crust of our globe. By convection, another portion is carried to the 
atmosphere, which it warms. Another portion is radiated into space, according 
to laws yet imperfectly understood, but which are evidently connected with the 
colour, chemical composition, and mechanical structure of parts of the earth's 
surface. At the same time the ordinary state of the air, consisting of gases and 
vapour, modifies the heat-rays and prevents scorching. Thus, the solar heat is 
equalised by the air. Nothing on earth or in air is hid from the heat of the sun. . . 
. Even the colour of some bodies is changed by heat. . . Heat also is in bodies in 
a state which is not sensible, and is therefore called latent heat, or heat of 
fluidity, because it is regarded as the cause of fluidity in ponderable substances. 
It can fuse every substance it does not decompose below the melting point, as 
in the case of wood. Every gas may be regarded as consisting of heat, and some 
basis of ponderable matter, whose cohesion it overcomes, imparting a tendency 
to great expansion, when no external obstacle prevents, and this expansive 
tendency is their elasticity or tension. Certain gases have been liquified under 
great pressure, and extreme cold. Heat, also, at certain temperatures, causes the 
estensitivity of vapours to overcome the atmospheric pressure which can no longer 
restrain them. An example of this is the boiling point of water; and, indeed, in 
every case the true instance is the boiling point. Philosophers are agreed that 
the affinity of heat for any ponderable substance is superior to all other forces 
acting upon it. No ponderable matters can combine without disengagement of 
heat. . . And the same occurs from every mechanical pressure and 
condensation of a body. In all these cases, and many more, there are like 
evidences of the presence and influence of heat; but the facts now advanced are 
sufficient to show us the force of the expression, that in terrestrial things
nothing is hid from, or can by any possibility escape the agency of heat.—

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

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

Verse 7. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." To man fallen, the law only convinceth of sin, and bindeth over to death, it is nothing but a killing letter; but the gospel, accompanied by the power of the Spirit, bringeth life. Again, it is said, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;" therefore it seems the law may also be a word of salvation to the creature. I answer; by the law there, is not meant only that part of the word which we call the covenant of works, but there it is put for the whole word, for the whole doctrine of the covenant of life and salvation; as Psalm 1:2: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." And if you take it in that stricter sense, then it converteth the soul but by accident, as it is
joined with the gospel, which is the misery of life and righteousness, but in itself it is the law of sin and death. Look, as a thing taken simply, would be poison and deadly in itself, yet mixed with other wholesome medicines, it is of great use, is an excellent physical ingredient; so the law is of great use as joined with the gospel, to awaken and startle the sinner, to show him his duty, to convince him of sin and judgment; but it is the gospel properly that pulls in the heart.—Thomas Manton.

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

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

Verse 7. "Converting the soul." The heart of man is the most free and hard of anything to work upon, and to make an impression and stamp upon this hard heart, this heart that is so stony, adamantine, "harder than the nether millstones," as the Scripture teacheth. To compel this free-will, this Domina sui actus, the queen in the soul, the empress, it cannot be without a divine power, without a hand that is omnipotent; but the ministers do this by the Word—they mollify, and wound, and break this heart, they incline, and bow, and draw this free-will whither the spirit listeth. And Clemens Alexandrinus is not afraid to say, that if the fables of Orpheus and Amphion were true—that they drew birds, beasts, and stones, with their ravishing melody—yet the harmony of the Word
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is greater, which translates men from Hellicon to Zion, which softens the hard heart of man obdurate against the truth, that "raises up children to Abraham of stones," that is (as he interprets), of unbelievers, which he calls stocks and stones, that put their trust in stones and stocks; which metamorphoses men that are beastlike, wild birds for their lightness and vanity, serpents for their craft and subtlety, lions for their wrath and cruelty, swine for voluptuousness and luxury, etc.; and charms them so that of wild beasts they become tame men; that makes living stones (as he did others) come of their own accord to the building of the walls of Jerusalem (as he of Thebes), to the building of a living temple to the everlasting God. This must needs be a truly persuasive charm, as he speaks.—*John Stoughton's "Choice Sermons,"* 1640.

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

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

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

*Verse 7-11.* All of us are by nature the children of wrath; our souls are like the porches of Bethesda (John 5), in which are lodged a great many "sick folk, blind, halt, withered;" and the Scriptures are like the pool of Bethesda, into which whoever entereth, after God's Holy Spirit hath a little stirred the water, is "made whole of whatsoever disease he hath." He that hath anger's frenzy, being as furious as a lion, by stepping into this pool shall in good time become as gentle as a lamb; he that hath the blindness of intemperance, by washing in this pool shall easily see his folly; he that hath envy's rust, avarice's leprosy, luxury's palsy, shall have means and medicines here for the curing of his maladies. *The word of God* is like the drug *catholicon,* that is instead of all
purges; and like the herb panaces, that is good for all diseases. Is any man heavy? the statutes of the Lord rejoice the heart: is any man in want? the judgments of the Lord are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, and by keeping of them there is great reward: is any man ignorant? the testimonies of the Lord give wisdom to the simple, that is, to little ones, both in standing and understanding. In standing, as unto little Daniel, little John the evangelist, little Timothy: to little ones in understanding; for the great philosophers who were the wizards of the world, because they were not acquainted with God's law became fools while they professed themselves wise. Romans 1:22. But our prophet saith, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, because thy testimonies are my meditation," and my study. Psalm 119:99. To conclude, whatsoever we are by corruption of nature, God's law converteth us, and maketh us to speak with new tongues, and to sing new songs unto the Lord, and to become new men and new creatures in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17.—J. Boys.

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

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

Verse 10. "Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." Love the word written. Psalm 119:97. "Oh, how love I thy law!" "Lord," said Augustine, "let the holy Scriptures be my chaste delight." Chrysostom compares the Scripture to a garden, every truth is a fragrant flower, which we should wear, not on our bosom, but in our heart. David counted the word "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." There is that in Scripture which may breed delight. It shows us the way to riches: Deuteronomy 28:5, Proverbs 3:10; to long life: Psalm 34:12; to a kingdom: Hebrews 12:28. Well, then, may we count those the sweetest hours which are spent in reading the holy Scriptures; well may we say with the prophet (Jeremiah 15:16), "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart."—Thomas Watson.

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

Verse 11. "Moreover by them is thy servant warned." A certain Jew had formed a design to poison Luther, but was disappointed by a faithful friend, who sent Luther a portrait of the man, with a warning against him. By this, Luther knew the murderer and escaped his hands. Thus the word of God, O Christian, shows thee the face of those lusts which Satan employs to destroy thy comforts and poison thy soul.—G. S. Bowes, B.A., in "Illustrative Gatherings for Preachers and Teachers."
Verse 11. "In keeping of them there is great reward." This "keeping of them" implies great carefulness to know, to remember, and to observe; and the "reward" (literally "the end"), i.e., the recompense, is far beyond anticipation.—W. Wilson.

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

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

Verse 11. "Reward." Though we should not serve God for a reward, yet we shall have a reward for our service. The time is coming when ungodliness shall be as much prosecuted by justice, as in times past godliness had been persecuted by injustice. Though our reward be not for our good works, yet we shall have our good works rewarded, and have a good reward for our works. Though the best of men (they being at the best but unprofitable servants) deserve nothing at the hands of God, yet they may deserve much at the hands of men; and if they have not the recompense they deserve, yet it is a kind of recompense to have deserved. As he said, and nobly, "I had rather it should be said, Why doth not Cato's image stand here? than it should be said, Why doth it stand here?"—Ralph Venning. 1620-1673.

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

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

Admit that thou keepest thyself so free, and renewest thy repentance so daily that thou knowest nothing by thyself, yet mark what the apostle adds further; "Notwithstanding, I do not judge myself; I am not hereby justified, but he that judges me is the Lord." This is the condition of all men; he that is infinite knows them; therefore they should not dare to judge themselves, but with the prophet David, in Psalm 19, entreat the Lord that he would cleanse them from their secret sins.—Richard Stock.

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

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

Verse 12. "Who can understand his errors?" By "errors" he means his unwitting and inconsiderate mistakes. There are sins, some of which are committed when the sun shines—i.e., with light and knowledge; and then, as it is with colours when the sun shines, you may see them; so these, a man can see, and know, and confess them particularly to be transgressions. There are other sins which are committed either in the times of ignorance, or else (if there be knowledge), yet with unobservance. Either of these may be so heaped up in the particular number of them, that as a man did when he did commit them, take no notice of them; so now, after the commission, if he should take the brightest candle to search all the records of his soul, yet many of them would escape his notice. And, indeed, this is a great part of our misery, that we cannot understand all our debts. We can easily see too many, yet many more lie, as it were, dead and out of sight. To sin is one great misery, and then to forget our
sins is a misery too. If in repentance we could set the battle in array, point to
every individual sin in the true and particular times of acting and re-acting, oh,
how would our hearts be more broken with shame and sorrow, and how would
we adore the richness of the treasure of mercy which must have a multitude in
it to pardon the multitude of our infinite errors and sins. But this is the comfort;
though we cannot understand every particular sin, or time of sinning, yet if we
be not idle to search and cast over the books, and if we be heartily grieved for
these sins which we have found out, and can by true repentance turn from them
unto God, and by faith unto the blood of Jesus Christ, I say that God, who
knows our sins better than we can know them, and who understands the true
intentions and dispositions of the heart—that if it did see the unknown sins it
would be answerably carried against them—he will for his own mercy sake
forgive them, and he, too, will not remember them. Nevertheless, though David
saith, *"Who can understand his errors?"* as the prophet Jeremiah spake also,
"The heart of man is desperately wicked, who can know it?" yet must we bestir
ourselves at heaven to get more and more heavenly light, to find out more and
more of our sinnings. So the Lord can search the heart; and, though we shall
never be able to find out all our sins which we have committed, yet it is proper
and beneficial for us to find out yet more sins than yet we do know. And you
shall find these in your own experience; that as soon as ever grace entered your
hearts, you saw sin in another way than you ever saw it before; yea, and the
more grace hath traversed and increased in the soul, the more full discoveries
hath it made of sins. It hath shown new sins as it were; new sins, not for their
being, not as if they were not in the heart and life before, but for their evidence
and our apprehension. We do now see such wages and such inclinations to be
sinful which we did not think to be so before. As physic brings those humours
which had their residence before now more to the sense of the patient, or as the
sun makes open the motes of dust which were in the room before, so doth the
light of the word discover more corruption.—*Obadiah Sedgwick.*

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

*Verse 12.* "*Cleanse thou me from secret faults.*" It is the desire of a holy person
to be cleansed, not only from public, but also from *private and secret sins.*
Romans 7:24. "O wretched man (saith Paul), who shall deliver me?" Why, O blessed apostle! what is it that holds thee? What is it that molestst thee? Thy life, thou sayest, was unblamable before thy conversion, and since thy conversion. Philippians 3. Thou hast exercised thyself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. Acts 24:16. And yet thou criest out, "O wretched man," and yet thou complainest, "Who shall deliver me?" Verily, brethren, it was not sin abroad, but at home: it was not sin without, but at this time sin within; it was not Paul's sinning with man, but Paul's sinning within Paul: oh! that "law of his members warring (secretly within him) against the law of his mind;" this, this made that holy man so to cry out, so to complain. As Rebekah was weary of her life, not as we read for any foreign disquietments, but because of domestic troubles: "The daughters of Heth" within the house made her "weary of her life;" so the private and secret birth of corruption within Paul—the workings of that—that was the cause of his trouble, that was the ground of his exclamation and desires, "Who shall deliver me?" I remember that the same Paul adviseth the Ephesians as "to put off the former conversation" so "to put on the renewed spirit of the mind" (Ephesians 4:22, 23); intimating that there are sins lurking within as well as sins walking without; and that true Christians must not only sweep the door, but wash the chamber; my meaning is, not only come off from the sins which lie open in the conversation, but also labour to be cleansed from sin and sinning which remain secret and hidden in the spirit and inward disposition.—Obadiah Sedgwick.

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

Verse 12. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." The law of the Lord is so holy that forgiveness must be prayed for, even for hidden sins. (Note—This was a
Verse 12. "Secret faults." Sins may be termed "secret" either, 1. When they are coloured and disguised—though they do fly abroad, yet not under that name, but apparelled with some semblance of virtues. Cyprian complains of such tricks in his second epistle, which is to Donatus. 2. When they are kept off from the stage of the world; they are like fire in the chimney; though you do not see it, yet it burns. So many a person, like those in Ezekiel, "commit abominations in secret"—that is, so as the public eye is not upon them. He is sinful, and acts it with the greatest vileness; all the difference betwixt another sinner and him is this—that he is, and the other saith he is, a sinner. Just as 'twixt a book shut and a book opened; that which is shut hath the same lines and words, but the other being opened every man may see and read them. 3. When they are kept, not only from the public eye, but from any mortal eye; that is, the carnal eye of him who commits the sins sees them not; he doth, indeed, see them with the eye of conscience, but not with the eye of natural sense. Even those persons with whom he doth have converse, and who highly commend the frame of his ways, cannot yet see the secret discoursings and actings of sin in his mind and heart. For, brethren, all the actings of sin are not without, they are not visible; but there are some, yes, the most dangerous actings within the soul, where corruption lies as a fountain and root. The heart of man is a scheme of wickedness; nay, a man saith that in his heart which he dares not speak with his tongue, and his thought will do that which his hands dare not to execute. Well, then, sin may be called "secret" when it is sin, and acted as sin, even there, where none but God and conscience can see. Methinks sin is like a candle in a lantern, where the shining is first within and then bursting out at the windows; or like evils and ulcerous humours, which are scabs and scurvy stuff, first within the skin, and afterwards they break out to the view on the outside. So it is with sin; it is a malignant humour and a fretting leprosy, diffusing itself into several secret acts and workings within the mind, and then it breaks abroad and dares adventure the practice of itself to the eye of the world; and be it that it may never see the light, that it may be like a child born and buried in the womb, yet as that child is a man, a true man there closeted in that hidden frame of nature, so sin is truly sin, though it never gets out beyond the womb which did conceive and enliven it.—Obadiah Sedgwick.

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

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

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

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

"Then down I cast me on my face,  
And first began to weep,  
For I knew my secret then was one  
That earth refused to keep:  
On land or sea though it should be  
Ten thousand fathoms deep."
In plaintive notes he prophesies his own discovery. He buried his victim in a
cave, and trod him down with stones, but when years had run their weary
round, the foul deed was discovered and the murderer put to death.

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

Spurgeon's Sermons (No. 116), on "Secret Sins."

Verse 12. The sin through ignorance (Heb.) is the same that David prays
against in Psalm 19:12, "Who can understand his errors (Heb.)? cleanse thou
me from secret things!" These are not sins of omission, but acts committed by a
person, when at the time, he did not suppose that what he did was sin. Although
he did the thing deliberately, yet he did not perceive the sin of it. So deceitful is
sin, we may be committing that abominable thing which casts angels into an
immediate and an eternal hell, and yet at the moment be totally unaware! Want
of knowledge of the truth, and too little tenderness of conscience hide it from
us. Hardness of heart and a corrupt nature cause us to sin unperceived. But here
again the form of the Son of Man appears! Jehovah, God of Israel, institutes
sacrifice for sins of ignorance, and thereby discovers the same compassionate
and considerate heart that appears in our High Priest, "who can have
compassion on the ignorant!" Hebrews 5:2. Amidst the types of this tabernacle,
we recognize the presence of Jesus—it is his voice that shakes the curtains, and
speaks in the ear of Moses, "If a soul shall sin through ignorance!" The same
yesterday, to-day, and for ever!—Andrew A. Bonar, in "Commentary on
Leviticus," ch. iv. v. 2.
Verse 12 (last clause). This is a singular difference between pharisaical and real sanctity: that is curious to look abroad, but seeth nothing at home: so that Pharisee condemned the Publican, and saw nothing in himself worthy of blame; but this careful to look at home, and searcheth into the secret corners, the very spirit of the mind. So did good David when he prayed, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."—Nathanael Hardy.

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

Verse 12. Sins are many times hid from the godly man's eye, though he commits them, because he is not diligent and accurate in making a search of himself, and in an impartial studying of his own ways. If any sin be hid, as Saul was behind the stuff; or as Rahab had hid the spies, unless a man be very careful to search, he shall think no sin is there where it is. Hence it is that the Scripture doth so often command that duty of searching and trying, of examining and communing with our hearts. Now what need were there of this duty, but that it is supposed many secret and subtle lusts lie lurking in our hearts, which we take no notice of? If then the godly would find out their hidden lusts, know the sins they not yet know, they must more impartially judge themselves; they must take time to survey and examine themselves; they must not in an overly and slight manner, but really and industriously look up and down as they would search for thieves; and they must again and again look into this dark corner, and that dark corner of their hearts, as the woman sought for the lost groat. This self-scrutiny, and self-judging, this winnowing and sifting of ourselves, is the only way to see what is chaff and what is wheat, what is mere refuse and what is enduring.—Anthony Burgess.

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

*cleanse me from my secret faults;* and this will be a most effectual means to preserve and keep thy servant from presumptuous sins.—Ezekiel Hopkins.

*Verse 12, 13.* That there is a difference betwixt infirmities and presumptuous sins is not to be denied; it is expressly in the holy Scripture. Papists say that the man who doth a mortal sin is not in the state of grace; but for venials, a man may commit (in their divinity) who can tell how many of them, and yet be in Christ for all that! I hope there is no such meaning in any of our divines as to tie up men's consciences, to hang on such a distinction of sins; since it is beyond the wit of man to set down a distinct point between mortal and venial sins. Now when it is an impossible matter punctually to set down to the understanding of man which is, and which is not a venial sin, they must pardon me for giving the least way to such divinity as must needs leave the conscience of a man in a maze and labyrinth. I find that the nature of infirmities doth so depend upon circumstances, that that is an infirmity in one man which is a gross sin in another; and some men plead for themselves that the things they do are but infirmities. He that will sin, and when he hath done will say—not to comfort his soul against Satan, but—to flatter himself in his sin, that it is but an infirmity; for aught I know, he may go to hell for his infirmities. Besides, if that be good divinity, that a man who is in the state of grace may do infirmities, but not commit gross sins, then I would I could see a man that would undertake to find us out some rule out of the word, by which a sinner may find by his sin, when he is in Christ and when out of Christ; at what degree of sinning—where lies the mathematical point and stop—that a man may say, "Thus far may I go and yet be in grace; but if I step a step farther, then I am none of Christ's." We all know that sins have their latitude; and for a man to hang his conscience on such a distinction as hath no rule to define where the difference lies, is not safe divinity. The conscience on the rack will not be laid and said with forms and quiddities. The best and nearest way to quiet the heart of man is to say, that be the sin a sin of infirmity when we strive and strive but yield at last; or, of precipitancy, when we be taken in haste, as he was who said in his haste, "All men are liars;" or, a mere gross sin in the matter: ay, say it be a presumptuous
Psalm 19

sin, yet if we allow it not, it hinders not but we are in Christ, though we do with reluctance act and commit it. And I say that we do resist it if we do not allow it. For let us not go about to deny that a godly man during his being a godly man may possibly commit gross and presumptuous sins; and for infirmities, if we allow them and like them that we know to be sins, then we do not resist them; and such a man who allows himself in one is guilty of all, and is none of Christ's as yet. Be the sin what it will, James makes no distinction; and, where the law distinguisheth not, we must not distinguish. I speak not of doing a sin, but allowing; for a man may do it, and yet allow it not; as in Paul (Romans 7:15, 16), "That which I would not, that I do;" and he that allows not sin doth resist it. Therefore, a man may resist it, hate it, and yet do it. All the difference that I know is this: 1. That a man may live after his conversion all his days, and yet never fall into a gross sin. By gross here I mean presumptuous sins also. So David saith not "cleanse," but "KEEP BACK thy servant from presumptuous sins." We may, then, be kept from them. I speak not that all are, but some be; and, therefore, in itself all might be. 2. For lesser sins, "secret faults," we cannot live without them—the y are of daily and almost hourly incursion; but yet we must be cleansed from them, as David speaks. Daily get your pardon; there is a pardon, of course, for them; they do not usually distract and plague the conscience, but yet we must not see them and allow them; if we do our case is to be pitied, we are none of Christ's as yet. 3. Great staring sins a man cannot usually and commonly practise them, but he shall allow them. So Psalm 19:13, "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me," implying that except we be kept back from them they will have dominion over us. It follows, "then shall I be upright;" so that the man in whom gross or presumptuous sins or sins have no dominion, he is an upright man.—Richard Capel.

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

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

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

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

Verse 13. "Keep back thy servant." God keeps back his servants from sin, 1. By preventing grace, which is, by infusing such a nature as is like a bias into a bowl, drawing it aside another way; 2. By assisting grace, which is a further strength superadded to that first-implanted nature of holiness; like a hand upon a child holding him in; 3. By quickening grace, which is, when God doth enliven our graces to manifest themselves in actual opposition; so that the soul shall not yield, but keep off from entertaining the sin; 4. By directing grace,
which is, when God confers that effectual wisdom to the mind, tenderness to the conscience, watchfulness to the heart, that his servants become greatly solicitous of his honour, scrupulously jealous of their own strength, and justly regardful of the honour of their holy profession; 5. By doing grace, which is, when God effectually inclines the hearts of his servants to the places and ways of their refuge, safeties, and preservations from sin, by enlarging the spirit of supplication, and framing the heart to the reverent and affectionate use of his ordinances.—Condensed from Obadiah Sedgwick.

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

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

Verse 13. "Presumptuous sins." When sin grows up from act to delight, from delight to new acts, from repetition of sinful acts to vicious indulgence, to habit and custom and a second nature, so that anything that toucheth upon it is grievous, and strikes to the man's heart; when it is got into God's place, and requires to be loved with the whole strength, makes grace strike sail, and other vices do it homage, demands all his concerns to be sacrificed to it and to be served with his reputation, his fortunes, his parts, his body, and soul, to the irreparable loss of his time and eternity both—this is the height of its dominion—then sin becomes "exceedingly sinful," and must needs make strange and sad alterations in the state of saints themselves, and be great hindrances to them in their way to Heaven, having brought them so near to Hell.—Adam Littleton.
Verse 13. "Presumptuous sins." The distribution of sins into sins of ignorance, of infirmity, and of presumption, is very usual and very useful, and complete enough without the addition (which some make) of a fourth sort, to wit, sins of negligence or inadvertency, all such sins being easily reducible to some of the former three. The ground of the distinction is laid in the soul of man, where there are three distinct prime faculties, from which all our actions flow—the understanding, the will, and the sensual appetite or affections. . . . The enquiry must be, when a sin is done, where the fault lay most; and thence it must have the right denomination. 1. If the understanding be most in fault, not apprehending that good it should, or not aright, the sin so done, though possibly it may have in it somewhat both of infirmity and presumption withal, is yet properly a sin of ignorance. 2. If the main fault be in the affections, through some sudden passion or perturbation of mind, blinding, or corrupting, or but outrunning the judgment—as of fear, anger, desire, joy, or any of the rest—the sin thence arising, though perhaps joined with some ignorance or presumption withal, is yet properly a sin of infirmity. But if the understanding be completely informed with knowledge, and not much blinded or transported with the incursion of any sudden, or violence of any vehement perturbation, so as the greatest blame must remain upon the untowardness of the will, resolvedly bent upon the evil, the sin arising from such willfulness, though probably not free from all mixture of ignorance and infirmity withal, is yet properly a wilful presumption, such a presumptuous sin as we are now in treaty of. Rules are soonest learned and best remembered when illustrated with fit examples; and of such the rich storehouse of the Scripture affordeth us in each kind variety and choice enough, whence it shall suffice us to propose but one eminent of each sort. The men, all of them for their holiness, of singular and worthy renown: David, St. Peter, and St. Paul. The sins, all of them for their matter, of the greatest magnitude: murdering of the innocent, abnegation of Christ, persecution of the church: Paul's persecution a grievous sin, yet a sin of ignorance; Peter's denial a grievous sin, yet a sin of infirmity; David's murder, a far more grievous sin than either of both, because a sin of presumption. St. Paul, before his conversion, whilst he was Saul, persecuted and wasted the church of God to the utmost of his power, making havoc of the professors of Christ, entering into their very houses, and haling thence to prison, both men and women; and posting abroad with letters into remote quarters, to do all the mischief he could, everywhere with great fury, as if he had been mad, breathing out, wherever he came, nothing but threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. His affections were not set against them through any personal provocations, but merely out of zeal to the law; and surely his zeal had been good had it not been blind. Nor did his will run cross to his judgment, but was led by it, for he "verily thought in himself that he ought to do many things
contrary to the name of Jesus;" and verily his will had been good had it not been misled. But the error was in his understanding, his judgment being not yet actually convinced of the truth of the Christian religion. He was yet fully persuaded that Jesus was an impostor, and Christianity a pestilent sect, raised by Satan, to the disgrace and prejudice of Moses and the law. If these things had indeed been so, as he apprehended them, his affections and will, in seeking to root out such a sect, had been not only blameless but commendable. It was his erroneous judgment that poisoned all, and made that which otherwise had been zeal, to become persecution. But, however, the first discernable obliquity therein being in the understanding, that persecution of his was therefore a sin of ignorance, so called, and under that name condemned by himself. 1 Timothy 1:13. But such was not Peter's denial of his Master. He knew well enough who he was having conversed so long with him, and having, long before, so amply confessed him. And he knew also that he ought not, for anything in the world, to have denied him. That made him so confident before that he would not do it, because he was abundantly satisfied that he should not do it. Evident it is, then, that Peter wanted no knowledge, either of the Master's person, or of his own duty; and so no plea left him of ignorance, either facti or juris. Nor was the fault so much in his will as to make it a sin properly of presumption. For albeit de facto he did deny him when he was put to it, and that with fearful oaths and imprecations, yet was it not done with any prepensed apostacy, or out of design, yea, he came rather with a contrary resolution, and he still honoured his Master in his heart, even then when he denied him with his tongue; and as soon as ever the watchword was given him by the second cock, to prefer to his consideration what he had done, it grieved him sore that he had so done, and he wept bitterly for it. We find no circumstance, in the whole relation, that argueth any deep obstinacy in his will. But in his affections, then! Alas! there was the fail! A sudden qualm of fear surprising his soul when he saw his Master so despitefully used before his face (which made him apprehensive of what hard usage himself might fall under if he should there and then have owned him) took from him for that time the benefit and use of his reason, and so drew all his thoughts to this one point—how to decline the present danger— that he had never a thought at so much liberty as to consult his judgment, whether it were a sin or no. And this, proceeding from such a sudden distemper of passion, Peter's denial was a sin properly of infirmity. But David's sin, in contriving the death of Uriah, was of a yet higher pitch, and of a deeper dye than either of these. He was no such stranger in the law of God as not to know that the wilful murder of an innocent party, such as he also knew Uriah to be, was a most loud crying sin; and therefore nothing surer than that it was not merely a sin of ignorance. Neither yet was it a sin properly of infirmity, and so capable of that extenuating circumstance of being done in the heat of anger, as his uncleanness
with Bathsheba was in the heat of lust, although that extenuation will not be
allowed to pass there, unless in tanto only, and as it standeth in comparison
with this fouler crime. But having time and leisure enough to bethink himself
what he was about, he doth it in cool blood, and with much advised
deliberation, plotting and contriving this way and that way to perfect his
design. He was resolved, whatsoever should become of it, to have it done; in
regard of which settled resolution of his will, this sin of David was therefore a
high presumptuous sin.—Robert Sanderson (Bishop of Lincoln), 1587-1662-3.

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

Verse 13. "Then shall I be innocent from the great transgression." It is in the
motions of a tempted soul to sin, as in the motions of a stone falling from the
brow of a hill; it is easily stopped at first, but when once it is set a-going, who
shall stay it? And therefore it is the greatest wisdom in the world to observe the
first motions of the heart, to check and stop it there.—G. H. Salter.

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

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

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

Verse 13. Happy souls, who, under a sense of peace through the blood of Jesus, are daily praying to be kept by the grace of the Spirit. Such truly know themselves, see their danger of falling, will not, dare not palliate or lessen the odious nature, and hateful deformity of their sin. They will not give a softer name to sin than it deserves, lest they depreciate the infinite value of that precious blood which Jesus shed to atone its guilt. Far will they be from flattering themselves into a deceitful notion that they are perfect, and have no sin in them. The spirit of truth delivers them from such errors; he teacheth them as poor sinners to look to the Saviour, and to beseech him to "keep back" the headstrong passions, the unruly lusts and evil concupiscences which dwell in their sinful natures. Alas! the most exalted saint, the most established believer, if left to himself, how soon might the blackest crimes, the most "presumptuous sins," get the "dominion" over him! David had woful experience of this for a season. He prays from a heartfelt sense of past misery, and the dread of future danger, and he found the blessing of that covenant-promise: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Romans 6:14.—William Mason, 1719-1791, in "A Spiritual Treasury for the Children of God."

Verse 14. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord," was David's prayer. David could not bear it, that a word, or a thought of his should miss acceptance with God. It did not satisfy him that his actions were well witnessed unto men on earth, unless his very thoughts were witnessed to by the Lord in heaven.—Joseph Caryl.
Verse 14. "Let the words of my mouth," etc. The best of men have their failing, and an honest Christian may be a weak one; but weak as he may be, the goodness and sincerity of his heart will entitle him to put the petition of this verse, which no hypocrite or cunning deceiver can ever make use of,—Thomas Sherlock (Bishop), 1676-1761.

Verse 14. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." Fast and pray; Lord, I do fast, and I would pray; for to what end do I withhold sustenance from my body if it be not the more to cheer up my soul? my hungry, my thirsty soul? But the bread, the water of life, both which I find nowhere but in thy word, I partake not but by exercising my soul therein. This I begin to do, and fain would do it well, but in vain shall I attempt except thou do bless: bless me then, O Lord; bless either part of me, both are thine, and I would withhold neither part from thee. Not my body; I would set my tongue on work to speak of thee; not my soul, I would exercise my heart in thinking on thee; I would join them in devotion which thou hast joined in creation. Yea, Lord, as they have conspired to sin against thee, so do they nor consort to do their duty to thee; my tongue is ready, my heart is ready; I would think, I would speak; think upon thee, speak to thee. But, Lord, what are my words? what are my thoughts? Thou knowest the thoughts of men, that they are altogether vanity, and our words are but the blast of such thoughts; both are vile. It were well it were no more; both are wicked, my heart a corrupt fountain, and my tongue an unclean stream; and shall I bring such a sacrifice to God? The halt, the lame, the blind, though otherwise the beasts be clean, yet are they sacrifices abominable to God: how much more if we offer those beasts which are unclean? And yet, Lord, my sacrifice is no better, faltering words, wandering thoughts, are neither of them presentable to thee; how much less evil thoughts and idle words? Yet such are the best of mine. What remedy? If any, it is in thee, O Lord, that I must find it, and for it now do I seek unto thee. Thou only, O Lord, canst hallow my tongue, and hallow my heart that my tongue may speak, and my heart think that which may "be acceptable unto thee," yea, that which may be thy delight. Do not I lavish? Were it not enough that God should bear with, that he should not publish, the defects of my words, of my thoughts? May I presume that God shall accept of me? nay, delight in me? Forget I who the Lord is? Of what majesty? Of what felicity? Can it stand with his Majesty to vouchsafe acceptance? with his felicity to take content in the words of a worm? in the thoughts of a wretch? And, Lord, I am too proud that villify myself so little, and magnify thee no more. But see whither the desire of thy servant doth carry him; how, willing to please, I consider not how hard it is for dust and ashes to please God, to do that wherein God should take content. But
Lord, here is my comfort that I may set God to give content unto God; God is mine, and I cannot want access unto God, if God may approach himself. Let me be weak, yet God is strong; O Lord, thou art "my strength." Let me be a slave to sin, God is a Saviour; O Lord, thou art my Saviour; thou hast redeemed me from all that woful state whereunto Adam cast me, yea, thou hast built me upon a rock, strong and sure, that the gates of hell might never prevail against me. These two things hast thou done for me, O Lord, and what may not he presume of for whom thou hast done these things! I fear not to come before thee. I presume my devotion shall content thee; be thine eyes never such all-seeing eyes, I will be bold to present my inward, my outward man before thee; be thy eyes never so holy eyes, I will not fly with Adam to hide my nakedness from thee, for I am able to keep my ground; seeing I am supported by my Lord, I doubt not but to prove a true Israelite, and to prevail with God. For all my woe, for all my sin, I will not shrink, nay, I will approach, approach to thee, for thou art "My Redeemer." The nearer I come to thee, the freer shall I be both from sin and woe. Oh, blessed state of man who is so weak, so strong; so wretched, and so happy; weak in himself, strong in God; most happy in God, though in himself a sinful wretch. And now, my soul, thou wouldst be devout; thou mayest be what thou wouldst: sacrifice to God thy words, sacrifice to God thy thoughts, make thyself a holocaust, doubt not but thou shalt be accepted, thou shalt content even the most glorious, the most holy eyes of God. Only presume not of thyself, presume on him; build thy words, build thy thoughts upon thy Rock, they shall not be shaken; free thy words, free thy thoughts (thoughts and words enthralled to sin), by thy Saviour, and thy sacrifice shall be accepted. So let me build on thee, so let me be enlarged by thee, in soul, in body, that "The words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer."—Arthur Lake (Bishop), in "Divine Meditations," 1629.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

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

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

Verse 1. "The heavens declare the glory of God." Work in which we may unite, the nobility, pleasure, usefulness, and duty of such service.
Verse 2. Voices of the day and of the night. Day and night thoughts.

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

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

Verses 4, 5, 6. The Sun of Righteousness.
   I. His tabernacle.
   II. His appearance as a Bridegroom.
   III. His joy as a champion.
   IV. His circuit and his influence.

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

Verse 6. The permeating power of the gospel.

Verse 7 (first clause). Holy Scripture.
   I. What it is—"law."
   II. Whose it is—"of the Lord."
   III. What is its character—"perfect."
   IV. What its result—"converting the soul."

Verse 7 (second clause).
   I. Scholars.
   II. Class-book.
   III. Teacher.
   IV. Progress.

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

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

Verse 8 (first clause). The heart-cheering power of the Word.
   I. Founded in its righteousness.
   II. Real in its quality.
   III. Constant in its operation.

Verse 8 (second clause). Golden ointment for the eyes.
Verse 9. The purity and permanence of true religion, and the truth and justice of the principles upon which it is founded.

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

Verse 10. The inexpressible delights of meditation on Scripture.

Verse 11 (first clause).—
I. What? "Warned."
II. How? "By them."
III. Who? "Thy servant."
IV. When? "Is"—present.

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


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


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


Verse 14. All wish to please. Some please themselves. Some please men. Some seek to please God. Such was David.
I. The prayer shows his humility.
II. The prayer show his affection.
III. The prayer shows a consciousness of duty.
IV. The prayer shows a regard to self-interest. William Jay.

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

WORKS UPON THE NINETEENTH PSALM


["The Nineteenth Psalm has been adopted as the model for the arrangement of the first twelve Lectures." *Extract from Preface.*]
Psalm 20

Exposition

EXPOSITION

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

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

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

Verse 3. "Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice. Selah." Before war kings offered sacrifice, upon the acceptance of which the depended for success; our blessed Lord presented himself as a victim, and was a sweet savour unto the Most High, and then he met and routed the embattled legions of hell. Still does his burnt sacrifice perfume the courts of heaven, and through him the offerings of his people are received as his sacrifices and oblations. We ought in our spiritual conflicts to have an eye to the sacrifice of Jesus, and never venture to war until first the Lord has given us a token for good at the altar of the cross, where faith beholds her bleeding Lord. "Selah." It is well to pause at the cross before we march onward to battle, and with the psalmist cry "Selah." We are too much in a hurry to make good haste. A little pausing might greatly help our speed. Stay, good man, there is a haste which hinders; rest awhile, meditate on the burnt sacrifice, and put thy heart right for the stern work which lieth before thee.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 6. Contrasts frequently bring out the truth vividly, and here the church sets forth the creature confidences of carnal men in contrast with her reliance upon the Prince Immanuel and the invisible Jehovah. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses." Chariots and horses make an imposing show, and with their rattling, and dust, and fine caparisons, make so great a figure that vain man is much taken with them; yet the discerning eye of faith sees more in an invisible God than in all these. The most dreaded war-engine of David's day was the war-chariot, armed with scythes, which mowed down men like grass: this was the boast and glory of the neighbouring nations; but the saints considered the name of Jehovah to be a far better defence. As the Israelites might not keep horses, it was natural for them to regard the enemy's calvary with more than usual dread. It is, therefore, all the greater evidence of faith that the bold songster can here disdain even the horse of Egypt in comparison with the Lord of hosts. Alas, how many in our day who profess to be the Lord's are as abjectly dependent upon their fellow-men or upon an arm of flesh in some shape or other, as if they had never known the name of Jehovah at all. Jesus, be thou alone our rock and refuge, and never may we mar the simplicity of our faith. "We will remember the name of the Lord our God." "Our God" in covenant, who has chosen us and whom we have chosen; this God is our God. The name of our God is JEHOVAH, and this should never be forgotten; the self-existent, independent, immutable, ever-present, all-filling I AM. Let us adore that matchless name, and never dishonour it by distrust or creature confidence. Reader, you must know it before you can remember it. May the blessed Spirit reveal it graciously to your soul!

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

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

Whole Psalm. There are traces of liturgical arrangement in many of the Psalms. There is frequently an adaptation to the circumstances of public worship. Thus, when the Jewish church wished to celebrate the great act of Messiah the High Priest making a sacrifice for the people on the day of atonement, as represented in the twenty-second Psalm, a subject so solemn, grand, and affecting, was not commenced suddenly and unpreparedly, but first a suitable occasion was sought, proper characters were introduced, and a scene in some degree appropriate to the great event was fitted for its reception. The priests and Levites endeavour to excite in the minds of the worshippers an exalted tone of reverent faith. The majesty and power of God, all the attributes which elevate the thoughts, are called in to fill the souls of the worshippers with the most intense emotion; and when the feelings are strung to the highest pitch, an awful, astounding impression succeeds, when the words are slowly chanted, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We are to suppose, then, that the series of Psalms, from the twentieth to the twenty-fourth inclusive, was used as a service or office in the public worship of the Jewish church.*—R. H. Ryland, M.A., in "The Psalms Restored to Messiah," 1853.

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

Whole Psalm. Really good wishes are good things, and should be expressed in words and deeds. The whole Psalm thus teaches. Christian sympathy is a great branch of Christian duty. There may be a great deal of obliging kindness in that which costs us little.—William S. Plumer.
Verse 1. "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble." All the days of Christ were days of trouble. He was a brother born for adversity, a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. . . . But more particularly it was a "day of trouble" with him when he was in the garden, heavy and sore amazed, and his sweat was, as it were, drops of blood falling on the ground, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; but more especially this was his case when he hung upon the cross. . . . when he bore all the sins of his people, endured the wrath of his Father, and was forsaken by him. Now, in this "day of trouble," both when in the garden and on the cross, he prayed unto his Father, as he had been used to do in other cases, and at other times; and the church here prays that God would hear and answer him, as he did.—Condensed from John Gill.

Verse 1. "The name." Whereas they say, "The name of the God of Jacob," thereby they mean God himself; but they thus speak of God because all the knowledge that we have of God ariseth from the knowledge of his name, and as to that end he hath given himself in the Scriptures sundry names, that thereby we might know not only what he is in himself, so far as it is meet for us to know, but especially what he is to us, so by them, and them principally, we know him to be, as he is, not only in himself, but unto us. . . . From this knowledge of the name of God ariseth confidence in prayer! as when they know him, and here call him "the God of Jacob," that is, he that hath made a covenant of mercy with him and with his posterity, that he will be their God and they shall be his people, that they may be bold to flee to him for succour, and confidently call upon him in the day of their trouble to hear them, and to help them, as they do. And the more that they know of his name, that is, of his goodness, mercy, truth, power, wisdom, justice, etc., so may they the more boldly pray unto him, not doubting but that he will be answerable unto his name. . . . For as among men, according to the good name that they have for liberality and pity, so will men be ready to come unto them in their need, and the poor will say, "I will go to such an house, for they have a good name, and are counted good to the poor, and merciful, all men speak well of them for their liberality;" and this name of theirs giveth the encouragement to come boldly and often. So when we know God thus by his name, it will make us bold to come unto him in prayer. . . . Or, if a man be never so merciful, and others know it not, and so they are ignorant of his good name that he hath, and that he is worthy of, they cannot, with any good hope, come unto him, for they know not what he is; they have heard nothing of him at all. So when, by unbelief, we hardly conceive of God and of his goodness, or for want of knowledge are ignorant of his good name, even of all his mercy, and of his truth, pity, and compassion that is in him, and so know not his great and glorious name, we can have little or no heart at all to come unto him in trouble, and seek unto him for
help by prayer, as these did here; and this maketh some so forward unto prayer, they are so well acquainted with the name of God, that they doubt not of speeding, and others again are so backward unto it, they are so wholly ignorant of his name.—Nicholas Bownd, 1604.

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

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

Verse 1. "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." There is an assurance of thy protection, of thy safety, in the midst of ten thousand foes, and of thy perseverance to the end. But you will say, how will the name of the God of Jacob defend me? Try it. I have, over and over again; therefore I speak what I do know, and testify what I have seen. "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." I was once goaded by a poor silly Irish papist to try it, who told me, in his consummate ignorance and bigotry, that if a priest would but give him a drop of holy water, and make a circle with it around a field full of wild beasts, they would not hurt him. I retired in disgust at the abominable trickery of such villains, reflecting, what a fool I am that I cannot put such trust in my God as this poor deluded man puts in his priest and a drop of holy water! And I resolved to try what the name of the God of Jacob would do, having the Father's fixed decrees, the Son's unalterable responsibility, and the Spirit's invincible grace and operation around me. I tried it and felt my confidence brighten. O brethren, get encircled with covenant engagements, and covenant blood, and covenant grace, and covenant promises, and covenant securities; then will "the Lord hear you in the time of trouble, and the name of the God of Jacob will defend you."—Joseph Irons.
Verse 1. A sweeter wish, or a more consolatory prayer for a child of sorrow was never uttered by man, "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee." And who is there of the sons of men to whom a "day of trouble" does not come, whose path is not darkened at times, or with whom is it unclouded sunshine from the cradle to the grave? "Few plants," says old Jacomb, "have both the morning and the evening sun;" and one far older than he said, "Man is born to trouble." A "day of trouble," then, is the heritage of every child of Adam. How sweet, as I have said, how sweet the wish, "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble." It is the prayer of another in behalf of some troubled one, and yet it implies that the troubled one himself had also prayed, "The Lord hear thee"—hear and answer thine own prayer!—Barton Bouchier.

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

Verses 1-5. These are the words of the people, which they spake unto God in the behalf of their king; and so they did as David desired them, namely, pray for him. If they did thus pray for him, being desired thereunto, and it was their bound duty so to do, and they knew it to be so, and therefore did make conscience of it, and it had been a great fault for them to have failed in it; then by consequence it followeth of necessity, that whatsoever any of our brethren or sisters in Christ shall desire this duty at our hands, we must be careful to perform it; and it were a fault not to be excused in us, both against God and them, to fail in it. Therefore we must not think that when godly men and women at their parting or otherwise, desire our prayers, and say, "I pray you pray for me," or, "remember me in your prayers," that these are words of course (though I do not deny, but that many do so use them, and so doing they take the name of God in vain); but we should be persuaded, that out of the abundance of their feeling of their own wants they speak unto us, and so be willing by our
prayers to help to supply them. And especially we should do it when they shall make known their estate unto us, as here David did to the people, giving them to understand that he should or might be in great danger of his enemies, and so it was "a time of trouble" unto him, as he called it. . . . Most of all, this duty of prayer ought to be carefully performed when we have promised it unto any upon such notice of their estate. For as all promises ought to be kept, yea, though it be to our own hindrance, so those most of all that so nearly concern them. And as if when any should desire us to speak to some great man for them, and we promise to do it, and they trust to it, hoping that we will be as good as our words; it were a great deceit in us to fail them, and so to frustrate their expectation; so when any have desired us to speak to God for them, and upon our promise they would comfort themselves over it, if we should by negligence deceive them, it were a great fault in us, and that which the Lord would require at our hands, though they should never know of it. Therefore, as we ought daily to pray one for another unasked, as our Saviour Christ hath taught us, "O our Father which art in heaven," etc., so more especially and by name should we do it for them that have desired it of us. And so parents especially should not forget their children in their prayers, which daily ask their blessing, and hope to be blessed of God by their prayers. Secondarily, if we should neglect to pray for them that have desired it at our hands, how could we have any hope that others whom we have desired to pray for us should perform that duty unto us? Nay, might not we justly fear that they would altogether neglect it, seeing we do neglect them? and should it not be just with God so to punish us? according to the saying of our Saviour Christ, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matthew 7:2. And I remember that this was the saying of a reverend father in the church, who is now fallen asleep in the Lord, when any desired him to pray for them (as many did, and more than any that I have known), he would say unto them, "I pray you, pray for me, and pray that I may remember you, and then I hope I shall not forget you." Therefore if we would have others pray for us, let us pray for them.—Nicholas Bownd.

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

Verse 2. "Send thee help from the sanctuary." Here we see the nature of true faith, that it causeth us to see help in heaven, and so to pray for it when there is none to be seen in the earth. And this is the difference between faith and unbelief; that the very unbelievers can by reason conceive of help, so long as they have any means to help them; but if they fail they can see none at all; so they are like unto those that are purblind, who can see nothing but near at hand. But faith seeth afar off, even into heaven, so that it is "the evidence of things that are not seen;" for it looketh unto the power of God, who hath all means in his hand, or can work without them, who made all of nothing, and "calleth the things that be not, as though they were." So that as the holy martyr Stephen, when his enemies were ready to burst for anger, and gnash at him with their teeth, looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw Christ standing at the right hand of God ready to defend him; so faith in the promises of the word doth see help in heaven ready for us, when there are no means in earth,—Nicholas Bownd.

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

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

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

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

Verse 3. "That thy burnt offering may be fat." That is, abundant, fruitful, and
full. But here we must understand this burnt offering, as we did the sacrifice, in
a spiritual sense, as we have before observed. Thus Christ offered up himself
wholly upon the cross to be consumed by the fire of love. And here, instead of
"all thy sacrifice," it might be rendered "the whole of thy sacrifice." Even as
burnt sacrifice (holocaustum) signifies the whole of it being burnt with fire. By
which groanings of the Spirit, he shows and teaches the righteous, that they
should pray and hope that none of their sufferings shall be vain, but that all
shall be well-pleasing, remembered, and fully acceptable.—Martin Luther.

Verse 3. "Selah." * This word, in the judgment of the learned, is sometime vox
optantis, the voice of one that wisheth, equivalent to amen; of vox admirantis,
the voice of one admiring, showing some special matter; or vox affirmantis, of
one affirming, avouching what is said; or vox meditantis, of one meditating,
requiring consideration of what is said. But withal, it is a rest in music. Jerome
saith it is commutatio metri, or vicissitudo canendi.—Edward Marbury.


Verse 4. "Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel."
Let us here call to mind the zealous and earnest desire of the Redeemer to
accomplish his work, "I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I
straitened till it be accomplished." Luke 12:50. "With desire I have desired to
eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15); that he might leave a
memorial of his sufferings and death, for the strengthening and refreshing of
their souls. These earnest desires and anticipations did the Father satisfy, as of
one with whom he was well pleased.—W. Wilson.
Verse 4. "Fulfil all thy counsel;" whatever was agreed upon in the counsel and covenant of peace between him and his Father, relating to his own glory, and the salvation of his people.—John Gill.

Verse 4. "Fulfil all thy counsel." Answer thee, ad cardinem desiderii, as a father, Augustine, expresseth it; let it be unto thee even as thou wilt. Sometimes God doth not only grant a man's prayer, but fulfilleth his counsel; that is, in that very way, by that very means, which his judgment pitched upon in his thoughts.—John Trapp.

Verse 5 (first clause). Whosoever do partake with Christ's subjects in trouble, shall share with them also in the joy of their deliverance; therefore it is said, "We will rejoice in thy salvation."—David Dickson.

Verse 5. "In the name of our God." As those cried out, Judges 7:20, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon:" and as we have it in Joshua 6:20, "And the people shouted, and the walls of Jericho fell down;" and king Abiah, crying out with his men in the same, killed five hundred thousand of the children of Israel; and so now also, according to the military custom in our day, the soldiers boast in the name and glory of their general, in order to encourage themselves against their enemies. And it is just this custom that the present verse is now teaching, only in a godly and religious manner.—Martin Luther.

Verse 5. "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." The banners formerly so much used were a part of military equipage, borne in times of war to assemble, direct, distinguish, and encourage the troops. They might possibly be used for other purposes also. Occasions of joy, splendid processions, and especially a royal habitation, might severally be distinguished in this way. The words of the psalmist may perhaps be wholly figurative: but if they should be literally understood, the allusion of erecting a banner in the name of the Lord, acknowledging his glory, and imploring his favour, might be justified from an existing practice. Certain it is that we find this custom prevalent on this very principle in other places, into which it might originally have been introduced from Judea. Thus Mr. Turner (Embassy to Thibet, p. 31), says, "I was told that it was a custom with the Soobah to ascend the hill every month, when he sets up a white flag, and performs some religious ceremonies, to conciliate the favour of a dewata, or invisible being, the genius of the place, who is said to hover about the summit, dispensing at his will, good and evil to every thing around him.—Samuel Burder's "Oriental Customs," 1812.

Verse 5. "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." In all religious as well as warlike processions the people carry banners. Hence, on the pinnacles
of their sacred cars, on the domes or gateways of their temples, and on the roof of a new house, may be seen the banner of the caste of sect, floating in the air. Siva the Supreme, also, is described as having a banner in the celestial world.—Joseph Robert's "Oriental Illustrations".

Verse 5. "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." 1. We will wage war in his name, we will see that our cause be good, and make his glory our end in every expedition; we will ask counsel at his mouth, and take him along with us; we will follow his conduct, implore his aid, and depend upon it, and refer the issue to him. David went against Goliath in the name of the Lord of hosts. 1 Samuel 17:45. 2. We will celebrate our victories in his name. When "we lift up our banners" in triumph, and set up our trophies, it shall be "in the name of our God," he shall have all the glory of our success, and no instrument shall have any part of the honour that is due to him.—Matthew Henry.

Verse 5. "We will set up our banners." Confession of Christ, as the only name whereby we can be saved, is the "banner" which distinguishes his faithful people. O that this confession were more distinct, more pure, more zealous, in those who seem to be his followers, then would they be more united, more bold, in the profession of their religion, more successful in the cause of Christ, terrible as an army with "banners." Canticles 5:4.—W. Wilson.

Verse 5. "Our banners." Will you know the staff, the colours, and the flag or streamer of this ensign? Why, the staff is his cross, the colours are blood and water, and the streamer the gospel, or preaching of them to the world. The staff that carried the colours, was of old time fashioned like a cross, a cross bar near the top there was, from which the flag or streamer hung; so as it were prefiguring, that all the hosts and armies of the nations were one day to be gathered under the banner of the cross, to which soldiers should daily flow out of all the nations and kingdoms of the earth.—Mark Frank, 1613-1664.

Verse 5. "The Lord fulfil all thy petitions," for thyself and for others, now that thou sittest on the right hand of the Father, pleading for us and showing thy side and thy wounds.—Dionysius, quoted by Isaac Williams.

Verse 6. "Now know I." A sudden change of number, speaking in the person of one, thereby to note the unity and consent of the people to this prayer, as though they had been all one, and uttered it all with one mouth. "The Lord will help his anointed;" that is, his king, whom he hath established. See Psalm 2:2; 18:50. "And will hear him (see verse 1), from his sanctuary." One readeth it thus—"from the heavens of his holiness;" meaning, from heaven where his holiness dwelleth.—Thomas Wilcocks.
Verse 6. "He will hear him." I would be glad of the prayers of all the churches of Christ; O that there were not a saint on earth but that I were by name in his morning and evening prayer (whosoever that art that readest, I beseech thee pray for me); but above all, let me have a property in those prayers and intercessions that are proper only to Christ; I am sure then I should never miscarry: Christ's prayers are heavenly, glorious, and very effectual.—Isaac Ambrose, 1592-1674.

Verse 6. "His anointed." As priests, and sometimes kings and prophets, were among the Jews anointed to their offices, so our Saviour was anointed as a Prophet, to preach glad tidings to the meek; as a Priest, to bind up the broken-hearted; and as a King to deliver the captives. As the unction means designation and ordination, it is properly applied to the divine person of the Mediator: he is spoken of as God, who was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows." Hebrews 1:8, 9. As the anointing with the Holy Spirit signifies the gifts and aids of the Holy Spirit, it terminates upon his human nature only, and not his divine person, which has all the perfections in itself, and cannot properly, in the sense last mentioned, be said to be anointed with the Holy Spirit. But yet as the human nature is taken into a subsistence in his divine Person, the anointed may properly enough be predicated and affirmed of his Person. The unction of our Redeemer has a great stress laid upon it in Scripture. And therefore we read, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" 1 John 5:1; 2:22. Our Saviour's enemies were sensible of this, when they made an order, that if "any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out out of the synagogue." John 9:22. Our Saviour's anointing was superior to that of any other, and more excellent as to the work to which he was consecrated. The apostles and others, who are called his followers, had the Spirit by measure, but Christ without measure. He is "fairer than the sons of men" (Psalm 45:2); and had a glory as the "only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, 16); and of his fullness the apostles and all others receive. Christ's anointing answers to that of Aaron his type; the precious ointment which was "poured upon his head, ran down to the skirts of his garments." Psalm 133:2. Our Saviour was so anointed, as to "fill all in all." Ephesians 1:23. He filleth all his members, and all their faculties, with all those measures of the Spirit, which they ever receive.—Condensed from John Hurrion, 1675-1731.

Verse 7. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." About Michaelmas I was in the utmost extremity, and having gone out in very fine weather, I contemplated the azure heavens, and my heart was so strengthened in faith (which I do not ascribe to my own
powers, but solely to the grace of God), that I thought within myself, "What an excellent thing it is when we have nothing, and can rely upon nothing, but yet are acquainted with the living God, who made heaven and earth, and place our confidence alone in him, which enables us to be so tranquil even in necessity!" Although I was well aware that I required something that very day, yet my heart was so strong in faith that I was cheerful, and of good courage. On coming home I was immediately waited upon by the overseer of the workmen and masons, who, as it was Saturday, required money to pay their wages. He expected the money to be ready, which he wished to go and pay, but enquired, however, whether I had received anything. "Has anything arrived?" asked he. I answered, "No, but I have faith in God." Scarcely had I uttered the words when a student was announced, who brought me thirty dollars from some one, whom he would not name. I then went into the room again, and asked the other "how much he required this time for the workmen's wages?" He answered, "Thirty dollars." "Here they are," said I, and enquired at the same time, "if he needed any more?" He said, "No," which very much strengthened the faith of both of us, since we so visibly saw the miraculous hand of God, who sent it at the very moment when it was needed.—Augustus Herman Frank, 1663-1727.

Verse 7. "Some trust in chariots," etc. Vain is the confidence of all wickedness. In war, chariots, horses, navies, numbers, discipline, former successes, are relied on; but the battle is not to the strong. "Providence favours the strong battalions" may sound well in a worldling's ear, but neither Providence nor the Bible so teaches. In peace, riches, friends, ships, farms, stocks, are relied upon, yet they can neither help nor save. Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord.—William S. Plumer.

Verse 7. "We will remember the name of the Lord our God." By the name of God is generally understood, in Holy Writ, the various properties and attributes of God: these properties and attributes make up and constitute the name of God. As when Solomon says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." And, by remembering, considering, meditating upon this name of God, the psalmist represents himself as comforted or strengthened, whatever might be the duties to which he was called, or the dangers to which he was exposed. Others were for looking to other sources of safety and strength, "some trusting in chariots, and some in horses;" but the psalmist always set himself to the "remembering the name of the Lord our God;" and always, it would seem, with satisfaction and success. And here is the peculiarity of the passage on which we wish to dwell, and from which we hope to draw important lessons and truths—the psalmist "remembers the name of the Lord his God;" not any one property or attribute of God; but the whole
combination of divine perfections. And he "remembers" this "name;" the expression implying, not a transient thought, but meditation—consideration; and yet the result of the recollection is gladness and confidence.—Henry Melvill.

Verse 7. It is easy to persuade papists to lean on priests and saints, on old rags and painted pictures—on any idol; but it is hard to get a Protestant to trust in the living God.—William Arnot, 1858.

Verse 7. Weak man cannot choose but have some confidence without himself in case of apparent difficulties, and natural men do look first to some earthly thing wherein they confide. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses," some in one creature, some in another. The believer must quit his confidence in these things, whether he have them or want them, and must rely on what God hath promised in his word to do unto us. "But we will remember the name of the Lord our God."—David Dickson.

Verse 7. They that "trust in chariots and horses," will have no king but Caesar; but the "armies in heaven" which follow thee have themselves no arms, and no strength but in following thee.—Isaac Williams.

Verse 7. Numa being told that his enemies were coming upon him, as he was offering sacrifices, thought it was sufficient for his safety that he could say, I am about the service of my God. When Jehoshaphat had once established a preaching ministry in all the cities of Judah, then, and not till then, the fear of the Lord fell on the neighbouring nations, and they made no war; albeit, he had before that placed forces in all the fenced cities.—Charles Bradbury.

Verse 7. "Some their warrior horses boast,
Some their chariots' marshall'd host;
But our trust we will proclaim
In our God Jehovah's name."
Richard Mant.

Verse 8. "They are brought down," from their horses and chariots in which they trusted. Hebrew: they bowed down, as being unable to stand longer because of their mortal wounds. Compare Judges 5:27. "Stand upright." Standing firmly upon our legs, and keeping the field, as conquerors use to do.—Matthew Poole.
HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

This Psalm has been much used for coronation, thanksgiving, and fast sermons, and no end of nonsense and sickening flattery has been tacked thereto by the trencher-chaplains of the world's church. If kings had been devils, some of these gentry would have praised their horns and hoofs; for although some of their royal highnesses have been very obedient servants of the prince of darkness, these false prophets have dubbed them "most gracious sovereigns," and have been as much dazzled in their presence as if they had beheld the beatific vision.—C. H. S.

Whole Psalm. A loyal song and prayer for subjects of King Jesus.

Verse 1. Two great mercies in great trouble—hearing at the throne, and defence from the throne.

Verses 1, 2.
I. The Lord's trouble in its nature and its cause.
II. How the Lord exercised himself in his trouble.
III. We ought not to be unmoved spectators of the trouble of Jesus.

Hamilton Verschoyle.

Verses 1-3. A model of good wishes for our friends.
I. They include personal piety. The person who is spoken of prays, goes to the sanctuary, and offers sacrifice. We must wish our friend grace.
II. They point upward. The blessings are distinctly recognised as divine.
III. They do not exclude trouble.
IV. They are eminently spiritual. Acceptance, etc.


Verse 3. God's ceaseless respect to the sacrifice of Jesus.

Verses 3, 4. The great privilege of this fourfold acceptance in the Beloved.

Verse 5. Joy in salvation, to be resolved on and practised.

Verse 5. Setting up the banner. Open avowal of allegiance, declaration of war, index of perseverance, claim of possession, signal of triumph.

Verse 5 (last clause). The prevalence of our Lord's intercession, and the acceptance of our prayers through him.

Verse 6. "He will hear him." The ever-prevalent Intercessor.

Verse 6. God's "saving strength;" the strength of his most used and most skilful hand.

Verse 6 (first clause). "Now know I." The moment when faith in Jesus fills the soul. The time when assurance is given. The period when a truth gleams into the soul. etc.

Verse 7. Creature confidence. Apparently mighty, well adapted, showy, noisy, etc. Faithful trust. Silent, spiritual, divine, etc.

Verse 7. "The name of the Lord our God." Comfortable reflections from the name and character of the true God.

Verse 8. Tables turned.

Verse 9. "Save, Lord." One of the shortest and most pithy prayers in the Bible.

Verse 9. (last clause).
   I. To whom we come, and what then. "To a king."
   II. How we come, and what it means. "We call."
   III. What we want, and what it implies. "Hear us."

WORK UPON THE TWENTIETH PSALM

"Medicines for the plague; that is, Godly and Fruitful Sermons upon part of the Twentieth Psalme, full of instructions and comfort; very fit generally for all times of affliction, but more particularly applied to this late visitation of the Plague. Preached at the same time at Norton in Suffolke, by NICHOLAS BOWND, Doctor of Divinite. . . . 1604." [Twenty-one Sermons on verses 1-6. 4to.]
Psalm 21

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

SUBJECT. The title gives us but little information; it is simply, To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David. Probably written by David, sung by David, relating to David, and intended by David to refer in its fullest reach of meaning to David's Lord. It is evidently the fit companion of Psalm Twenty, and is in its proper position next to it. Psalm Twenty anticipates what this regards as realized. If we pray to-day for a benefit and receive it, we must, ere the sun goes down, praise God for that mercy, or we deserve to be denied the next time. It has been called David's triumphant song, and we may remember it as The Royal Triumphal Ode. "The king" is most prominent throughout, and we shall read it to true profit if our meditation of him shall be sweet while perusing it. We must crown him with the glory of our salvation; singing of his love, and praising his power, The next psalm will take us to the foot of the cross, this introduces us to the steps of the throne.

DIVISION. The division of the translators will answer every purpose. A thanksgiving for victory, verses 1 to 6. Confidence of further success, verses 7 to 13.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord." Jesus is a Royal Personage. The question, "Art thou a King then?" received a full answer from the Saviour's lips: "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth." He is not merely a King, but the King; King over minds and hearts, reigning with a dominion of love, before which all other rule is but mere brute force. He was proclaimed King even on the cross, for there, indeed, to the eye of faith, he reigned as on a throne, blessing with more than imperial munificence the needy sons of earth. Jesus has wrought out the salvation of his people, but as a man he found his strength in Jehovah his God, to whom he addressed himself in prayer upon the lonely mountain's side, and in the garden's solitary gloom. That strength so abundantly given is here gratefully acknowledged, and made the subject of joy. The Man of Sorrows is now anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Returned in triumph from the overthrow of all his foes, he offers his own rapturous Te Deum in the temple above, and joys in the power of the Lord. Herein let every subject of King Jesus imitate the King; let us lean upon Jehovah's strength, let us joy in it by unstaggering faith, let us exult in it in our thankful songs. Jesus not only has thus rejoiced, but he shall do so as he sees the power of divine grace bringing out from their sinful hiding-places the purchase of his soul's travail; we also shall rejoice more and more as we learn by experience more and more fully the strength of the arm of our covenant.
God. Our weakness unstrings our harps, but his strength tunes them anew. If we cannot sing a note in honour of our own strength, we can at any rate rejoice in our omnipotent God.

"And in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" Everything is ascribed to God; the source is thy strength and the stream is thy salvation. Jehovah planned and ordained it, works it and crowns it, and therefore it is his salvation. The joy here spoken of is described by a note of exclamation and a word of wonder: "how greatly!" The rejoicing of our risen Lord must, like his agony, be unutterable. If the mountains of his joy rise in proportion to the depth of the valleys of his grief, then his sacred bliss is high as the seventh heaven. For the joy which was set before him as he endured the cross, despising the shame, and now that joy daily grows, for he rests in his love and rejoices over his redeemed with singing, as in due order they are brought to find their salvation in his blood. Let us with our Lord rejoice in salvation, as coming from God, as coming to us, as extending itself to others, and as soon to encompass all lands. We need not be afraid of too much rejoicing in this respect; this solid foundation will well sustain the loftiest edifice of joy. The shoutings of the early methodists in the excitation of the joy were far more pardonable than our own lukewarmness. Our joy should have some sort of inexpressibleness in it.

Verse 2. "Thou hast given him his heart's desire." That desire he ardently pursued when he was on earth, both by his prayer, his actions, and his suffering; he manifested that his heart longed to redeem his people, and now in heaven he has his desire granted him, for he sees his beloved coming to be with him where he is. The desires of the Lord Jesus were from his heart, and the Lord heard them; if our hearts are right with God, he will in our case also "fulfil the desires of them that fear him."

"And hast not withholden the request of his lips." What is in the well of the heart is sure to come up in the bucket of the lips, and those are the only true prayers where the heart's desire is first, and the lip's request follows after. Jesus prayed vocally as well as mentally; speech is a great assistance to thought. Some of us feel that even when alone we find it easier to collect our thoughts when we can pray aloud. The requests of the Saviour were not withheld. He was and still is a prevailing Pleader. Our Advocate on high returns not empty from the throne of grace. He asked for his elect in the eternal council-chamber, he asked for blessings for them here, he asked for glory for them hereafter, and his requests have speeded. He is ready to ask for us at the mercy-seat. Have we not at this hour some desire to send up to his Father by him? Let us not be slack to use our willing, loving, all-prevailing Intercessor.

"Selah." Here a pause is very properly inserted that we may admire the blessed success of the king's prayers, and that we may prepare our own requests.
which may be presented through him. If we had a few more quiet rests, a few more Selahs in our public worship, it might be profitable.

Verse 3. "For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness." The word prevent formerly signified to precede or go before, and assuredly Jehovah preceded his Son with blessings. Before he died saints were saved by the anticipated merit of his death, before he came believers saw his day and were glad, and he himself had his delights with the sons of men. The Father is so willing to give blessings through his Son, that instead of his being constrained to bestow his grace, he outstrips the Mediatorial march of mercy. "I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you." Before Jesus calls the Father answers, and while he is yet speaking he hears. Mercies may be bought with blood, but they are also freely given. The love of Jehovah is not caused by the Redeemer's sacrifice, but that love, with its blessings of goodness, preceded the great atonement, and provided it for our salvation. Reader, it will be a happy thing for thee if, like thy Lord, thou canst see both providence and grace preceding thee, forestalling thy needs, and preparing thy path. Mercy, in the case of many of us, ran before our desires and prayers, and it ever outruns our endeavours and expectancies, and even our hopes are left to lag behind. Prevenient grace deserves a song; we may make one out of this sentence; let us try. All our mercies are to be viewed as "blessings;" gifts of a blessed God, meant to make us blessed; they are "blessings of goodness," not of merit, but of free favour; and they come to us in a preventing way, a way of prudent foresight, such as only preventing love could have arranged. In this light the verse is itself a sonnet!

"Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head." Jesus wore the thorn-crown, but now wears the glory-crown. It is a "crown," indicating royal nature, imperial power, deserved honour, glorious conquest, and divine government. The crown is of the richest, rarest, most resplendent, and most lasting order—"gold," and that gold of the most refined and valuable sort, "pure gold," to indicate the excellence of his dominion. This crown is set upon his head most firmly, and whereas other monarchs find their diadems fitting loosely, his is fixed so that no power can move it, for Jehovah himself has set it upon his brow. Napoleon crowned himself, but Jehovah crowned the Lord Jesus; the empire of the one melted in an hour, but the other has an abiding dominion. Some versions read, "a crown of precious stones;" this may remind us of those beloved ones who shall be as jewels in his crown, of whom he has said, "They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels." May we be set in the golden circlet of the Redeemer's glory, and adorn his head for ever!
Verse 4. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever." The first words may suit King David, but the length of days for ever and ever can only refer to the King Messiah. Jesus, as man, prayed for resurrection and he received it, and now possesses it in immortality. He died once, but being raised from the dead he dieth no more. "Because I live, ye shall live also," is the delightful intimation which the Saviour gives us, that we are partakers of his eternal life. We had never found this jewel, if he had not rolled away the stone which covered it.

Verse 5. "His glory is great in thy salvation." Immanuel bears the palm; he once bore the cross. The Father has glorified the Son, so that there is no glory like unto that which surroundeth him. See his person as it is described by John in the Revelation; see his dominion as it stretches from sea to sea; see his splendour as he is revealed in flaming fire. Lord, who is like unto thee? Solomon in all his glory could not be compared with thee, thou once despised Man of Nazareth! Mark, reader: salvation is ascribed to God; and thus the Son, as our Saviour, magnifies his Father; but the Son's glory is also greatly seen, for the Father glorifies his Son.

"Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him." Parkhurst reads, "splendour and beauty." These are put upon Jesus as chains of gold, and stars and tokens of honour are placed upon princes and great men. As the wood of the tabernacle was overlaid with pure gold, so is Jesus covered with glory and honour. If there be a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory for his humble followers, what must there be for our Lord himself? The whole weight of sin was laid upon him; it is but meet that the full measure of the glory of bearing it away should be laid upon the same beloved person. A glory commensurate with his shame he must and will receive, for well has he earned it. It is not possible for us to honour Jesus too much; what our God delights to do, we may certainly do to our utmost. Oh for new crowns for the lofty brow which once was marred with thorns!

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

 Verse 6. "For thou hast made him most blessed for ever." He is most blessed in himself, for he is God over all, blessed for ever; but this relates to him as our Mediator, in which capacity blessedness is given to him as a reward. The margin has it, thou hast set him to be blessings; he is an overflowing wellspring of blessings to others, a sun filling the universe with light. According as the Lord sware unto Abraham, the promised seed is an everlasting source of
blessings to all the nations of the earth. He is set for this, ordained, appointed, made incarnate with this very design, that he may bless the sons of men. Oh that sinners had sense enough to use the Saviour for that end to which he is ordained, viz., to be a Saviour to lost and guilty souls.

"Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." He who is a blessing to others cannot but be glad himself; the unbounded good-doing of Jesus ensures him unlimited joy. The loving favour of his Father, the countenance of God, gives Jesus exceeding joy. This is the purest stream to drink of, and Jesus chooses no other. His joy is full. Its source is divine. Its continuance is eternal. Its degree exceeding all bounds. The countenance of God makes the Prince of Heaven glad; how ought we to seek it, and how careful should we be lest we should provoke him by our sins to hide his face from us! Our anticipations may cheerfully fly forward to the hour when the joy of our Lord shall be shed abroad on all the saints, and the countenance of Jehovah shall shine upon all the blood-bought. So shall we "enter into the joy of our Lord."

So far all has been "the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast." Let us shout and sing with them, for Jesus is our King, and in his triumphs we share a part.

Verse 7. "For the king trusteth in the Lord." Our Lord, like a true King and leader, was a master in the use of the weapons, and could handle well the shield of faith, for he has set us a brilliant example of unwavering confidence in God. He felt himself safe in his Father's care until his hour was come, he knew that he was always heard in heaven; he committed his cause to him that judgeth right, and in his last moments he committed his spirit into the same hands. The joy expressed in the former verses was the joy of faith, and the victory achieved was due to the same precious grace. A holy confidence in Jehovah is the true mother of victories. This psalm of triumph was composed long before our Lord's conflict began, but faith overleaps the boundaries of time, and chants her "Io triumphe," while yet she sings her battle song.

"Through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved." Eternal mercy secures the mediatorial throne of Jesus. He who is Most High in every sense, engages all his infinite perfections to maintain the throne of grace upon which our King in Zion reigns. He was not moved from his purpose, nor in his sufferings, nor by his enemies, nor shall he be moved from the completion of his designs. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Other empires are dissolved by the lapse of years, but eternal mercy maintains his growing dominion evermore; other kings fail because they rest upon an arm of flesh, but our monarch reigns on in splendour because he trusteth in Jehovah. It is a great display of divine mercy to men that the throne of King Jesus is still among
them: nothing but divine mercy could sustain it, for human malice would
everturn it to-morrow if it could. We ought to trust in God for the promotion of
the Redeemer's kingdom, for in Jehovah the King himself trusts: all
unbelieving methods of action, and especially all reliance upon mere human
ability, should be for ever discarded from a kingdom where the monarch sets
the examples of walking by faith in God.

Verse 8. "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find
out those that hate thee." The destruction of the wicked is a fitting subject for
joy to the friends of righteousness; hence here, and in most scriptural songs, it
is noted with calm thanksgiving. "Thou hast put down the mighty from their
seats," is a note of the same song which sings, "and hast exalted them of low
degree." We pity the lost for they are men, but we cannot pity them as enemies
of Christ. None can escape from the wrath of the victorious King, nor is it
desirable that they should. Without looking for his flying foes he will find them
with his hand, for his presence is about and around them. In vain shall any hope
for escape, he will find out all, and be able to punish all, and that too with the
ease and rapidity which belong to the warrior's right hand. The finding out
relates, we think, not only to the discovery of the hiding places of the haters of
God, but to the touching of them in their tenderest parts, so as to cause the
severest suffering. When he appears to judge the world hard hearts will be
subdued into terror, and proud spirits humbled into shame. He who has the key
of human nature can touch all its springs at his will, and find out the means of
bringing the utmost confusion and terror upon those who aforetime boastfully
expressed their hatred of him.

Verse 9. "Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger."
They themselves shall be an oven to themselves, and so their own tormentors.
Those who burned with anger against thee shall be burned by thine anger. The
fire of sin will be followed by the fire of wrath. Even as the smoke of Sodom
and Gomorrah went up to heaven, so shall the enemies of the Lord Jesus be
utterly and terribly consumed. Some read it, "thou shalt put them as it were into
a furnace of fire." Like faggots cast into an oven they shall burn furiously
beneath the anger of the Lord; "they shall be cast into a furnace of fire, there
shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." These are terrible words, and those
teachers do not well who endeavour by their sophistical reasonings to weaken
their force. Reader, never tolerate slight thoughts of hell, or you will soon have
low thoughts of sin. The hell of sinners must be fearful beyond all conception,
or such language as the present would not be used. Who would have the Son of
God to be his enemy when such an overthrow awaits his foes? The expression,
"the time of thine anger," reminds us that as now is the time of his grace, so
there will be a set time for his wrath. The judge goes upon assize at an appointed time. There is a day of vengeance of our God; let those who despise the day of grace remember this day of wrath.

"The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them." Jehovah will himself visit with his anger the enemies of his Son. The Lord Jesus will, as it were, judge by commission from God, whose solemn assent and co-operation shall be with him in his sentences upon impenitent sinners. An utter destruction of soul and body, so that both shall be swallowed up with misery, and be devoured with anguish, is here intended. Oh, the wrath to come! The wrath to come! Who can endure it? Lord, save us from it, for Jesu's sake.

Verse 10. "Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth." Their life's work shall be a failure, and the result of their toil shall be disappointment. That in which they prided themselves shall be forgotten; their very names shall be wiped out as abominable, "and their seed from among the children of men." Their posterity following in their footsteps shall meet with a similar overthrow, till at last the race shall come to an end. Doubtless the blessing of God is often handed down by the righteous to their sons, as almost a heirloom in the family, while the dying sinner bequeaths a curse to his descendants. If men will hate the Son of God, they must not wonder if their own sons meet with no favour.

Verse 11. "For they intended evil against thee." God takes notice of intentions. He who would but could not is as guilty as he who did. Christ's church and cause are not only attacked by those who do not understand it, but there are many who have the light and yet hate it. Intentional evil has a virus in it which is not found in sins of ignorance; now as ungodly men with malice aforethought attack the gospel of Christ, their crime is great, and their punishment will be proportionate. The words "against thee" show us that he who intends evil against the poorest believer means ill to the King himself: let persecutors beware.

"They imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform." Want of power is the clog on the foot of the haters of the Lord Jesus. They have the wickedness to imagine, and the cunning to devise, and the malice to plot mischief, but blessed be God, they fail in ability; yet they shall be judged as to their hearts, and the will shall be taken for the deed in the great day of account.

When we read the boastful threatenings of the enemies of the gospel at the present day, we may close our reading by cheerfully repeating, "which they are not able to perform." The serpent may hiss, but his head is broken; the lion may worry, but he cannot devour: the tempest may thunder, but cannot strike. Old Giant Pope bites his nails at the pilgrims, but he cannot pick their bones as
aforetime. Growling forth a hideous "non possumus," the devil and all his allies retire in dismay from the walls of Zion, for the Lord is there.

Verse 12. "Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them." For a time the foes of God may make bold advances, and threaten to overthrow everything, but a few ticks of the clock will alter the face of their affairs. At first they advance impudently enough, but Jehovah meets them to their teeth, and a taste of the sharp judgment of God speedily makes them flee in dismay. The original has in it the thought of the wicked being set as a butt for God to shoot at, a target for his wrath to aim at. What a dreadful situation! As an illustration upon a large scale, remember Jerusalem during the siege; and for a specimen in an individual, read the story of the death-bed of Francis Spira. God takes sure aim; who would be his target? His arrows are sharp and transfixed the heart; who would wish to be wounded by them? Ah, ye enemies of God, your boastings will soon be over when once the shafts begin to fly!

Verse 13. "Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength." A sweet concluding verse. Our hearts shall join in it. It is always right to praise the Lord when we call to remembrance his goodness to his Son, and the overthrow of his foes. The exaltation of the name of God should be the business of every Christian; but since such poor things as we fail to honour him as he deserves, we may invoke his own power to aid us. Be high, O God, but do thou maintain thy loftiness by thine own almightiness, for no other power can worthily do it.

"So will we sing and praise thy power." For a time the saints may mourn, but the glorious appearance of their divine Helper awakens their joy. Joy should always flow in the channel of praise. All the attributes of God are fitting subjects to be celebrated by the music of our hearts and voices, and when we observe a display of his power, we must extol it. He wrought our deliverance alone, and he alone shall have the praise.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. The last Psalm was a litany before the king went forth to battle. This is apparently a Te Deum on his return.—J. J. Stewart Perowne, B.D., in the "Book of Psalms: a New Translation, with Introduction and Notes," 1864.

Whole Psalm. The prayer which the church offers up at the conclusion of the preceding Psalm now issues in a hymn of praise, the result of a believing view of the glory which is to follow, when Messiah's sufferings are ended. This is one of the beautiful songs of which we find many in Scripture, prepared by the
Holy Spirit to awaken and enliven the hopes and expectations of the church while she waits for the Lord, and to give utterance to her joy at the time of his arrival. The theme is Messiah's exaltation and glory, and the time chosen for its delivery is just the moment when darkness covered the earth, and all nature seemed about to die with its expiring Lord. Scripture deals largely in contrasts. It seems to be suitable to the human mind to turn from one extreme to another. Man can endure any change, however violent and contradictory, but a long continuance, a sameness either of joy or sorrow, has a debilitating and depressing effect.—R. H. Ryland.

Whole Psalm. "After this I looked. . . . and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." Revelation 4:1, 2. Such may be considered as the description of this Psalm, after the foregoing prayer. "He who in the preceding Psalm," says St. Jerome, "was prayed for as having taken the form of a servant, in this is King of kings, and Lord of lords."—Isaac Williams.

Whole Psalm. I am persuaded that there is not one who consents to the application of the preceding Psalm to Christ in his trouble, who will fail to recognise in this, Christ in his triumph. There he was in the dark valley—the valley of Achor; now he is on the mount of Zion; there he was enduring sorrow and travail; now he remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a spiritual seed is born into the world; there he was beset with deadly enemies, who encompassed him on every side; but here he has entered upon that which is written in Psalm 78:65, 66, "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach."—Hamilton Verschoyle.

Whole Psalm. As you have already observed in the heading of this Psalm, it is said to have been composed by David. He wrote of himself in the third person, and as "the king." He penned the Psalm, not so much for his own use, as for his people's. It is, in fact, a national anthem, celebrating the majesty and glory of David, but ascribing both to God—expressing confidence in David's future, but building that confidence upon God alone.—Samuel Martin, in "Westminster Chapel Pulpit," 1860.

Verse 1. "Thy strength. . . . thy salvation." So you have two words, "virtus and salus," strength and salvation. Note them well; for not virtus without salus, not salus without virtus, neither without the other is full, nor both without Tua Domine. In virtute is well, so it have in salute after it. For not in strength alone is there matter of joy, every way considered. No, not in God's strength, if it have not salvation behind it. Strength, not to smite us down, but strength to deliver; this is the joyful side. Now turn it the other way. As strength, if it end
Psalm 21

Verse 1. "In thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice." Oh, it is good rejoicing in the strength of that arm which shall never wither, and in the shadow of those wings which shall never cast their feathers! In him that is not there yesterday and here to-day, but the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! For as he is, so shall the joy be.—Launcelot Andrews.

Verse 2. "Thou hast given him the desire of his soul." He desired to eat the passover, and to lay down his life when he would, and again when he would to take it; and thou hast given it to him. "And hast not deprived him of the good pleasure of his lips." "My peace," saith he, "I leave with you;" and it was done.—Augustine, in loc.

Verse 2 (first clause). Good men are sure to have out their prayers either in money, or in money's worth, as they say—in that very thing, or a better.—John Trapp.


Verse 3. "For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head." The Son of God could not be more ready to ask for the blessings of the divine goodness, than the Father was to give them; and his disposition is the same towards all his adopted sons. Christ, as King and Priest, weareth a crown of glory, represented by the purest and most resplendent of metals—gold. He is pleased to esteem his saints, excelling in different virtues, as the rubies, the sapphires, and the emeralds, which grace and adorn that crown. Who would not be ambitious of obtaining a place therein?—George Horne.

Verse 3. "Thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness." As if he should say, "Lord, I never asked for a kingdom, I never thought of a kingdom, but thou hast prevented me with the blessings of thy goodness." . . . . . From whence I take up this note or doctrine, that it is a sweet thing and worthy of all our thankful acknowledgments, to be prevented with the blessings of God's goodness, or God's good blessings. . . . It is no new thing for God to walk in a way of preventing love and mercy with the children of men. Thus he hath always dealt, doth deal, and will deal; thus he hath always dealt with the world, with the nations of the world, with great towns and places, with families, and with particular souls. . . . As for particular souls, you know how it was with
Matthew the publican, sitting at the receipt of custom. "Come and follow me," says Christ; preventing of him. And you know how it was with Paul: "I was a blasphemer, and I was a persecutor, but I obtained mercy." How so? Did he seek it first? "No," says he, "I went breathing out threatenings against the people of God, and God met me, and unhorsed me; God prevented me with his grace and mercy." Thus Paul. And pray tell me what do you think of that whole chapter of Luke—the fifteenth? There are three parables: the parable of the lost groat, of the lost sheep, and of the lost son. The woman lost her groat, and swept to find it; but did the groat make first toward the woman, or the woman make after the groat first? The shepherd lost his sheep, but did the sheep make first after the shepherd, or the shepherd after the sheep? Indeed, it is said concerning the lost son, that he first takes up a resolution, "I will return home to my father," but when his father saw him afar off, he ran and met him, and embraced him, and welcomed him home. Why? But to show that the work of grace and mercy shall be all along carried on in a way of preventing love.—Condensed from William Bridge, 1600-1670.

Verse 3. "For thou hast prevented him with the blessings of sweetness." Because he had first quaffed the blessings of thy sweetness, the gall of our sins did not hurt him.—Augustine.

Verse 3. "Thou preventest him." The word "prevent" is now generally used to represent the idea of hindrance. "Thou preventest him," would mean commonly, "Thou hinderest him." But here the word "prevent" means to go before. Thou goest before him with the blessings of thy goodness as a pioneer, to make crooked ways straight, and rough places smooth; or, as one who strews flowers in the path of another, to render the way beautiful to the eye and pleasant to the tread.—Samuel Martin.

Verse 3 (first clause). The text is an acknowledgment of God's goodness. God has anticipated David's wants; and he writes, "Thou preventest—thou goest before him—with goodness." The words "blessings of goodness" suggest that God's gifts are God's love embodied and expressed. And this greatly enhances the value of our blessings— that they are cups as full of God and of God's kindness as of happiness and blessedness.—Samuel Martin.

Verse 3 (first clause). A large portion of our blessing is given us before our asking or seeking. Existence, reason, intellect, a birth in a Christian land, the calling of our nation to the knowledge of Christ, and Christ himself, with many other things, are unsought bestowed on men, as was David's right to the throne on him. No one ever asked for a Saviour till God of his own motion promised "the seed of the woman."—William S. Plumer.
Verse 3. "Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head." Christ may be said to have a fourfold glory, or crown. 1. As God co-essential with the Father; "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Hebrews 1:1, 2, 3. 2. He hath a crown and glory as Mediator, in respect of the power, authority, and glory wherewith he is invested as God's great deputy, and anointed upon the hill of Zion, having power, and a rod of iron, even in reference to enemies. 3. He hath a crown and glory in respect of the manifestation of his glory in the executing of his offices, when he makes his mediating power and glory apparent in particular steps: thus sometimes he is said to take his power to him (Revelation 11:17); and is said to be crowned when the white horse of the gospel rides in triumph. Revelation 6:2. The last step of this glory will be in the day of judgment; in short, this consists in his exercising his former power committed to him as Mediator. 4. There is a crown and glory which is in a manner put on him by particular believers, when he is glorified by them, not by adding anything to his infinite glory, but by their acknowledging of him to be so.—James Durham, 1622-1658.

Verse 3. "The crown of pure gold" has respect to his exaltation at the right hand of God, where he is crowned with glory and honour, and this "crown" being of "pure gold," denotes the purity, glory, solidity, and perpetuity of his kingdom.—John Gill.

Verse 4. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever." The glory of God is concerned in Christ's living for ever—1. The glory of his faithfulness: for eternal life and blessedness were pledged to Immanuel in covenant as the reward of his work (Psalm 110:1-4; Isaiah 9:6, 7, etc.); and it was in the anticipation and confident hope of this, that he "endured the cross, despising the shame." Hebrews 12:2; Psalm 16:8-11. 2. The glory of his justice. The justice of God was honoured and fully satisfied in all its righteous demands by the death of Christ. His subsequent life is the expression on the part of God of that satisfaction. His perpetual life is a permanent declaration that in him and his finished work the everlasting righteousness of Jehovah rests for ever satisfied. Death can "never more have dominion over him:" for to inflict the penalty again would be a violation of justice. 3. The glory of his grace. The glory of this grace he now lives actively to promote. John 17:2. By living "ever" at God's right hand, he appears as an eternal memorial of God's love in making him our Mediator and Substitute—our Saviour from sin and wrath; and his permanent appearance there will keep all heaven perpetually in mind that "by the grace of God they are what they are," owing all to the sovereign mercy of God through Jesus Christ. He shall appear as the blessed medium through which all the gifts and joys of salvation shall
flow to the guilty for evermore. Thus the power of God and all his moral attributes secure the perpetuity of the life of the risen and exalted Saviour.—Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.

Verse 4. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him." He asked a resurrection, saying, "Father, glorify thy Son;" and thou gavest it him. "Length of days for ever and ever." The prolonged ages of this world which the church was to have, and after them an eternity, world without end.—Augustine.

Verse 4. "He asked life of thee," etc. Thus God is better to his people than their prayers; and when they ask but one blessing, he answereth them as Naaman did Gehazi, with, Nay, take two. Hezekiah asked but one life, and God gave him fifteen years, which we reckon at two lives and more. He giveth liberally and like himself; as great Alexander did when he gave the poor beggar a city; and when he sent his schoolmaster a ship full of frankincense, and bade him sacrifice freely.—John Trapp.

Verses 4-8. If David had before been without the symbol of his royal dignity, namely, the diadem, he was the more justified in praising the goodness of God, which had now transferred it from the head of an enemy to his own.—Augustus F. Tholuck.

Verse 5. "His glory is great in thy salvation." I remember one dying, and hearing some discourse of Jesus Christ; "Oh," said she, "speak more of this—let me hear more of this—be not weary of telling his praise; I long to see him, how should I but long to hear of him?" Surely I cannot say too much of Jesus Christ. On this blessed subject no man can possibly hyperbolise. Had I the tongues of men and angels, I could never fully set forth Christ. It involves an eternal contradiction, that the creature can see to the bottom of the Creator. Suppose all the sands on the sea-shore, all the flowers, herbs, leaves, twigs of trees in woods and forests, all the stars of heaven, were all rational creatures; and had they that wisdom and tongues of angels to speak of the loveliness, beauty, glory, and excellency of Christ, as gone to heaven, and sitting at the right hand of his Father, they would, in all their expressions, stay millions of miles on this side Jesus Christ. Oh, the loveliness, beauty, and glory of his countenance! Can I speak, or you hear of such a Christ? And are we not all in a burning love, in a seraphical love, or at least in a conjugal love? O my heart, how is it thou art not love sick? How is it thou dost not charge the daughters of Jerusalem as the spouse did: "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye shall tell him, that I am sick of love." Canticles 5:8.—Isaac Ambrose.
Verse 5. "Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him." If it be demanded whether Christ were exalted unto his glory and dignity, according to both his natures, both his Godhead and his manhood, I answer, according to both. According to his Godhead, not as it is considered in itself, but inasmuch as his Godhead, which from his birth unto his death did little show itself, after his resurrection was made manifest in his manhood; for, as the apostle saith (Romans 1:4), "He was declared mighty to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead," even by the resurrection and after his resurrection from the dead, he which was thought only to be man, was most plainly manifested likewise to be God. Now, as touching his manhood, he was therein exalted unto highest majesty in the heavenly places, not only shaking off all infirmities of man's nature, but also being beautified and adorned with all qualities of glory, both in his soul and in his body, yet so that he still retaineth the properties of a true body, for even as he was man, he was set at the right hand of the Father, to rule and reign over all, till all his enemies be destroyed, and put under his feet. To knit up all in a word, Christ, God and man, after his resurrection, was crowned with glory and honour, even such as plainly showed him to be God, and was set on the throne of God, there to rule and reign as sovereign Lord and King, till he come in the clouds to judge both quick and dead. Here, then, is both matter of comfort and consolation unto the godly, and likewise for fear and astonishment unto the wicked and ungodly.—Henry Airway, 1560-1616.

Verse 5 (last clause). Christ was "a man of sorrows" on earth, but he is full of joy in heaven. He that "wipes away all tears from the eyes of his people," surely has none in his own. There was a joy set before him before he suffered, and doubtless it was given him, when he sat down at God's right hand. We may take the latter to be an actual donation of the former; the joy he had in prospect when he suffered he had in possession when he came to his throne. This is the time of his receiving the Father's public approbation, and the tokens of his love, before the whole heavenly assembly, which must be matter of great joy to him who so much valued and delighted in his Father's love.—John Hurrion, 1675-1731.

Verse 5. Happy he who hath a bone, or an arm, to put the crown upon the head of our highest King, whose chariot is paved with love. Were there ten thousand millions of heavens created above these highest heavens, and again as many above them, and as many above them, till angels were wearied with counting, it were but too low a seat to fix the princely throne of that Lord Jesus (whose ye are) above them all.—Samuel Rutherford.

Verse 6. "Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." Though this be metamorphically used for favour, yet is the speech not all metaphor, and that well-experienced Christians will tell you.—Zachary Bogan, in "The Mirth of a Christian Life." 1653.

Verse 6 (first clause). Literally, as in the Bible marginal translation, "Thou hast set him to be blessings for ever." Most truly said of the King in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.—Richard Mant.

Verse 8. "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee." By a kind of climax in the form of expression, "hand," is followed by "right hand," a still more emphatic sign of active strength. To "find," in this connection, includes the ideas of detecting and reaching. Compare 1 Samuel 23:17; Isaiah 10:10; in the latter of which places the verb is construed with a preposition (Heb.), as it is in the first clause of the verse before us, whereas in the other clause it governs the noun directly. If any difference of meaning was intended, it is probably not greater than that between find and find out in English.—Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 8. "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee." Saul killed himself, for fear of falling into the hands of his enemies, and thought death less terrible than the shame that he would have endured in seeing himself in their power. What will it be then "to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31), of an offended God? of God unchangeably determined to be avenged? "Who can stand before his indignation?" says the prophet Nahum (chap. 1:6). Who will dare look on him? Who will dare show himself? "Who may abide the day of his coming" (Malachi 3:2) without shuddering and fainting for fear? If Joseph's brethren were so terrified that they "could not answer him," when he said, "I am Joseph your brother," how will it be with sinners, when they shall hear the voice of the Son of God, when he shall triumph over them in his wrath, and say unto them, "I am he" whom ye despised; "I am he" whom ye have offended; "I am he" whom ye have crucified? If these words, "I am he," overthrew the soldiers in the garden of Olives (John 18:6), though spoken with extreme gentleness, how will it be when his indignation bursts forth, when it falls upon his enemies like a thunderbolt, and reduces them into dust? Then will they cry out in terror, and say to the mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth
on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Revelation 6:16.—James Nouet.

Verse 8. "Thine hand shall find out," etc. It is not meant only of a discovery of a person (though it be a truth, that the Lord will discover all that are his enemies), but thine hand shall find them out, is, it shall take hold of them, grasp them, and arrest them. "Thine hand shall find out" all "thine enemies," though close, though covert enemies; not only thy above-ground enemies, but thy under-ground enemies; as well those that undermine thee, as those that assault thee.—Joseph Caryl.

Verse 9. "Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them." How then shall it fare with sinners, when, after all, shall come that general fire so often foretold, which shall either fall from heaven, or ascend out of hell, or (according to Albertus Magnus), proceed from both, and shall devour and consume all it meets with? Whither shall the miserable fly, when that river of flames, or (to say better), that inundation and deluge of fire shall so encompass them, as no place of surety shall be left; where nothing can avail but a holy life; when all besides shall perish, in that universal ruin of the whole world? What lamentations were in Rome, when it burnt for seven days together! What shrieks were heard in Troy, when it was wholly consumed with flames! What howling and astonishment in Pentapolis, when those cities were destroyed with fire from heaven! What weeping there was in Jerusalem, when they beheld the house of God, the glory of their kingdom, the wonder of the world, involved in fire and smoke! Imagine what these people felt; they saw their houses and goods on fire, and no possibility of saving them; when the husband heard the shrieks and cries of his dying wife; the father, of his little children; and, unawares, perceived himself so encompassed with flames, that he could neither relieve them, nor free himself. What shall it then profit the worldlings, to have rich vessels of gold and silver, curious embroideries, precious tapestries, pleasant gardens, sumptuous palaces, and all what the world now esteems, when they shall with their own eyes, behold their costly palaces burnt, their rich and curious pieces of gold melted, and their flourishing and pleasant orchards consumed, without power to preserve them or themselves? All shall burn, and with it the world, and all the memory and fame of it shall die; and that which mortals thought to be immortal, shall then end and perish.—Jeremy Taylor.

Verse 9. "Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger." They shall not only be cast into a furnace of fire (Matthew 13:42), but he shall make them themselves as a fiery oven or furnace, they shall be their own
tormentors, the reflections and terrors of their own consciences will be their hell. Those that might have had Christ to rule and save them, but rejected him, and fought against him, even the remembrance of that will be enough to make them to eternity a fiery oven to themselves.—Matthew Henry.

Verse 9. "Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven:" thou shalt make them on fire within, by the consciousness of their ungodliness: "In the time of thy countenance;" in the time of thy manifestation.—Augustine.

Verse 9. "As a fiery oven," where the burning is extremely hot, the heat striking upon what is in it from all sides, above, below, and about, on all hands, and the door closed from going out, or from suffering any cool refreshment to come in.—David Dickson.

Verse 9. "As a fiery oven." Shall make them like a vault of fire, literally, "an oven," as in our translation, or "furnace of fire." Bishop Horsley remarks, "It describes the smoke of the Messiah's enemies perishing by fire, ascending like the smoke of a furnace. 'The smoke of their torments shall ascend for ever and ever.'" How awfully grand is that description of the ruins of the cities of the plain, as the prospect struck on Abraham's eye on the fatal morning of their destruction! "And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." Milton puts it—

"Overhead the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
And flying vaulted either host with fire."

Richard Mant.

Verse 9. The Chaldee reads:—"The fire of Gehenna, or hell."—John Morison.

Verse 9. "The time of thine anger." If God be willing to pour out his heavy displeasure upon those that displease him, what can hinder his mighty arm from performing? Creatures indeed may be angry, but oftentimes, like drones without stings, cannot hurt; as cannons charged with powder without shot only make a roaring; like the Pope's Bulls, threaten many, hurt none but those whose conscience is enslaved. Saul may be angry at David, but cannot find him out; but from God's all-piercing eye none can hide himself. Satan may desire to kill Job, Jonah may be angry till death for Nineveh's preservation; yet God puts a bit in both their mouths, who, if he be angry, nothing can be holden out of his reach. Princes, if they take captives, may have them rescued from them again, as Lot was from the King of Sodom; bought with a price, as Joseph of the
Ishmaelites. But no power can rescue us from God's anger, no ransom but Christ's blood redeem us. God's will being set afoot, all his attributes follow; if his will say, Be angry, his eye seek out the object of his anger, and finds it; his wisdom tempers the cup, his hand whets the sword, his arm strikes the blow. Thus you see there is a time of God's anger for sin, because he will have it so.—John Cragge.

Verse 9. "The fire shall devour them." Being troubled by the vengeance of the Lord, after the accusation of their conscience, they shall be given up to eternal fire to be devoured.—Augustine.

Verse 9. I have read that a frown of Queen Elizabeth killed Sir Christopher Hatton, the Lord Chancellor of England. What then shall the frowns of the King of nations do? If the rocks rend, the mountains melt, and the foundations of the earth tremble under his wrath; how will the ungodly sinner appear when he comes in all his royal glory to take vengeance on all that knew him not, and that obeyed not his glorious gospel?—Charles Bradbury.

Verse 10. "Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men." A day is coming when all the "fruits" of sin, brought forth by sinners in their words, their writings, and their actions shall be "destroyed;" yea, the tree itself, which had produced them, shall be rooted up, and cast into the fire. The "seed" and posterity of the wicked, if they continue in the way of their forefathers, will be punished like them. Let parents consider, that upon their principles and practices may depend the salvation or destruction of multitudes after them. The case of the Jews, daily before their eyes, should make them tremble.—George Horne.

Verse 11. "They intended," or warped. Hebrew, have bent or stretched. A similitude taken from weavers, who warp their yarn before they weave: or from archers, who, when they have bent their bow and put in their arrow, do take their aim.—John Diodati.

Verse 12. "Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back," or thou shalt set them as a butt, "when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them." The judgments of God are called his "arrows," being sharp, swift, sure and deadly. What a dreadful situation, to be set as a mark and "butt" at which these arrows are directed! View Jerusalem encompassed by the Roman armies without, and torn to pieces by the animosity of desperate and bloody factions within! No farther commentary is requisite upon this verse.—George Horne.
HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The joy of Jesus and of his people in the strength and salvation of God.

Verses 1, 2. The doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ contained in the text, may be considered under three heads:
   I. As an answer to prayer.
   II. His joy therein—even in the resurrection.
   III. As a necessary appendage to this—our own individual concern in his glory and in his joy. Hamilton Verschoyle.

Verse 2. The successful Advocate.

Verse 3 (first clause). Preventing mercies.

Verse 3 (first clause). GOD GOING BEFORE US, or God's anticipation of our necessities by his merciful dispensations. God prevents us with the blessings of his goodness:
   I. When we come into the world.
   II. When we become personal transgressors.
   III. When we enter upon the duties and upon the cares of mature life.
   IV. When, in the general course of life, we enter upon new paths.
   V. In the dark "valley of the shadow of death."
   VI. By giving us many mercies without our asking for them; and thus creating occasion, not for prayer, but for praise only.
   VII. By opening to us the gate of heaven, and by storing heaven with every provision for our blessedness.—Samuel Martin.

Verse 3 (second clause). Jesus crowned.
   I. His previous labours.
   II. The dominion bestowed.
   III. The character of the crown.
   IV. The divine coronant.


Verse 5. The glory of the Mediator.

Verse 6. The blessedness of Jesus.

Verse 7. Jesus, and example of faith and of its results.
Verse 8. The secret sinner unearthed, and deprived of all hope of concealment.

Verses 8, 9. The certainty and terror of the punishment of the wicked.

Verses 11, 12. The guilt and punishment of evil intentions.

Verse 12. The retreat of the grand army of hell.

   I. God exalted.
   II. God alone exalted.
   III. God exalted by his own strength.
   IV. His people singing his praise.
Psalm 22

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

TITLE. "To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar. A Psalm of David." This ode of singular excellence was committed to the most excellent of the temple songsters; the chief among ten thousand is worthy to be extolled by the chief Musician; no meaner singer must have charge of such a strain; we must see to it that we call up our best abilities when Jesus is the theme of praise. The words Aijeleth Shahar are enigmatical, and their meaning is uncertain; some refer them to a musical instrument used upon mournful occasions, but the majority adhere to the translation of our margin, "Concerning the kind of the morning." This last interpretation is the subject of much enquiry and conjecture. Calmet believed that the psalm was addressed to the music master who presided over the band called the "Morning Hind," and Adam Clarke thinks this to be the most likely of all the conjectural interpretations, although he himself inclines to the belief that no interpretation should be attempted, and believes that it is a merely arbitrary and unmeaning title, such as Orientals have always been in the habit of appending to their songs. Our Lord Jesus is so often compared to a hind, and his cruel huntings are so pathetically described in this most affecting psalm, that we cannot but believe that the title indicates the Lord Jesus under a well-known poetical metaphor; at any rate, Jesus is the Hind of the morning concerning whom David here sings.

SUBJECT. This is beyond all others THE PSALM OF THE CROSS. It may have been actually repeated word by word by our Lord when hanging on the tree; it would be too bold to say that it was so, but even a casual reader may see that it might have been. It begins with, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and ends, according to some, in the original with "It is finished." For plaintive expressions uprising from unutterable depths of woe we may say of this psalm, "there is none like it." It is the photograph of our Lord's saddest hours, the record of his dying words, the lachrymatory of his last tears, the memorial of his expiring joys. David and his afflictions may be here in a very modified sense, but, as the star is concealed by the light of the sun, he who sees Jesus will probably neither see nor care to see David. Before us we have a description both of the darkness and of the glory of the cross, the sufferings of Christ and the glory which shall follow. Oh for grace to draw near and see this great sight! We should read reverently, putting off our shoes from off our feet, as Moses did at the burning bush, for if there be holy ground anywhere in Scripture it is in this psalm.

DIVISION. From the commencement to the twenty-first verse is a most pitiful cry for help, and from verse 21 to 31 is a most precious foretaste of deliverance. The first division may be subdivided at the tenth verse, from verse 1 to 10 being an appeal based upon covenant relationship; and from verse 10 to 21 being an equally earnest plea derived from the imminence of his peril.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was the startling cry of Golgotha: Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani. The Jews mocked, but the angels adored when Jesus cried this exceeding bitter cry. Nailed to the tree we behold our great Redeemer in extremities, and what see we? Having ears to hear let us hear, and having eyes to see let us see! Let us gaze with holy wonder, and mark the flashes of light amid the awful darkness of that midday-midnight. First, our Lord's faith beams forth and deserves our reverent imitation; he keeps his hold upon his God with both hands and cries twice, "My God, my God!" The spirit
of adoption was strong within the suffering Son of Man, and he felt no doubt about his interest in his God. Oh that we could imitate this cleaving to an afflicting God! Nor does the sufferer distrust the power of God to sustain him, for the title used—"El"—signifies strength, and is the name of the Mighty God. He knows the Lord to be the all-sufficient support and succour of his spirit, and therefore appeals to him in the agony of grief, but not in the misery of doubt. He would fain know why he is left, he raises that question and repeats it, but neither the power nor the faithfulness of God does he mistrust. What an enquiry is this before us! "Why hast thou forsaken me?" We must lay the emphasis on every word of this saddest of all utterances. "Why?" what is the great cause of such a strange fact as for God to leave his own Son at such a time and in such a plight? There was no cause in him, why then was he deserted? "Hast:" it is done, and the Saviour is feeling its dread effect as he asks the question; it is surely true, but how mysterious! It was no threatening of forsaking which made the great Surety cry aloud, he endured that forsaking in very deed. "Thou:" I can understand why traitorous Judas and timid Peter should be gone, but thou, my God, my faithful friend, how canst thou leave me? This is worst of all, yea, worse than all put together. Hell itself has for its fiercest flame the separation of the soul from God. "Forsaken:" if thou hadst chastened I might bear it, for thy face would shine; but to forsake me utterly, ah! why is this? "Me:" thine innocent, obedient, suffering Son, why leavest thou me to perish? A sight of self seen by penitence, and of Jesus on the cross seen by faith will best expound this question. Jesus is forsaken because our sins had separated between us and our God.

"Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" The Man of Sorrows had prayed until his speech failed him, and he could only utter moanings and groanings as men do in severe sicknesses, like the roarings of a wounded animal. To what extremity of grief was our Master driven? What strong crying and tears were those which made him too hoarse for speech! What must have been his anguish to find his own beloved and trusted Father standing afar off, and neither granting help nor apparently hearing prayer! This was good cause to make him "roar." Yet there was reason for all this which those who rest in Jesus as their Substitute well know.

Verse 2. "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not." For our prayers to appear to be unheard is no new trial, Jesus felt it before us, and it is observable that he still held fast his believing hold on God, and cried still, "My God." On the other hand his faith did not render him less importunate, for amid the hurry and horror of that dismal day he ceased not his cry, even as in Gethsemane he had agonized all through the gloomy night. Our Lord continued to pray even though no comfortable answer came, and in this he set us an
example of obedience to his own words, "men ought always to pray, and not to
faint." No daylight is too glaring, and no midnight too dark to pray in; and no
delay or apparent denial, however grievous, should tempt us to forbear from
importunate pleading.

Verse 3. "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."
However ill things may look, there is no ill in thee, O God! We are very apt to
think and speak hardly of God when we are under his afflicting hand, but not so
the obedient Son. He knows too well his Father's goodness to let outward
circumstances libel his character. There in no unrighteousness with the God of
Jacob, he deserves no censure; let him do what he will, he is to be praised, and
to reign enthroned amid the songs of his chosen people. If prayer be
unanswered it is not because God is unfaithful, but for some other good and
weighty reason. If we cannot perceive any ground for the delay, we must leave
the riddle unsolved, but we must not fly in God's face in order to invent an
answer. While the holiness of God is in the highest degree acknowledged and
adored, the afflicted speaker in this verse seems to marvel how the holy God
could forsake him, and be silent to his cries. The argument is, thou art holy,
Oh! why is it that thou dost disregard thy holy One in his hour of sharpest
anguish? We may not question the holiness of God, but we may argue from it,
and use it as a plea in our petitions.

Verse 4. "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver
them." This is the rule of life with all the chosen family. Three times over is it
mentioned, they trusted, and trusted, and trusted, and never left off trusting, for
it was their very life; and they fared well too, for thou didst deliver them. Out of
all their straits, difficulties, and miseries faith brought them by calling their
God to the rescue; but in the case of our Lord it appeared as if faith would bring
no assistance from heaven, he alone of all the trusting ones was to remain
without deliverance. The experience of other saints may be a great consolation
to us when in deep waters if faith can be sure that their deliverance will be ours;
but when we feel ourselves sinking, it is poor comfort to know that others are
swimming. Our Lord here pleads the past dealings of God with his people as a
reason why he should not be left alone; here again he is an example to us in the
skilful use of the weapon of all prayer. The use of the plural pronoun "our"
shows how one with his people Jesus was even on the cross. We say, "Our
Father which art in heaven," and he calls those "our fathers" through whom we
came into the world, although he was without father as to the flesh.

Verse 5. "They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and
were not confounded." As if he had said, "How is it that I am now left without
succour in my overwhelming grieves, while all others have been helped? We
may remind the Lord of his former lovingkindnesses to his people, and beseech him to be still the same. This is true wrestling; let us learn the art. Observe, that ancient saints cried and trusted, and that in trouble we must do the same; and the invariable result was that they were not ashamed of their hope, for deliverance came in due time; this same happy portion shall be ours. The prayer of faith can do the deed when nothing else can. Let us wonder when we see Jesus using the same pleas as ourselves, and immersed in griefs far deeper than our own.

Verse 6. "But I am a worm, and no man." This verse is a miracle in language. How could the Lord of glory be brought to such abasement as to be not only lower than the angels, but even lower than men. What a contrast between "I AM" and "I am a worm"! yet such a double nature was found in the person of our Lord Jesus when bleeding upon the tree. He felt himself to be comparable to a helpless, powerless, down-trodden worm, passive while crushed, and unnoticed and despised by those who trod upon him. He selects the weakest of creatures, which is all flesh; and becomes, when trodden upon, writhing, quivering flesh, utterly devoid of any might except strength to suffer. This was a true likeness of himself when his body and soul had become a mass of misery—the very essence of agony—in the dying pangs of crucifixion. Man by nature is but a worm; but our Lord puts himself even beneath man, on account of the scorn that was heaped upon him and the weakness which he felt, and therefore he adds, "and no man." The privileges and blessings which belonged to the fathers he could not obtain while deserted by God, and common acts of humanity were not allowed him, for he was rejected of men; he was outlawed from the society of earth, and shut out from the smile of heaven. How utterly did the Saviour empty himself of all glory, and become of no reputation for our sakes! "A reproach of men"—their common butt and jest; a byword and a proverb unto them: the sport of the rabble, and the scorn of the rulers. Oh the caustic power of reproach, to those who endure it with patience, yet smart under it most painfully! "And despised of the people." The vox populi was against him. The very people who would once have crowned him then contemned him, and they who were benefited by his cures sneered at him in his woes. Sin is worthy of all reproach and contempt, and for this reason Jesus, the Sinbearer, was given up to be thus unworthily and shamefully entreated.

Verse 7. "All they that see me laugh me to scorn." Read the evangelistic narrative of the ridicule endured by the Crucified One, and then consider, in the light of this expression, how it grieved him. The iron entered into his soul. Mockery has for its distinctive description "cruel mockings," those endured by our Lord were of the most cruel kind. The scornful ridicule of our Lord was
universal; all sorts of men were unanimous in the derisive laughter, and vied with each other in insulting him. Priests and people, Jews and Gentiles, soldiers and civilians, all united in the general scoff, and that at the time when he was prostrate in weakness and ready to die. Which shall we wonder at the most, the cruelty of man or the love of the bleeding Saviour? How can we ever complain of ridicule after this?

"They shoot out the lip, they shake the head." These were gestures of contempt. Pouting, grinning, shaking of the head, thrusting out of the tongue, and other modes of derision were endured by our patient Lord; men made faces at him before whom angels vail their faces and adore. The basest signs of disgrace which disdain could devise were maliciously cast at him. They punned upon his prayers, they made matter for laughter of his sufferings, and set him utterly at nought. Herbert sings of our Lord as saying,—

"Shame tears my soul, my body many a wound;
Sharp nails pierce this, but sharper that confound;
Reproaches which are free, while I am bound.
Was ever grief like mine?"

Verse 8. "Saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." Here the taunt is cruelly aimed at the sufferer's faith in God, which is the tenderest point in a good man's soul, the very apple of his eye. They must have learned the diabolical art from Satan himself, for they made rare proficiency in it. According to Matthew 27:39-44, there were five forms of taunt hurled at the Lord Jesus; this special piece of mockery is probably mentioned in this psalm because it is the most bitter of the whole; it has a biting, sarcastic irony in it, which gives it a peculiar venom; it must have stung the Man of Sorrows to the quick. When we are tormented in the same manner, let us remember him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, and we shall be comforted. On reading these verses one is ready, with Trapp, to ask, Is this a prophecy or a history? for the description is so accurate. We must not lose sight of the truth which was unwittingly uttered by the Jewish scoffers. They themselves are witnesses that Jesus of Nazareth trusted in God: why then was he permitted to perish? Jehovah had aforetime delivered those who rolled their burdens upon him: why was this man deserted? Oh that they had understood the answer! Note further, that their ironical jest, "seeing he delighted in him," was true. The Lord did delight in his dear Son, and when he was found in fashion as a man, and became obedient unto death, he still was well pleased with him. Strange mixture! Jehovah delights in him, and yet bruises him; is well pleased, and yet slays him.
Verse 9. "But thou art he that took me out of the womb." Kindly providence attends with the surgery of tenderness at every human birth; but the Son of Man, who was marvelously begotten of the Holy Ghost, was in an especial manner watched over by the Lord when brought forth by Mary. The destitute state of Joseph and Mary, far away from friends and home, led them to see the cherishing hand of God in the safe delivery of the mother, and the happy birth of the child; that Child now fighting the great battle of his life, uses the mercy of his nativity as an argument with God. Faith finds weapons everywhere. He who wills to believe shall never lack reasons for believing. "Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts." Was our Lord so early a believer? Was he one of those babes and sucklings out of whose mouths strength is ordained? So it would seem; and if so, what a plea for help! Early piety gives peculiar comfort in our after trials, for surely he who loved us when we were children is too faithful to cast us off in our riper years. Some give the text the sense of "gave me cause to trust, by keeping me safely," and assuredly there was a special providence which preserved our Lord's infant days from the fury of Herod, the dangers of travelling, and the ills of poverty.

Verse 10. "I was cast upon thee from the womb." Into the Almighty arms he was first received, as into those of a loving parent. This is a sweet thought. God begins his care over us from the earliest hour. We are dandled upon the knee of mercy, and cherished in the lap of goodness; our cradle is canopied by divine love, and our first totterings are guided by his care. "Thou art my God from my mother's belly." The psalm begins with "My God, my God," and here, not only is the claim repeated, but its early date is urged. Oh noble perseverance of faith, thus to continue pleading with holy ingenuity of argument! Our birth was our weakest and most perilous period of existence; if we were then secured by Omnipotent tenderness, surely we have no cause to suspect that divine goodness will fail us now. He who was our God when we left our mother, will be with us till we return to mother earth, and will keep us from perishing in the belly of hell.

Verses 11-21. The crucified Son of David continues to pour out his complaint and prayer. We need much grace that while reading we may have fellowship with his sufferings. May the blessed Spirit conduct us into a most clear and affecting sight of our Redeemer's woes.

Verse 11. "Be not far from me." This is the petition for which he has been using such varied and powerful pleas. His great woe was that God had forsaken him, his great prayer is that he would be near him. A lively sense of the divine presence is a mighty stay to the heart in times of distress. "For trouble is near; for there is none to help." There are two "fors," as though faith gave a double
knock at mercy's gate; that is a powerful prayer which is full of holy reasons and thoughtful arguments. The nearness of trouble is a weighty motive for divine help; this moves our heavenly Father's heart, and brings down his helping hand. It is his glory to be our very present help in trouble. Our Substitute had trouble in his inmost heart, for he said, "the waters have come in, even unto my soul;" well might he cry, "be not far from me." The absence of all other helpers is another telling plea. In our Lord's case none either could or would help him, it was needful that he should tread the winepress alone; yet was it a sore aggravation to find that all his disciples had forsaken him, and lover and friend were put far from him. There is an awfulness about absolute friendlessness which is crushing to the human mind, for man was not made to be alone, and is like a dismembered limb when he has to endure heart-loneliness.

Verse 12. "Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round." The mighty ones in the crowd are here marked by the tearful eye of their victim. The priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, rulers, and captains bellowed round the cross like wild cattle, fed in the fat and solitary pastures of Bashan, full of strength and fury; they stamped and foamed around the innocent One, and longed to gore him to death with their cruelties. Conceive of the Lord Jesus as a helpless, unarmed, naked man, cast into the midst of a herd of infuriated wild bulls. They were brutal as bulls, many, and strong, and the Rejected One was all alone, and bound naked to the tree. His position throws great force into the earnest entreaty, "Be not far from me."

Verse 13. "They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." Like hungry cannibals they opened their blasphemous mouths as if they were about to swallow the man whom they abhorred. They could not vomit forth their anger fast enough through the ordinary aperture of their mouths, and therefore set the doors of their lips wide open like those who gape. Like roaring lions they howled out their fury, and longed to tear the Saviour in pieces, as wild beasts raven over their prey. Our Lord's faith must have passed through a most severe conflict while he found himself abandoned to the tender mercies of the wicked, but he came off victorious by prayer; the very dangers to which he was exposed being used to add prevalence to his entreaties.

Verse 14. Turning from his enemies, our Lord describes his own personal condition in language which should bring the tears into every loving eye. "I am poured out like water." He was utterly spent, like water poured upon the earth; his heart failed him, and had no more firmness in it than running water, and his whole being was made a sacrifice, like a libation poured out before the Lord. He had long been a fountain of tears; in Gethsemane his heart welled over in
sweat, and on the cross he gushed forth with blood; he poured out his strength and spirit, so that he was reduced to the most feeble and exhausted state. "All my bones are out of joint," as if distended upon a rack. Is it not most probable that the fastenings of the hands and feet, and the jar occasioned by fixing the cross in the earth, may have dislocated the bones of the Crucified One? If this is not intended, we must refer the expression to that extreme weakness which would occasion relaxation of the muscles and a general sense of parting asunder throughout the whole system. "My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels." Excessive debility and intense pain made his inmost life to feel like wax melted in the heat. The Greek liturgy uses the expression, "thine unknown sufferings," and well it may. The fire of Almighty wrath would have consumed our souls for ever in hell; it was no light work to bear as a substitute the heat of an anger so justly terrible. Dr. Gill wisely observes, "if the heart of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, melted at it, what heart can endure, or hands be strong, when God deals with them in his wrath?"

Verse 15. "My strength is dried up like a potsherd." Most complete debility is here portrayed; Jesus likens himself to a broken piece of earthenware, or an earthen pot, baked in the fire till the last particle of moisture is driven out of the clay. No doubt a high degree of feverish burning afflicted the body of our Lord. All his strength was dried up in the tremendous flames of avenging justice, even as the paschal lamb was roasted in the fire. "My tongue cleaveth to my jaws;" thirst and fever fastened his tongue to his jaws. Dryness and a horrible clamminess tormented his mouth, so that he could scarcely speak. "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death;" so tormented in every single part as to feel dissolved into separate atoms, and each atom full of misery; the full price of our redemption was paid, and no part of the Surety's body or soul escaped its share of agony. The words may set forth Jesus as having wrestled with Death until he rolled into the dust with his antagonist. Behold the humiliation of the Son of God! The Lord of Glory stoops to the dust of death. Amid the mouldering relics of mortality Jesus condescends to lodge!

Bishop Mant's version of the two preceding verses is forcible and accurate:—

"Pour'd forth like water is my frame;  
My bones asunder start;  
As wax that feels the searching flame,  
Within me melts my heart.  
My wither'd sinews shrink unstrung  
Like potsherd dried and dead:
Psalm 22

Cleaves to my jaws my burning tongue
The dust of death my bed."

Verse 16. We are to understand every item of this sad description as being urged by the Lord Jesus as a plea for divine help; and this will give us a high idea of his perseverance in prayer. "For dogs have compassed me." Here he marks the more ignoble crowd, who, while less strong than their brutal leaders, were not less ferocious, for there they were howling and barking like unclean and hungry dogs. Hunters frequently surround their game with a circle, and gradually encompass them with an ever-narrowing ring of dogs and men. Such a picture is before us. In the centre stands, not a panting stag, but a bleeding, fainting man, and around him are the enraged and unpitying wretches who have hounded him to his doom. Here we have the "hind of the morning" of whom the psalm so plaintively sings, hunted by bloodhounds, all thirsting to devour him. The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: thus the Jewish people were unchurched, and that which called itself an assembly of the righteous is justly for its sins marked upon the forehead as an assembly of the wicked. This is not the only occasion when professed churches of God have become synagogues of Satan, and have persecuted the Holy One and the Just. They pierced my hands and my feet. This can by no means refer to David, or to any one but Jesus of Nazareth, the once crucified but now exalted Son of God. Pause, dear reader, and view the wounds of thy Redeemer.

Verse 17. So emaciated was Jesus by his fastings and sufferings that he says, "I may tell all my bones." He could count and recount them. The posture of the body on the cross, Bishop Horne thinks, would so distend the flesh and skin as to make the bones visible, so that they might be numbered. The zeal of his Father's house had eaten him up; like a good soldier he had endured hardness. Oh that we cared less for the body's enjoyment and ease and more for our Father's business! It were better to count the bones of an emaciated body than to bring leanness into our souls.

"They look and stare upon me." Unholy eyes gazed insultingly upon the Saviours's nakedness, and shocked the sacred delicacy of his holy soul. The sight of the agonizing body ought to have ensured sympathy from the throng, but it only increased their savage mirth, as they gloated their cruel eyes upon his miseries. Let us blush for human nature, and mourn in sympathy with our Redeemer's shame. The first Adam made us all naked, and therefore the second Adam became naked that he might clothe our naked souls.

Verse 18. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." The garments of the executed were the perquisites of the executioners in most cases, but it was not often that they cast lots at the division of the spoil; this
incident shows how clearly David in vision saw the day of Christ, and how surely the Man of Nazareth is he of whom the prophets spake: "these things, therefore, the soldiers did." He who gave his blood to cleanse us gave his garments to clothe us. As Ness says, "this precious Lamb of God gave up his golden fleece for us." How every incident of Jesus' griefs is here stored up in the treasury of inspiration, and embalmed in the amber of sacred song; we must learn hence to be very mindful of all that concerns our Beloved, and to think much more of everything which has a connection with him. It may be noted that the habit of gambling is of all others the most hardening, for men could practise it even at the cross-foot while besprinkled with the blood of the Crucified. No Christian will endure the rattle of the dice when he thinks of this.

Verse 19. "But be thou not far from me, O Lord." Invincible faith returns to the charge, and uses the same means, viz., importunate prayer. He repeats the petition so piteously offered before. He wants nothing but his God, even in his lowest state. He does not ask for the most comfortable or nearest presence of God, he will be content if he is not far from him; humble requests speed at the throne. "O my strength, haste thee to help me." Hard cases need timely aid: when necessity justifies it we may be urgent with God as to time, and cry, "make haste;" but we must not do this out of willfulness. Mark how in the last degree of personal weakness he calls the Lord "my strength;" after this fashion the believer can sing, "when I am weak, then am I strong."

Verse 20. "Deliver my soul from the sword." By the sword is probably meant entire destruction, which as a man he dreaded; or perhaps he sought deliverance from the enemies around him, who were like a sharp and deadly sword to him. The Lord had said, "Awake, O sword," and now from the terror of that sword the Shepherd would fain be delivered as soon as justice should see fit. "My darling from the power of the dog." Meaning his soul, his life, which is most dear to every man. The original is, "my only one," and therefore is our soul dear, because it is our only soul. Would that all men made their souls their darlings, but many treat them as if they were not worth so much as the mire of the streets. The dog may mean Satan, that infernal Cerberus, that cursed and cursing cur; or else the whole company of Christ's foes, who though many in number were as unanimous as if there were but one, and with one consent sought to rend him in pieces. If Jesus cried for help against the dog of hell, much more may we. Cave canem, beware of the dog, for his power is great, and only God can deliver us from him. When he fawns upon us, we must not put ourselves in his power; and when he howls at us, we may remember that God holds him with a chain.
Verse 21. "Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns." Having experienced deliverance in the past from great enemies, who were strong as the unicorns, the Redeemer utters his last cry for rescue from death, which is fierce and mighty as the lion. This prayer was heard, and the gloom of the cross departed. Thus faith, though sorely beaten, and even cast beneath the feet of her enemy, ultimately wins the victory. It was so in our Head, it shall be so in all the members. We have overcome the unicorn, we shall conquer the lion, and from both lion and unicorn we shall take the crown.

Verses 22-31. The transition is very marked; from a horrible tempest all is changed into calm. The darkness of Calvary at length passed away from the face of nature, and from the soul of the Redeemer, and beholding the light of his triumph and its future results the Saviour smiled. We have followed him through the gloom, let us attend him in the returning light. It will be well still to regard the words as a part of our Lord's soliloquy upon the cross, uttered in his mind during the last few moments before his death.

Verse 22. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." The delights of Jesus are always with his church, and hence his thoughts, after much distraction, return at the first moment of relief to their usual channel; he forms fresh designs for the benefit of his beloved ones. He is not ashamed to call them brethren, "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Among his first resurrection words were these, "Go to my brethren." In the verse before us, Jesus anticipates happiness in having communication with his people; he purposes to be their teacher and minister, and fixes his mind upon the subject of his discourse. The name, i.e., the character and conduct of God are by Jesus Christ's gospel proclaimed to all the holy brotherhood; they behold the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in him, and rejoice greatly to see all the infinite perfections manifested in one who is bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. What a precious subject is the name of our God! It is the only one worthy of the only Begotten, whose meat and drink it was to do the Father's will. We may learn from this resolution of our Lord, that one of the most excellent methods of showing our thankfulness for deliverances is to tell to our brethren what the Lord has done for us. We mention our sorrows readily enough; why are we so slow in declaring our deliverances? "In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Not in a little household gathering merely does our Lord resolve to proclaim his Father's love, but in the great assemblies of his saints, and in the general assembly and church of the first-born. This the Lord Jesus is always doing by his representatives, who are the heralds of salvation, and labour to praise God.
the great universal church Jesus is the One authoritative teacher, and all others, so far as they are worthy to be called teachers, are nothing but echoes of his voice. Jesus, in this second sentence, reveals his object in declaring the divine name, it is that God may be praised; the church continually magnifies Jehovah for manifesting himself in the person of Jesus, and Jesus himself leads the song, and is both precentor and preacher in his church. Delightful are the seasons when Jesus communes with our hearts concerning divine truth; joyful praise is the sure result.

Verse 23. *Ye that fear the Lord praise him.* The reader must imagine the Saviour as addressing the congregation of the saints. He exhorts the faithful to unite with him in thanksgiving. The description of "fearing the Lord" is very frequent and very instructive; it is the beginning of wisdom, and is an essential sign of grace. "I am a Hebrew and I fear God" was Jonah's confession of faith. Humble awe of God is so necessary a preparation for praising him that none are fit to sing to his honour but such as reverence his word; but this fear is consistent with the highest joy, and is not to be confounded with legal bondage, which is a fear which perfect love casteth out. Holy fear should always keep the key of the singing pew. Where Jesus leads the tune none but holy lips may dare to sing. *All ye the seed of Jacob glorify him.* The genius of the gospel is praise. Jew and Gentile saved by sovereign grace should be eager in the blessed work of magnifying the God of our salvation. All saints should unite in the song; no tongue may be silent, no heart may be cold. Christ calls us to glorify God, and can we refuse? *And fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.* The spiritual Israel all do this, and we hope the day will come when Israel after the flesh will be brought to the same mind. The more we praise God the more reverently shall we fear him, and the deeper our reverence the sweeter our songs. So much does Jesus value praise that we have it here under his dying hand and seal that all the saints must glorify the Lord.

Verse 24. *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted.* Here is good matter and motive for praise. The experience of our covenant Head and Representative should encourage all of us to bless the God of grace. Never was man so afflicted as our Saviour in body and soul from friends and foes, by heaven and hell, in life and death; he was the foremost in the ranks of the afflicted, but all those afflictions were sent in love, and not because his Father despised and abhorred him. *'Tis true that justice demanded that Christ should bear the burden which as a substitute he undertook to carry, but Jehovah always loved him, and in love laid that load upon him with a view to his ultimate glory and to the accomplishment of the dearest wish of his heart. Under all his woes our Lord was honourable in the Father's sight, the matchless
jewel of Jehovah's heart. "Neither hath he hid his face from him." That is to say, the hiding was but temporary, and was soon removed; it was not final and eternal. "But when he cried unto him, he heard." Jesus was heard in that he feared. He cried in extremis and de profundis, and was speedily answered; he therefore bids his people join him in singing a Gloria in excelsis.

Every child of God should seek refreshment for his faith in this testimony of the Man of Sorrows. What Jesus here witnesses is as true to-day as when it was first written. It shall never be said that any man's affliction or poverty prevented his being an accepted suppliant at Jehovah's throne of grace. The meanest applicant is welcome at mercy's door:—

"None that approach his throne shall find
A God unfaithful or unkind."

Verse 25. "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation." The one subject of our Master's song is the Lord alone. The Lord and the Lord only is the theme which the believer handleth when he gives himself to imitate Jesus in praise. The word in the original is "from thee,"—true praise is of celestial origin. The rarest harmonies of music are nothing unless they are sincerely consecrated to God by hearts sanctified by the Spirit. The clerk says, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God;" but the choir often sing to the praise and glory of themselves. Oh when shall our service of song be a pure offering? Observe in this verse how Jesus loves the public praises of the saints, and thinks with pleasure of the great congregation. It would be wicked on our part to despise the twos and threes; but, on the other hand, let not the little companies snarl at the greater assemblies as though they were necessarily less pure and less approved, for Jesus loves the praise of the great congregation. "I will pay my vows before them that fear him." Jesus dedicates himself anew to the carrying out of the divine purpose in fulfilment of his vows made in anguish. Did our Lord when he ascended to the skies proclaim amid the redeemed in glory the goodness of Jehovah? And was that the vow here meant? Undoubtedly the publication of the gospel is the constant fulfilment of covenant engagements made by our Surety in the councils of eternity. Messiah vowed to build up a spiritual temple for the Lord, and he will surely keep his word.

Verse 26. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied." Mark how the dying Lover of our souls solaces himself with the result of his death. The spiritually poor find a feast in Jesus, they feed upon him to the satisfaction of their hearts, they were famished until he gave himself for them, but now they are filled with royal dainties. The thought of the joy of his people gave comfort to our expiring Lord. Note the characters who partake of the benefit of his passion; "the meek,"
the humble and lowly. Lord, make us so. Note also the certainty that gospel provisions shall not be wasted, "they shall eat;" and the sure result of such eating, "and be satisfied." "They shall praise the Lord that seek him." For a while they may keep a fast, but their thanksgiving days must and shall come. "Your heart shall live for ever." Your spirits shall not fail through trial, you shall not die of grief, immortal joys shall be your portion. Thus Jesus speaks even from the cross to the troubled seeker. If his dying words are so assuring, what consolation may we not find in the truth that he ever liveth to make intercession for us! They who eat at Jesus' table receive the fulfilment of the promise, "Whosoever eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

Verse 27. In reading this verse one is struck with the Messiah's missionary spirit. It is evidently his grand consolation that Jehovah will be known throughout all places of his dominion. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord." Out from the inner circle of the present church the blessing is to spread in growing power until the remotest parts of the earth shall be ashamed of their idols, mindful of the true God, penitent for their offences, and unanimously earnest for reconciliation with Jehovah. Then shall false worship cease, "and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee," O thou only living and true God. This hope which was the reward of Jesus is a stimulus to those who fight his battles.

It is well to mark the order of conversion as here set forth; they shall "remember"—this is reflection, like the prodigal who came unto himself; "and turn unto Jehovah"—this is repentance, like Manasseh who left his idols and "worship"—this is holy service, as Paul adored the Christ whom once he abhorred.

Verse 28. "For the kingdom is the Lord's." As an obedient Son the dying Redeemer rejoiced to know that his Father's interests would prosper through his pains. "The Lord reigneth" was his song as it is ours. He who by his own power reigns supreme in the domains of creation and providence, has set up a kingdom of grace, and by the conquering power of the cross that kingdom will grow until all people shall own its sway and proclaim that "he is the governor among the nations." Amid the tumults and disasters of the present the Lord reigneth; but in the halcyon days of peace the rich fruit of his dominion will be apparent to every eye. Great Shepherd, let thy glorious kingdom come.

Verse 29. "All they that be fat upon earth," the rich and great are not shut out. Grace now finds the most of its jewels among the poor, but in the latter days the mighty of the earth "shall eat," shall taste of redeeming grace and dying love, and shall "worship" with all their hearts the God who deals so bountifully with us in Christ Jesus. Those who are spiritually fat with inward prosperity
shall be filled with the marrow of communion, and shall worship the Lord with peculiar fervour. In the covenant of grace Jesus has provided good cheer for our high estate, and he has taken equal care to console us in our humiliation, for the next sentence is, "all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him."

There is relief and comfort in bowing down to God when our case is at its worst; even amid the dust of death prayer kindles the lamp of hope.

While all who come to God by Jesus Christ are thus blessed, whether they be rich or poor, none of those who despise him may hope for a blessing. "None can keep alive his own soul." This is the stern counterpart of the gospel message of "look and live." There is no salvation out of Christ. We must hold life, and have life as Christ's gift, or we shall die eternally. This is very solid evangelical doctrine, and should be proclaimed in every corner of the earth, that like a great hammer it may break in pieces all self-confidence.

Verse 30. "A seed shall serve him." Posterity shall perpetuate the worship of the Most High. The kingdom of truth on earth shall never fail. As one generation is called to its rest, another will arise in its stead. We need have no fear for the true apostolic succession; that is safe enough. "It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." He will reckon the ages by the succession of the saints, and set his accounts according to the families of the faithful. Generations of sinners come not into the genealogy of the skies. God's family register is not for strangers, but for the children only.

Verse 31. "They shall come." Sovereign grace shall bring out from among men the bloodbought ones. Nothing shall thwart the divine purpose. The chosen shall come to life, to faith, to pardon, to heaven. In this the dying Saviour finds a sacred satisfaction. Toiling servant of God, be glad at the thought that the eternal purpose of God shall suffer neither let nor hindrance. "And shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born." None of the people who shall be brought to God by the irresistible attractions of the cross shall be dumb, they shall be able to tell forth the righteousness of the Lord, so that future generations shall know the truth. Fathers shall teach their sons, who shall hand it down to their children; the burden of the story always being "that he hath done this," or, that "It is finished." Salvation's glorious work is done, there is peace on earth, and glory in the highest. "It is finished," these were the expiring words of the Lord Jesus, as they are the last words of this Psalm. May we by living faith be enabled to see our salvation finished by the death of Jesus!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS
Title.—_Aijeleth Shahar_. The title of the twenty-second Psalm is _Aijeleth Shahar—the morning hart_. The whole Psalm refers to Christ, containing much that cannot be applied to another: parting his garments, casting lots for his vesture, etc. He is described as a kindly, meek and beautiful hart, started by the huntsman at the dawn of the day. Herod began hunting him down as soon as he appeared. Poverty, the hatred of men, and the temptation of Satan, joined in the pursuit. There always was some "dog," or "bull," or "unicorn," ready to attack him. After his first sermon the huntsmen gathered about him, but he was too fleet of foot, and escaped. The church had long seen the Messiah "like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains," had "heard the voice of her Beloved," and had cried out, "Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills;" sometimes he was even seen, with the dawn of the day, in the neighbourhood of the temple, and beside the enclosures of the vineyards. The church requested to see him "on the mountains of Bether," and upon "the mountains of spices." The former probably signifying the place of his sufferings, and the latter the sublime acclivities of light, glory, and honour, where the "hart" shall be hunted no more. But in the afternoon, the huntsmen who had been following the "young roe" from early day-break, had succeeded in driving him to the mountains of Bether. Christ found Calvary a craggy, jagged, and fearful hill—"a mountain of division." Here he was driven by the huntsmen to the edges of the awful precipices yawning destruction from below, while he was surrounded and held at bay by all the beasts of prey and monsters of the infernal forest. The "unicorn," and the "bulls of Bashan," gored him with their horns; the great "lion" roared at him; and the "dog" fastened himself upon him. But he foiled them all. In his own time he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. He was buried in a new grave; and his assailants reckoned upon complete victory. They had not considered that he was a "morning hart." Surely enough, at the appointed time, did he escape from the hunter's net, and stand forth on the mountains of Israel ALIVE, and _never_, NEVER to die again. Now he is with Mary in the garden, giving evidence of his own resurrection; in a moment he is at Emmaus, encouraging the too timid and bewildered disciples. Nor does it cost him any trouble to go thence to Galilee to his friends, and again to the Mount of Olives, "on the mountains of spices," _carrying with him the day-dawn_, robed in life and beauty for ever more._Christmas Evans, 1766-1838._

Title. It will be very readily admitted that the _hind_ is a very appropriate emblem of the suffering and persecuted righteous man who meets us in this Psalm. . . . That the _hind_ may be a figurative expression significant of suffering innocence, is put beyond a doubt by the fact, that the wicked and the persecutors in this Psalm, _whose peculiar physiognomy is marked by emblems drawn from the_
brute creation, are designed by the terms dogs, lions, bulls, etc. E. W. Hengstenberg.

Title. "The hind." Much extraordinary symbolism has by old authors been conjured up and clustered around the hind. According to their curious natural history, there exists a deadly enmity between the deer and the serpent, and the deer by its warm breath draws serpents out of their holes in order to devour them. The old grammarians derived Elaphas, or hart, from elaunein tous opheis, that is, of driving away serpents. Even the burning a portion of the deer's horns was said to drive away all snakes. If a snake had escaped the hart after being drawn out by the hart by its breath, it was said to be more vehemently poisonous than before. The timidity of the deer was ascribed to the great size of its heart, in which they thought was a bone shaped like a cross. Condensed from Wood's "Bible Animals," by C. H. S.

Whole Psalm. This is a kind of gem among the Psalms, and is peculiarly excellent and remarkable. It contains those deep, sublime, and heavy sufferings of Christ, when agonising in the midst of the terrors and pangs of divine wrath and death, which surpass all human thought and comprehension. I know not whether any Psalm throughout the whole book contains matter more weighty, or from which the hearts of the godly can so truly perceive those sighs and groans, inexpressible by man, which their Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, uttered when conflicting for us in the midst of death, and in the midst of the pains and terrors of hell. Wherefore this Psalm ought to be most highly prized by all who have any acquaintance with temptations of faith and spiritual conflicts. Martin Luther.

Whole Psalm. This Psalm, as it sets out the sufferings of Christ to the full, so also his three great offices. His sufferings are copiously described from the beginning of the Psalm to verse 22. The prophetic office of Christ, from verse 22 to verse 25. That which is foretold about his vows (verse 25), hath respect to his priestly function. In the rest of the Psalm the kingly office of Christ is set forth. William Gouge, D.D. (1575-1653), in "A Commentary on the whole Epistle to the Hebrews." [Reprinted in Nichol's Series of Commentaries.]

Whole Psalm. This Psalm seems to be less a prophecy than a history. Cassiodorus.

Whole Psalm. This Psalm must be expounded, word for word, entire and in every respect, of Christ only; without any allegory, trope, or anagoge. Bakius, quoted by F. Delitzsch, D.D., on Hebrews, ii. 12.

Verse 1. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We contrast this with John 16:32, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." That these words in David were notwithstanding the words of Christ, there is no true believer ignorant; yet how cross our Lord's words in John! Answer:— It is one thing to speak out of present sense of misery, another thing to be confident of a never-separated Deity. The condition of Christ in respect of his human state (not the divine), is in all outward appearances, like ours; we conceive the saints' condition very lamentable at times, as if God were for ever gone. And Christ (to teach us to cry after God the Father, like children after the mother, whose very stepping but at the door, oftimes makes the babe believe, and so saith that his father is gone for ever), presents in his own sufferings how much he is sensible of ours in that case. As for his divine nature, he and his Father can never sunder in that, and so at no time is he alone, but the Father is always with him. William Streat, in "The Dividing of the Hoof," 1654.

Verse 1. "My God, my God," etc. There is a tradition that our Lord, hanging on the cross, began, as we know from the gospel, this Psalm; and repeating it and those that follow, gave up his most blessed spirit when he came to the sixth verse of the thirty-first Psalm. However that may be, by taking these first words on his lips, he stamped the Psalm as belonging to himself. Ludolph, the Carthusian (circa.1350), in J. M. Neale's Commentary.

Verse 1. "My God, my God," etc. It was so sharp, so heavy an affliction to Christ's soul, that it caused him who was meek under all other sufferings as a lamb, to roar under this like a lion. For so much those words of Christ signify, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" It comes from a root that signifies to howl or roar as a lion, and rather signifies the noise made by a wild beast than the voice of a man. And it is as much as if Christ had said, O my God, no words can express my anguish, I will not speak, but roar, howl out my complaints. Pour it out in volleys of groans. I roar as a lion. It's no small matter will make that majestic creature to roar. And sure so great a spirit as Christ's would not have roared under a slight burden.

Did God really forsake Jesus Christ upon the cross? then from the desertion of Christ singular consolation springs up to the people of God; yea, manifold consolation. Principally it's a support in these two respects, as it is preventive of your final desertion, and a comfortable pattern to you in your present sad desertions. 1. Christ's desertion is preventive of your final desertion. Because he was forsaken for a time you shall not be forsaken for ever. For he was
forsaken for you. It is every way as much for the dear Son of God, the darling
delight of his soul, to be forsaken of God for a time, as if such a poor
inconsiderable thing as thou art shouldst be cast off to eternity. Now, this being
equivalent and borne in thy room, must needs give thee the highest security in
the world that God will never finally withdraw from thee. 2. Moreover, this sad
desertion of Christ becomes a comfortable pattern to poor deserted souls in
divers respects; and the proper business of such souls, at such times, is to eye it
believingly. Though God deserted Christ, yet at the same time he powerfully
supported him. His omnipotent arms were under him, though his pleased face
was hid from him. He had not indeed his smiles, but he had his supportsations.
So, Christian, just so shall it be with thee. Thy God may turn away his face, he
will not pluck away his arm. When one asked of holy Mr. Baines how the case
stood with his soul, he answered, "Supports I have, though suavities I want."

Our Father in this deals with us as we ourselves sometimes do with a child that
is stubborn and rebellious. We turn him out of doors and bid him begone out of
our sight, and there he sighs and weeps; but however for the humbling of him,
we will not presently take him into house and favour; yet we order, at least
permit the servants to carry him meat and drink: here is fatherly care and
support, though no former smiles or manifested delights. . . . Though God
forsook Christ, yet at that time he could justify God. So you read, "O my God
(saith he), I cry in the day time; but thou hearest not, and in the night season,
and am not silent; but thou art holy." Is not thy spirit according to thy measure,
framed like Christ's in this; canst thou not, say even when he writes bitter
things against thee, he is a holy, faithful and good God for all this! I am deserted
but not wronged. There is not one drop of injustice in all the sea of my sorrows.
Though he condemned me I must and will justify him: this also is Christ-like.

John Flavel.

Verse 1. "My God, my God." The repetition is expressive of fervent desire—
"My God," in an especial sense, as in his words after the resurrection to Mary
Magdalene, "I ascend unto my God, and your God;" "My God," not as the Son
of God only, but in that nature which he hath assumed, as the beloved Son in
whom the Father is well pleased; who is loved of the Father and who loveth the
Father more than the whole universe. It is observed that this expression, "My
God," is three times repeated. Dionysius, quoted by Isaac Williams.

Verse 1. "My God." It was possible for Christ by faith to know that he was
beloved of God, and he did know that he was beloved of God, when yet as to
sense and feeling he tasted of God's wrath. Faith and the want of sense are not
inconsistent; there may be no present sense of God's love, nay, there may be a
present sense of his wrath, and yet there may be faith at the same time. John Row's "Emmanuel," 1680.

Verse 1. This word, "My God," takes in more than all the philosophers in the world could draw out of it. Alexander Wedderburn, 1701.

Verse 1. That there is something of a singular force, meaning, and feeling in these words is manifest from this—the evangelists have studiously given us this verse in the very words of the Hebrew, in order to show their emphatic force. And moreover I do not remember any one other place in the Scriptures where we have this repetition, ELI, ELI. Martin Luther.

Verse 1. "Why?" Not the "why" of impatience or despair, not the sinful questioning of one whose heart rebels against his chastening, but rather the cry of a lost child who cannot understand why his father has left him, and who longs to see his father's face again. J. J. Stewart Perowne.

Verse 1. "My roaring." (Heb.), seems primarily to denote the roaring of a lion; but, as applied to intelligent beings, it is generally expressive of profound mental anguish poured forth in audible and even vehement strains. Psalm 38:9; 33:3; Job 3:24. Thus did the suffering Messiah pour forth strong crying and tears, to him that was able to save him from death. Hebrews 5:7. John Morison.

Verse 1. When Christ complains of having been forsaken by God, we are not to understand that he was forsaken by the First Person, or that there was a dissolution of the hypostatic union, or that he lost the favour and friendship of the Father; but he signifies to us that God permitted his human nature to undergo those dreadful torments, and to suffer an ignominious death, from which he could, if he chose, most easily deliver him. Nor did such complaints proceed either from impatience or ignorance, as if Christ were ignorant of the cause of his suffering, or was not most willing to bear such abandonment in his suffering; such complaints were only a declaration of his most bitter sufferings. And whereas, through the whole course of his passion, with such patience did our Lord suffer, as not to let a single groan or sigh escape from him, so now, lest the bystanders may readily believe that he was rendered impassible by some superior power; therefore, when his last moments were nigh he protests that he is true man, truly passible; forsaken by his Father in his sufferings, the bitterness and acuteness of which he then intimately felt. Robert Bellarmine (Cardinal), 1542-1621.

Verse 1. Divines are wont commonly to say, that Christ, from the moment of his conception, had the sight of God, his human soul being immediately united
to the Deity, Christ from the very moment of his conception had the sight of God. Now for our Saviour, who had known experimentally how sweet the comfort of his Father's face had been, and had lived all his days under the warm beams and influences of the Divinity, and had had his soul all along refreshed with the sense of the Divine presence, for him to be left in that horror and darkness, as to have no taste of comfort, no glimpse of the Divinity breaking in upon his human soul, how great an affliction must that needs be unto him! *John Row.*

*Verse 1.* Desertion is in itself no sin; for Christ endured its bitterness, ay, he was so deep in it, that when he died, he said, "*Why hast thou forsaken me?*" A total, a final desertion ours is not; partial the best have had and have. God turns away his face, David himself is troubled: "*The just shall live by faith,*" and not by feeling. *Richard Capel.*

*Verse 1.* Oh! how will our very hearts melt with love, when we remember that as we have been distressed for our sins against him; so he was in greater agonies for us? We have had gall and wormwood, but he tasted a more bitter cup. The anger of God has dried up our spirits, but he was scorched with a more flaming wrath. He was under violent pain in the garden, and on the cross; ineffable was the sorrow that he felt, being forsaken of his Father, deserted by his disciples, affronted and reproached by his enemies, and under a curse for us. This Sun was under a doleful eclipse, this living Lord was pleased to die, and in his death was under the frowns of an angry God. That face was then hid from him that had always smiled before; and his soul felt that horror and that darkness which it had never felt before. So that there was no separation between the divine and human nature, yet he suffered pains equal to those which we had deserved to suffer in hell for ever. God so suspended the efficacies of his grace that it displayed in that hour none of its force and virtue on him. He had no comfort from heaven, none from his angels, none from his friends, even in that sorrowful hour when he needed comfort most. Like a lion that is hurt in the forest, so he roared and cried out, though there was no despair in him; and when he was forsaken, yet there was trust and hope in these words, "*My God, my God.*" *Timothy Rogers.*

*Verse 1.* Here is comfort to deserted souls; Christ himself was deserted; therefore, if thou be deserted, God dealeth no otherwise with thee than he did with Christ. Thou mayest be beloved of God and not feel it; Christ was so, he was beloved of the Father, and yet he had no present sense and feeling of his love. This may be a great comfort to holy souls under the suspension of those comforts and manifestations which sometimes they have felt; Christ himself underwent such a suspension, therefore such a suspension of divine comfort
may consist with God's love. Thou mayest conclude possibly, "I am a hypocrite, and therefore God hath forsaken me;" this is the complaint of some doubting Christians, "I am a hypocrite, and therefore God hath forsaken me;" but thou hast no reason so to conclude: there was no failure in Christ's obedience, and yet Christ was forsaken in point of comfort; therefore desertion, in point of comfort, may consist with truth of grace, yea, with the highest measure of grace; so it did in our Saviour. John Row.

Verse 1. Lord, thou knowest what it is for a soul to be forsaken, it was sometime thine own case when thou complainedst, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" not, O my Lord! but that thou hadst a divine supportment, but thou hadst not (it seemeth) that inward joy which at other times did fill thee; now thou art in thy glory, pity a worm in misery, that mourns and desires more after thee than all things: Lord, thou paidst dear for my good, let good come unto me. Joseph Symonds, 1658.

Verse 2. "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not," etc. How like is this expostulation to that of a human child with its earthly parent! It is based on the ground of relationship—"I am thine; I cry day and night, yet I am not heard. Thou art my God, yet nothing is done to silence me. In the daytime of my life I cried; in this night season of my death I intreat. In the garden of Gethsemane I occupied the night with prayers; with continual ejaculations have I passed through this eventful morning. O my God, thou hast not yet heard me, therefore am I not yet silent; I cannot cease till thou answerest." Here Christ urges his suit in a manner which none but filial hearts adopt. The child knows that the parent yearns over him. His importunity is strengthened by confidence in paternal love. He keeps not silence, he gives him no rest because he confides in his power and willingness to grant the desired relief. This is natural. It is the argument of the heart, an appeal to the inward yearnings of our nature. It is also scriptural, and is thus stated, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:13. John Stevenson, in "Christ on the Cross," 1842.

Verse 2. The princely prophet says, "Lord, I cry unto thee in the daytime, but thou hearest not, also in the night time, and yet this is not to be thought folly to me." (Septuagint version.) Some perhaps would think it a great point of folly
for a man to cry and call unto him who stops his ears, and seems not to hear. Nevertheless, this folly of the faithful is wiser than all the wisdom of the world. For we know well enough, that howsoever God seem at the first not to hear, yet the Lord is a sure refuge in due time—in affliction. Psalm 9:9. Thomas Playfere.

Verses 2, 3. Well, what hears God from him, now he hears nothing from God, as to the deliverance prayed for? No murmuring at God's proceedings; nay, he hears quite the contrary, for he justifies and praises God: "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabittest the praises of Israel." Observe whether thou canst not gather something from the manner of God's denying the thing prayed for, which may sweeten it to thee! Haply thou shalt find he denies thee, but it is with a smiling countenance, and ushers it in with some expressions of grace and favour, that may assure thee his denial proceeds not from displeasure. As you would do with a dear friend, who, may be, comes to borrow a sum of money of you; lend it you dare not, because you see plainly it is not for his good; but in giving him the denial, lest he should misinterpret it, as proceeding from want of love and respect, you preface it with some kind of language of your hearty affection to him, as that you love him, and therefore deny him, and shall be ready to do for him more than that comes to. Thus God sometimes wraps up his denials in such sweet intimations of love, as prevents all jealousies arising in the hearts of his people. William Gurnall.

Verses 2, 3. They that have conduit-water come into their houses, if no water come they do not conclude the spring to be dry, but the pipes to be stopped or broken. If prayer speed not, we must be sure that the fault is not in God, but in ourselves; were we but ripe for mercy, he is ready to extend it to us, and even waits for the purpose. John Trapp.

Verse 3. "But thou art holy." Here is the triumph of faith—the Saviour stood like a rock in the wide ocean of temptation. High as the billows rose, so did his faith, like the coral rock, wax greater and stronger till it became an island of salvation to our shipwrecked souls. It is as if he had said, "It matters not what I endure. Storms may howl upon me; men despise; devils tempt; circumstances overpower; and God himself forsake me, still God is holy; there is no unrighteousness in him." John Stevenson.

Verse 3. "But thou art holy." Does it seem strange that the heart in its darkness and sorrow should find comfort in this attribute of God? No, for God's holiness is but another aspect of his faithfulness and mercy. And in that remarkable name, "the Holy One of Israel," we are taught that he who is the "holy" God is also the God who has made a covenant with his chosen. It would be impossible for an Israelite to think of God's holiness without thinking also of that covenant
relationship. "Be ye holy; for I, the Lord your God am holy," were the words in which Israel was reminded of their relation to God. See especially Leviticus 19:1. We see something of this feeling in such passages as Psalm 89:16-19; 99:5-9; Hosea 11:8, 9; Isaiah 41:14; 47:4. J. J. Stewart Perowne.

Verse 3. Were temptations never so black, faith will not hearken to an ill word spoken against God, but will justify God always. David Dickson.

Verses 4, 5. Those who look upon this Psalm as having a primary reference to the King of Israel, attribute great beauty to these words, from the very pleasing conjecture that David was, at the time of composing them, sojourning at Mahanaim, where Jacob, in his distress, wrestled with the angel, and obtained such signal blessings. That, in a place so greatly hallowed by associations of the past, he should make his appeal to the God of his fathers, was alike the dictate of patriarchal feeling and religion. John Morison, D.D., in "Morning Meditations."

Verse 5. "Thou didst deliver them," but thou wilt not deliver me; nay, rather thou didst deliver them because thou wilt not deliver me. Gerhohus.

Verse 6. "But I am a worm, and no man." A fisherman, when he casts his angle into the river, doth not throw the hook in bare, naked and uncovered, for then he knows the fish will never bite, and therefore he hides the hook within a worm, or some other bait, and so, the fish, biting at the worm, is caught by the hook. Thus Christ, speaking of himself, saith, "Ego vermis et non homo." He, coming to perform the great work of our redemption, did cover and hide his Godhead within the worm of his human nature. The grand water-serpent, Leviathan, the devil, thinking to swallow the worm of his humanity, was caught upon the hook of his divinity. This hook stuck in his jaws, and tore him very sore. By thinking to destroy Christ, he destroyed his own kingdom, and lost his own power for ever. Lancelot Andrewes.

Verse 6. "I am a worm." Christ calls himself "a worm" . . . on account of the opinion that men of the world had of him . . . the Jews esteemed Christ as a worm, and treated him as such; he was loathsome to them and hated by them; every one trampled upon him, and trod him under foot as men do worms . . . The Chaldee paraphrase renders it here a weak worm; and though Christ is the mighty God, and is also the Son of man, whom God made strong for himself; yet there was a weakness in his human nature, and he was crucified through it, 2 Corinthians 13:4: and it has been observed by some, that the word (Heb.) there used signifies the scarlet worm, or the worm that is in the grain or berry with which scarlet is dyed: and like this scarlet worm did our Lord look, when
by way of mockery he was clothed with a scarlet robe; and especially when he appeared in his dyed garments, and was red in his apparel, as one that treadeth in the wine fat; when his body was covered with blood when he hung upon the cross, which was shed to make crimson and scarlet sins as white as snow. John Gill.

Verse 6. "I am a worm." An humble soul is emptied of all swelling thoughts of himself. Bernard calls humility a self-annihilation. Job 22:29. "Thou wilt save the humble;" in the Hebrew it is, "Him that is of low eyes." An humble man has lower thoughts of himself than others can have of him; David, though a king, yet looked upon himself as "a worm:" "I am a worm, and no man." Bradford, a martyr, yet subscribes himself "a sinner." Job 10:15. "If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head:" like the violet a sweet flower, but hangs down the head. Thomas Watson.

Verse 6. "A worm." So trodden under foot, trampled on, maltreated, buffeted and spit upon, mocked and tormented, as to seem more like a worm than a man. Behold what great contempt hath the Lord of Majesty endured, that his confusion may be our glory; his punishment our heavenly bliss! Without ceasing impress this spectacle, O Christian, on thy soul! Dionysius, quoted by Isaac Williams.

Verse 6. "I am a worm." Among the Hindoos, when a man complains and abhors himself, he asks; "What am I! a worm! a worm!" "Ah, the proud man! he regarded me as a worm, well should I like to say to him, 'We are all worms.'" "Worm, crawl out of my presence." Joseph Roberts.

Verse 7. "All they that see me laugh me to scorn," etc. Imagine this dreadful scene. Behold this motley multitude of rich and poor, of Jews and Gentiles! Some stand in groups and gaze. Some recline at ease and stare. Others move about in restless gratification at the event. There is a look of satisfaction on every countenance. None are silent. The velocity of speech seems tardy. The theme is far too great for one member to utter. Every lip, and head, and finger, is now a tongue. The rough soldiers, too, are busied in their coarse way. The work of blood is over. Refreshment has become necessary. Their usual beverage of vinegar and water is supplied to them. As they severally are satisfied, they approach the cross, hold some forth to the Saviour, and bid him drink as they withdraw it. Luke 23:36. They know he must be suffering an intense thirst, they therefore aggravate it with the mockery of refreshment. Cruel Romans! and ye, O regicidal Jews! Was not death enough? Must mockery and scorn be added? On this sad day Christ made you one indeed!
Dreadful unity—which constituted you the joint mockers and murderers of the Lord of glory! *John Stevenson.*

*Verse 7.* "All they that see me, laugh me to scorn," etc. There have been persons in our own days, whose crimes have excited such detestation that the populace would probably have torn them in pieces, before, and even after their trial, if they could have had them in their power. Yet when these very obnoxious persons have been executed according to their sentence, if, perhaps, there was not one spectator who wished them to escape, yet neither was one found so lost to sensibility as to insult them in their dying moments. But when Jesus suffers, *all that see him laugh him to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head;* they insult his character and his hope. *John Newton.*

*Verse 7.* "They shoot out the lip." To protrude the lower lip is, in the East, considered a very strong indication of contempt. Its employment is chiefly confined to the lower orders. *Illustrated Commentary.*

*Verses 7, 8.* It was after his crucifixion, and during the hours that he hung upon the cross, that his sufferings in this way—the torment of beholding and hearing the scorn and mockery which was made of the truth of his person and doctrine—exceedingly abounded, and in such and so many kinds of mockery and insult that some consider this to have been the chiefest pain and sorrow which he endured in his most sacred passion. For as, generally, those things are considered the most painful to endure of which we are most sensible, so it seems to these persons, that sufferings of this kind contain in them more cause for feeling than any other sufferings. And, therefore, although all the torments of the Lord were very great, so that each one appears the greatest, and no comparison can be made between them; yet, nevertheless, this kind of suffering appears to be the most painful. Because in other troubles, not only the pain and suffering of them, but the troubles themselves, in themselves, may be desired by us, and such as we suffer for love's sake, in order by them to evince that love. Wherefore, the stripes, the crown of thorns, the buffetings, the cross, the gall, the vinegar, and other bodily torments, besides that they torment the body, are often a means for promoting the divine honour, which it holds in esteem above all else. But to blaspheme God, to give the lie to eternal truths, to deface the supreme demonstration of the divinity and majesty of the Son of God (although God knoweth how to extract from these things the good which he intends), nevertheless are, in their nature, things, which, from their so greatly affecting the divine honour, although they may be, for just considerations, endured, can never be desired by any one, but must be abhorrent to all. Our Lord then, being, of all, the most zealous for the divine honour, for which he also died, found in this kind of suffering, more than in all other, much to abhor
and nothing to desire. Therefore with good reason it may be held to be the greatest of all, and that in which, more than in all other, he exhibited the greatest suffering and patience. *Fra Thom, de Jesu, in "The Sufferings of Jesus,"* 1869.

*Verses* 7-9. All that see me made but a laughynge stocke on me, they mocked me wyth their lyppes, and wagged theyr heads at me. Sayenge, thys vyllayne referred all thynes to the Lord, let him now delyver hym yf he wyll, for he loveth hym well. But yet thou arte he whyche leddest me oute of my mother's wombe myne own refuge, even from my mother's teats. As sone as I came into this worlde, I was layde in thy lappe, thou art my God even from my mother's wombe. From *"The Psalter of David in English, truly translated out of Latyn,"* in *"Devout Psalms,"* etc., by E. Whitchurch, 1547.

*Verse* 8. Here are recorded some of those very words, by which the persecutors of our Lord expressed their mockery and scorn. How remarkable to find them in a Psalm written so many hundred years before! *John Stevenson.*

*Verses* 9, 10. Faith is much strengthened by constant evidences of God's favour. Herewith did he support his faith that said to God, "Thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly." "Thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels." Psalm 71:5, 6. It was not only the disposition of Obadiah towards God, but also the evidence that thereby he had of God's affection towards him, that made him with confidence say to Elijah, "I fear the Lord from my youth." 1 Kings 18:12. By long continuance of ancient favour, many demonstrations are given of a fast, fixed, and unremovable affection. So as if, by reason of temptations, one or more evidences should be questioned, yet others would remain to uphold faith, and to keep it from an utter languishing, and a total falling away. As when a house is supported by many pillars, though some be taken away, yet by the support of them which remain, the house will stand. *William Gouge.*

*Verses* 9, 10. David acknowledges ancient mercies, those mercies which had been cast upon him long ago, these were still fresh and new in his memory, and this is one affection and disposition of a thankful heart—to remember those mercies which another would have quite forgotten, or never thought of. Thus does David here; the mercies of his *infancy,* and his *childhood,* and his *younger years,* which one would have imagined, that now in his age had been quite out of his mind; yet these does he here stir up himself to remember and bring to his thoughts. "Took me out of the womb:" when was that? It may have been
threescore years ago when David penned the Psalms. He thinks of those mercies which God vouchsafed him when he was not capable of thinking, nor considering what was bestowed upon him; and so are we taught hence to do, in an imitation of this holy example which is here set before us: those mercies which God hast bestowed in our minority, we are to call to mind and acknowledge in our riper years. *Thomas Horton.*

*Verses 9, 10.* Here the tribulation begins to grow lighter, and hope inclines towards victory; a support, though small, and sought out with deep anxiety, is now found. For after he had felt that he had suffered without any parallel or example, so that the wonderful works of God as displayed toward the fathers afforded him no help, he comes to the wonderful works of God toward himself, and in these he finds the goodwill of God towards him, and which was displayed towards him alone in so singular a way. *Martin Luther.*

*Verses 9, 10.* The bitter severity of the several taunts with which his enemies assailed our Lord, had no other effect than to lead the Saviour to make a direct appeal to his Father. . . . That appeal is set before us in these two verses. It is of an unusual and remarkable nature. The argument on which it is founded is most forcible and conclusive. At the same time, it is the most seasonable and appropriate that can be urged. We may thus paraphrase it, "I am now brought as a man to my last extremity. It is said that God disowns me; but it cannot be so. My first moment of existence he tenderly cared for. When I could not even ask for, or think of his kindness, he bestowed it upon me. If, of his mere good pleasure he brought me into life at first, he will surely not forsake me when I am departing out of it. In opposition, therefore, to all their taunts, I can and I will appeal to himself. Mine enemies declare, O God, that thou hast cast me off—but thou art he that took me out of the womb. They affirm that I do not, and need not trust in thee; but thou didst make me hope (or, kepest me in safety, margin) when I was upon my mother's breasts. They insinuate that thou wilt not acknowledge me as thy Son; but I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly." *John Stevenson.*

*Verse 10.* "I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly." There is a noble passage in Eusebius, in which he shows the connection between our Lord's incarnation and his passion: that he might well comfort himself while hanging on the cross by the remembrance that the very same body then "marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14), was that which had been glorified by the Father with such singular honour, when the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. That this body, therefore, though now so torn and so mangled, as it had once been the wonder, so it would for ever be the joy,
of the angels; and having put on immortality, would be the support of his faithful people to the end of time. *J. M. Neale, in loc.*

**Verse 10.** I was like one forsaken by his parent, and wholly cast upon Providence. I had no father upon earth, and my mother was poor and helpless. *Matthew Poole.*

**Verse 11.** "Be not far from me; for trouble is near;" and so it is high time for thee to put forth a helping hand. *Hominibus profanis mirabilis videtur h'cratio,* to profane persons, this seemeth to be a strange reason, saith an interpreter; but it is a very good one, as this prophet knew, who therefore makes it his plea. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 12.** "Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round." These animals are remarkable for the proud, fierce, and sullen manner in which they exercise their great strength. Such were the persecutors who now beset our Lord. These were first, human, and secondly, spiritual foes; and both were alike distinguished by the proud, fierce, and sullen manner in which they assaulted him. *John Stevenson.*

**Verses 12, 13.** "Bashan" was a fertile country (Numbers 32:4), and the cattle there fed were fat and "strong." Deuteronomy 32:14. Like them, the Jews, in that good land, "waxed fat and kicked," grew proud, and rebelled; forsook God "that made them, and lightly esteemed the rock of their salvation." *George Horne.*

**Verse 13.** A helpless infant, or a harmless lamb, surrounded by furious bulls, and hungry lions, aptly represented the Saviour encompassed by his insulting and bloody persecutors. *Thomas Scott,* 1747-1821.

**Verse 14.** "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels." He was faint. Such a feeling of languor and faintness supervened that language fails to express it, and the emblem of "water poured out" is employed to represent it. As the water falls from the vessel to the earth, see how its particles separate farther and farther from each other. Its velocity increases as it falls. It has no power to stay itself midway, much less to return to its place. It is the very picture of utter weakness. So did our Lord feel himself to be when hanging on the cross. He was faint with weakness. The sensations experienced when about to faint away are very overpowering. We appear to our own consciousness to be nothing but weakness, as water poured out. All our bones feel relaxed and out of joint; we seem as though we had none. The strength of bone is gone, the knitting of the
joints is loosened, and the muscular vigour fled. A sickly giddiness overcomes us. We have no power to bear up. All heart is lost. Our strength disappears like that of wax, of melting wax, which drops upon surrounding objects, and is lost. Daniel thus describes his sensations on beholding the great vision, "There remained no strength in me: for my vigour was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength." Daniel 10:8. In regard, however, to the faintness which our Lord experienced, we ought to notice this additional and remarkable circumstance, that he did not altogether faint away. The relief of insensibility he refused to take. When consciousness ceases, all perception of pain is necessarily and instantly terminated. But our Lord retained his full consciousness throughout the awful scene; and patiently endured for a considerable period, those, to us, insupportable sensations which precede the actual swoon. John Stevenson.

Verse 14. "I am poured out like water:" that is, in the thought of my enemies I am utterly destroyed. "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." 2 Samuel 14:14. "What marvel," asks St. Bernard, "that the name of the Bridegroom should be as ointment poured forth, when he himself, for the greatness of his love, was poured forth like water!" J. M. Neale.

Verse 14. "I am poured out like water," i.e., I am almost past all recovery, as water spilt upon the ground. John Trapp.

Verse 14. "All my bones are out of joint." The rack is devised as a most exquisite pain, even for terror. And the cross is a rack, whereon he was stretched till, saith the Psalm, "all his bones were out of joint." But even to stand, as he hung, three long hours together, holding up but the arms at length, I have heard it avowed of some that have felt it, to be a pain scarce credible. But the hands and the feet being so cruelly nailed (part, of all other, most sensible, by reason of the texture of sinews there in them most) it could not but make his pain out of measure painful. It was not for nothing, that dolores acerrimi dicuntur cruciatus (saith the heathen man), that the most sharp and bitter pains of all other have their name from hence, and are called cruciatus—pains like those of the cross. It had a meaning, that they gave him, that he had (for his welcome to the cross) a cup mixed with gall or myrrh; and (for his farewell) a sponge of vinegar; to show by the one the bitterness, and by the other the sharpness of the pains of this painful death. Lancelot Andrewes.

Verse 14. "All my bones are out of joint." We know that the greatest and most intolerable pain that the body can endure, is that arising from a bone out of its place, or dislocated joint. Now when the Lord was raised up upon the cross,
and his sacred body hung in the air from the nails, all the joints began to give, so that the bones were parted the one from the other so visibly that, in very truth (as David had prophesied) they might tell all his bones, and thus, throughout the whole body, he endured acute torture. Whilst our Lord suffered these torments, his enemies, who had so earnestly desired to see him crucified, far from pitying him, were filled with delight, as though celebrating a victory. *Fra Thom, de Jesu.*

**Verse 15.** "My strength is dried up," etc. Inflammation must have commenced early and violently in the wounded parts—then been quickly imparted to those that were strained, and have terminated in a *high degree of feverish burning over the whole body.* The animal juices would be thus dried up, and the watery particles of the blood absorbed. The skin parched by the scorching sun till midday would be unable to supply or to imbibe any moisture. The loss of blood at the hands and feet would hasten the desiccation. Hence our Lord says, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws." The fever would devour his small remaining strength. And THIRST, that most intolerable of all bodily privations, must have been overpowering. His body appeared to his feeling like a potsherd that had been charred in the potter's kiln. It seemed to have neither strength nor substance left in it. So feeble had he become, so parched and dried up that CLAMMINESS OF THE MOUTH, one of the forerunners of immediate dissolution, had already seized him; "My tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." *John Stevenson.*

**Verse 15.** "My strength is dried up;" not as in the trial of gold and silver, but "like a potsherd," as the earthen vessel dried up by the heat, spoken in humiliation. *Isaac Williams, in loc.*

**Verse 15.** "A potsherd." (Heb.) rendered *potsherd,* is a word which denotes a piece of earthenware, frequently in a broken state. As employed in the verse under consideration, it seems to derive considerable illustration from the corresponding word in ARABIC, which expresses roughness of skin, and might well convey to the mind the idea of the bodily appearance of one in whom the moisture of the fluids had been dried up by the excess of grief. *John Morison.*

**Verse 15.** That hour what his feelings were is dangerous to define: we know them not; we may be too bold to determine of them. To very good purpose it was that the ancient Fathers of the Greek church in their liturgy, after they had recounted all the particular pains, as they are set down in his passion, and by all and by everyone of them called for mercy, do, after all, shut up with this *Di agnwstwn kopwn basanwn elehson ki swson emas.* By thine unknown sorrows
and sufferings, felt by thee, but not distinctly known by us, have mercy upon us and save us. *Lancelot Andrewes.*

**Verse 16.** "Dogs have compassed me." So great and varied was the malignity exhibited by the enemies of our Lord, that the combined characteristics of two species of ferocious animals were not adequate to its representation. Another emblematical figure is therefore introduced. The assembly of the wicked is compared to that of "dogs" who haunt about the cities, prowl in every corner, snarl over the carrion, and devour it all with greediness—like "dogs," with their wild cry in full pursuit, with unfailing scent tracking their victim, with vigilant eye on all its movements, and with a determination which nothing can falter, they run it on to death. The Oriental mode of hunting, both in ancient and modern times, is murderous and merciless in the extreme. A circle of several miles in circumference is beat round; and the men, driving all before them, and narrowing as they advance, inclose the prey on every side. Having thus made them prisoners, the cruel hunters proceed to slaughter at their own convenience. So did the enemies of our Lord: long before his crucifixion it is recorded that they used the most treacherous plans to get him into their power. *John Stevenson.*

**Verse 16.** "Dogs have compassed me." At the hunting of the lion, a whole district is summoned to appear, who, forming themselves first into a circle, enclose a space of four or five miles in compass, according to the number of the people and the quality of the ground which is pitched upon for the scene of action. The footmen advance first, running into the thickets with their dogs and spears, to put up the game; while the horsemen, keeping a little behind, are always ready to charge upon the first sally of the wild beast. In this manner they proceed, still contracting their circle, till they all at last close in together, or meet with some other game to divert them. *Dr. Shaw's Travels, quoted in Paxton's "Illustrations of Scripture."*

**Verse 16.** "They pierced my hands and my feet;" namely, when they nailed Christ to the cross. Matthew 27:35; John 20:25. Where let me simulate, saith a learned man, the orator's gradation, *Facinus vincire civem Romanum,* etc. It was much for the Son of God to be bound, more to be beaten, most of all to be slain; *Quid dicam in crucem tolle?* but what shall I say to this, that he was crucified? That was the most vile and ignominious; it was also a cruel and cursed kind of death, which yet he refused not; and here we have a clear testimony for his cross. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 16.** "They pierced my hands and my feet." Of all sanguinary punishments, that of crucifixion is one of the most dreadful—no vital part is immediately
affected by it. The hands and the feet which are furnished with the most numerous and sensitive organs, are perforated with nails, which must necessarily be of some size to suit their intended purpose. The tearing asunder of the tender fibres of the hands and feet, the lacerating of so many nerves, and bursting so many blood-vessels, must be productive of intense agony. The nerves of the hand and foot are intimately connected, through the arm and leg, with the nerves of the whole body; their laceration therefore must be felt over the entire frame. Witness the melancholy result of even a needle's puncture in even one of the remotest nerves. A spasm is not unfrequently produced by it in the muscles of the face, which locks the jaws inseparably. When, therefore the hands and feet of our blessed Lord were transfixed with nails, he must have felt the sharpest pangs shoot through every part of his body. Supported only by his lacerated limbs, and suspended from his pierced hands, our Lord had nearly six hours' torment to endure. John Stevenson.

Verse 16. "They pierced my hands and my feet." That evangelical prophet testifies it, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Isaiah 49:16. Were we not engraven there when his hands were pierced for us? "They dug my hands and my feet." And they dug them so deep, that the very prints remained after his resurrection, and their fingers were thrust into them for evidence sake. Some have thought that those scars remain still in his glorious body, to be showed at his second appearing: "They shall see him whom they have pierced." That is improbable, but this is certain; there remains still an impression upon Christ's hands and his heart, the sealing and wearing of the elect there, as precious jewels. Thomas Adams.

Verse 17. "I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me." The skin and flesh were distended by the posture of the body on the cross, that the bones, as through a thin veil, became visible, and might be counted. George Horne.

Verse 17. "I may tell all my bones." For, as the first Adam by his fall, lost the robe of innocence, and thenceforth needed other garments, so the second Adam vouchsafed to be stripped of his earthly vestments, to the end it might hereafter be said to us, "Bring forth the first robe, and put it on him." Luke 15:22. Gerhohus, quoted by J. M. Neale.

Verse 17. "They look and stare upon me." Sensitively conscious of his condition upon the cross, the delicate feelings of the holy Saviour were sorely pained by the gaze of the multitude. With impudent face they looked upon him. To view him better they halted as they walked. With deliberate insolence they collected in groups, and made their remarks to each other on his conduct and
appearance. Mocking his naked, emaciated, and quivering body, they "looked and stared upon him." John Stevenson.

Verse 17. "They look and stare upon me." Oh, how different is that look which the awakened sinner directs to Calvary, when faith lifts up her eye to him who agonised, and bled, and died, for the guilty! And what gratitude should perishing men feel, that from him that hangs upon the accursed tree there is heard proceeding the inviting sound, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and besides me there is none else. John Morison.

Verse 18. "They part my garments," etc. Perfectly naked did the cruciarii hang upon the cross, and the executioners received their clothes. There is nothing to show that there was a cloth even round the loins. The clothes became the property of the soldiers, after Roman usage. The outer garment was divided probably into four, by ripping up the seams. Four soldiers were counted off as a guard, by the Roman code. The under garment could not be divided being woven; and this led the soldiers to the dice-throwing. J. P. Lange, D.D., on Matthew, 27:35.

Verse 18. "They part my garments," etc. Instruments will not be wanting to crucify Christ, if it were but for his old clothes, and those but little worth; for these soldiers crucify him, though they got but his garments for their reward. Christ did submit to suffer naked, hereby to teach us:—1. That all flesh are really naked before God by reason of sin (Exodus 32:25; 2 Chronicles 28:19), and therefore our Surety behoved to suffer naked. 2. That he offered himself a real captive in his sufferings, that so he might fully satisfy justice by being under the power of his enemies, till he redeemed himself by the strong hand, having fully paid the price; for therefore did he submit to be stripped naked, as conquerors use to do with prisoners. 3. That by thus suffering naked he would expiate our abuse of apparel, and purchase to us a liberty to make use of suitable raiment, and such as becometh us in our station. 4. That by this suffering naked he would purchase unto them who flee to him, to be covered with righteousness and glory, and to walk with him in white for ever, and would point out the nakedness of those, who, not being found clothed with his righteousness, shall not be clothed upon with immortality and glory. 2 Corinthians 5:2, 3. 5. He would also by this, teach all his followers to resolve on nakedness in their following of him, as a part of their conformity with their Head (1 John 4:17; Romans 8:35; Hebrews 11:37), and that therefore they should not dote much on their apparel when they have it. George Hutcheson, 1657.
Verse 18. "And cast lots upon my vesture." Trifling as this act of casting the lot for our Lord's vesture may appear, it is most significant. It contains a double lesson. It teaches us how greatly that seamless shirt was valued; how little he to whom it had belonged. It seemed to say, this garment is more valuable than its owner. As it was said of the thirty pieces of silver, "A goodly price at which I was prized at of them;" so may we say regarding the casting of the lot, "How cheaply Christ was held!" John Stevenson.

Verse 20. "My darling" had better be rendered "my lonely, or solitary one." For he wishes to say that his soul was lonely and forsaken by all, and that there was no one who sought after him as a friend, or cared for him, or comforted him: as we have it, Psalm 142:4, "Refuge failed me; no one cared for my soul; I looked on my right hand, but there was no one who would know me;" that is, solitude is of itself a certain cross, and especially so in such great torments, in which it is most grievous to be immersed without an example and without a companion. And yet, in such a state, everyone of us must be, in some suffering or other, and especially in that of death; and we must be brought to cry out with Psalm 25:16, "Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted." Martin Luther.

Verse 20. "The dog." It is scarcely possible for a European to form an idea of the intolerable nuisance occasioned in the villages and cities of the East, by the multitudes of dogs that infest the streets. The natives, accustomed from their earliest years to the annoyance, come to be regardless of it; but to a stranger, these creatures are the greatest plague to which he is subjected; for as they are never allowed to enter a house, and do not constitute the property of any particular owner, they display none of those habits of which the domesticated species among us are found susceptible, and are destitute of all those social qualities which often render the dog the trusty and attached friend of man. . . . The race seems wholly to degenerate in the warm regions of the East, and to approximate to the character of beasts of prey, as in disposition they are ferocious, cunning, bloodthirsty, and possessed of the most insatiable voracity: and even in their very form there is something repulsive; their sharp and savage features; their wolf-like eyes; their long hanging ears; their straight and pointed tails; their lank and emaciated forms, almost entirely without a belly, give them an appearance of wretchedness and degradation, that stands in sad contrast with the general condition and qualities of the breed in Europe. . . . These hideous creatures, dreaded by the people for their ferocity, or avoided by them as useless and unclean, are obliged to prowl about everywhere in search of a precarious existence. . . . They generally run in bands, and their natural ferocity, inflamed by hunger, and the consciousness of strength, makes them
the most troublesome and dangerous visitors to the stranger who unexpectedly finds himself in their neighbourhood, as they will not scruple to seize whatever he may have about him, and even, in the event of his falling, and being otherwise defenceless, to attack and devour him. These animals, driven by hunger, greedily devour everything that comes in their way; they glut themselves with the most putrid and loathsome substances that are thrown about the cities, and of nothing are they so fond as of human flesh, a repast, with which the barbarity of the despotick countries of Asia frequently supplies them, as the bodies of criminals slain for murder, treason, or violence, are seldom buried, and lie exposed till the mangled fragments are carried off by the dogs. From "Illustrations of Scripture, by the late Professor George Paxton, D.D., revised and enlarged by Robert Jamieson," 1843.

Verse 21. "Save me from the lion's mouth." Satan is called a lion, and that fitly; for he hath all the properties of the lion: as bold as a lion, as strong as a lion, as furious as a lion, as terrible as the roaring of a lion. Yea, worse: the lion wants subtlety and suspicion; herein the devil is beyond the lion. The lion will spare the prostrate, the devil spares none. The lion is full and forbears, the devil is full and devours. He seeks all; let not the simple say, He will take no notice of me; nor the subtle, He cannot overreach me; nor the noble say, He will not presume to meddle with me; nor the rich, He dares not contest with me; for he seeks to devour all. He is our common adversary, therefore let us cease all quarrels amongst ourselves, and fight with him. Thomas Adams.

Verse 21. "Save me . . . from the horns of the unicorns." Those who are in great trouble from the power or cruelty of others, often cry out to their gods, "Ah! save me from the tusk of the elephant! from the mouth of the tiger and the tusks of the boar, deliver me, deliver me!" Who will save me from the horn of the K.,ndam?" This animal is now extinct in these regions, and it is not easy to determine what it was; the word in the Sathur —Agar,.the—is rendered "jungle cow." Joseph Roberts.

Verse 21. "The horns of the unicorns." On turning to the Jewish Bible we find that the word (Heb.) is translated as buffalo, and there is no doubt that this rendering is nearly the correct one, and at the present day naturalists are nearly agreed that the re`m of the Old Testament must have been now the extinct urus. . . . The presence of these horns affords a remarkable confirmation to a well-known passage in Julias Caesar's familiar "Commentaries." "The uri are little inferior to elephants in size ("magnitudine paulo infra elephantos;") "but are bulls in their nature, color, and figure. Great is their strength, and great their swiftness; nor do they spare man or beast when they have caught sight of them." J. G. Wood, M.A., F.L.S., in "Bible Animals." 1869.
Verse 22. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." Having thus obtained relief from the oppressive darkness, and regained conscious possession of the joy and light of his Father's countenance, the thoughts and desires of the Redeemer flow into their accustomed channel. The glory of God in the salvation of his church. John Stevenson.

Verse 22. "My brethren." This give evidence of the low condescension of the Son of God, and also of the high exaltation of sons of men; for the Son of God to be a brother to sons of men is a great degree of humiliation, and for the sons of men to be made brethren with the Son of God is a high degree of exaltation; for Christ's brethren are in that respect sons of God, heirs of heaven, or kings, not earthly, but heavenly; not temporary, but everlasting kings. . . . This respect of Christ to his brethren is a great encouragement and comfort to such as are despised and scorned by men of this world for Christ's professing of them. William Gouge.

Verse 24. "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the prayer of the poor, neither hath he hid his face from me; but when I cried unto him, he heard me." Let him, therefore, that desires to be of the seed of Israel, and to rejoice in the grace of the gospel, become poor, for this is a fixed truth, our God is one that has respect unto the poor! And observe the fulness and diligence of the prophet. He was not content with having said "will not despise," but adds, "and will not abhor;" and, again, "will not turn away his face;" and again, "will hear." And then he adds himself as an example, saying, "When I cried," as our translation has it. As if he had said, "Behold ye, and learn by my example, who have been made the most vile of all men, and numbered among the wicked; when I was despised, cast out, rejected, behold! I was held in the highest esteem, and taken up, and heard. Let not this state of things, therefore, after this, my encouraging example, frighten you; the gospel requires a man to be such a character before it will save him. These things, I say, because our weakness requires so much exhortation, that it might not dread being humbled, nor despair when humbled, and thus might, after the bearing of the cross, receive the salvation. Martin Luther.

Verse 25. "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation," etc. The joy and gratitude of our adorable Lord rise to such a height at this great deliverance, his heart so overflows with fresh and blessed consciousness of his heavenly Father's nearness, that he again pours forth the expression of his praise. By its repetition, he teaches us that this is not a temporary burst of gratitude, but an abiding determination, a full and settled resolution. John Stevenson.
Verse 25. "In the great congregation." Saints are fittest witnesses of sacred duties. That which, in Psalm 116:14, is implied under this particle of restraint, "his," in "the presence of all his people," is in Psalm 22:25, more expressly noted by a more apparent description, thus: "I will pay my vows before them that fear him." None but true saints do truly fear God. 1. This property of God's people, that they fear the Lord, showeth that they will make the best use of such sacred, solemn duties performed in their presence. They will glorify God for this your zeal; they will join their spirits with your spirit in this open performance of duty; they will become followers of you, and learn of you to vow and pay unto the Lord, and that openly, publicly. 2. As for others, they are no better than such hogs and dogs as are not meet to have such precious pearls and holy things cast before them, lest they trample them under their feet. William Gouge.

Verse 26. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever." A spiritual banquet is prepared in the church for the "meek" and lowly in heart. The death of Christ was the sacrifice for sin; his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. The poor in spirit feed on this provision, in their hearts by faith, and are satisfied; and thus, whilst they "seek" the Lord, they "praise" him also, and their "hearts" (or souls), are preserved unto eternal life. Practical Illustrations of the Book of Psalms," 1826.

Verse 26. "The meek." Bonaventure engraved this sweet saying of our Lord, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," in his study. O that this saying was engraved upon all your foreheads, and upon all your hearts! Charles Bradbury.

Verse 26. "They shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever." Now, I would fain know the man that ever went about to form such laws as should bind the hearts of men, or prepare such rewards as should reach the souls and consciences of men! Truly, if any mortal man should make a law that his subjects should love him with all their hearts and souls, and not dare, upon peril of his greatest indignation, to entertain a traitorous thought against his royal person, but presently confess it to him, or else he would be avenged on him, he would deserve to be more laughed at for his pride and folly, than Xerxes for casting his fetters into the Hellespont, to chain the waves into his obedience; or Caligula, that threatened the air, if it durst rain when he was at his pastimes, who durst not himself so much as look into the air when it thundered. Certainly a madhouse would be more fit for such a person than a throne, who should so far forfeit his reason, as to think that the thoughts and hearts of men were within his jurisdiction. William Gurnall.
Verse 26. "Your heart," that is, not your outward man, but the hidden man of the heart (Ezekiel 36:26); the new man which is created after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, "shall live for ever." The life which animates it is the life of the Spirit of God. John Stevenson.

Verse 27. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." This passage is a prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles. It furnishes us with two interesting ideas; the nature of true conversion—and the extent of it under the reign of the Messiah. 1. The NATURE of true conversion: —It is to "remember"—to "turn to the Lord"—and to "worship before him." This is a plain and simple process. Perhaps the first religious exercise of mind of which we are conscious is reflection. A state of unregeneracy is a state of forgetfulness. God is forgotten. Sinners have lost all just sense of his glory, authority, mercy, and judgment; living as if there were no God, or as if they thought there was none. But if ever we are brought to be the subjects of true conversion, we shall be brought to remember these things. This divine change is fitly expressed by the case of the prodigal, who is said to have come to himself, or to his right mind. But further, true conversion consists not only in remembering, but in "turning to the Lord." This part of the passage is expressive of a cordial relinquishment of our idols, whatever they have been, and an acquiescence in the gospel way of salvation by Christ alone. Once more, true conversion to Christ will be accompanied with the "worship" of him. Worship, as a religious exercise, is the homage of the heart, presented to God according to his revealed will. . . . 2. The EXTENT of conversion under the kingdom or reign of the Messiah: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." It was fit that the accession of the Gentiles should be reserved for the gospel day, that it might grace the triumph of Christ over his enemies, and appear to be what it is, "the travail of his soul." This great and good work, begun in the apostles' day, must go on, and "must increase," till "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn," and "all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." Conversion work has been individual; God has gathered sinners one by one. Thus it is at present with us; but it will not be thus always. People will flock to Zion as doves to their windows. Further, conversion work has hitherto been circumscribed within certain parts of the world. But the time will come when "all the kindreds of the earth" shall worship. These hopes are not the flight of an ardent imagination; they are founded on the true sayings of God. Finally, while we are concerned for the world, let us not forget our own souls. So the whole world be saved and we lost, what will it avail us? Condensed from Andrew Fuller.
Verse 27. "All the ends of the world shall REMEMBER"—this is a remarkable expression. It implies that man has forgotten God. It represents all the successive generations of the world as but one, and then it exhibits that one generation, as if it had been once in paradise, suddenly remembering the Lord whom it had known there, but had long forgotten. . . . The converted nations, we learn by this verse, will not only obtain remembrance of their past loss, but will also be filled with the knowledge of present duty. John Stevenson.

Verse 27. "All the nations of the world" ((Heb.) jizkeru, the same Hebrew root with (Heb.) azkir) "shall remember;" why? what is that? or what shall they remember? Even this: they shall turn to the Lord, and worship him, in his name, in his ordinances; as is explained in the words following of this verse: "And all the families of the nations" ((Heb.) jishtachavu, "shall bow" down themselves, or) "worship before thee," etc. And so in Psalm 86:9, "All nations whom thou hast made shall come" ((Heb.) vejishtachavu) "and they shall worship before thee;" and how shall they do so? Even by recording, remembering, and making mention of the glory of thy name; as in the words following ((Hebrew) vicabbedu lishmecha), "and shall glorify thy name." William Strong's "Saints Communion with God," 1656.

Verses 27, 28. The one undeviating object of the Son all through was, the glory of the Father: he came to do his will, and he fulfilled it with all the unvarying intensity of the most heavenly affection. What, then, will not be the exuberant joy of his heart, when in his glorious kingdom, he shall see the Father beyond all measure glorified? . . . The praise and honour and blessing which will be yielded to the Father in that day through him, so that God shall be all in all, will make him feel he underwent not a sorrow too much for such a precious consummation. . . . Every note of thanksgiving which ascends to the Father, whether from the fowls of the air, or the beasts of the field, or the fishes of the sea, or the hills, or the mountains, or the trees of the forest, or the rivers of the valleys—all shall gladden his heart, as sweet in the ears of God, for the sake of him who redeemed even them from the curse, and restored to them a harmony more musical than burst from them on the birthday of their creation. And man! renewed and regenerated man! for whose soul the blood was spilt, and for the redemption of whose body death was overcome, how shall the chorus of his thanksgiving, in its intelligent and articulate hallelujahs, be the incense which that Saviour shall still love to present unto the Father, a sweet-smelling savour through himself, who, that he might sanctify his people by his own blood, suffered without the camp. How are the channels choked up or impaired in this evil world, wherein the praise and glory of our God should flow as a river! How will Christ then witness, to the delight of his soul, all cleared and restored!
No chill upon the heart, no stammering in the tongue, in his Father's praises!
No understanding dull, or eye feeble, in the apprehension of his glory! No hand
unready, or foot stumbling, in the fulfilling of his commandments. God, the
glory of his creatures: his glory their service and their love; and all this the
reward to Jesus of once suffering himself. C. J. Goodhart, M.A., in
"Bloomsbury Lent Lectures," 1848.

Verse 29. "And they shall bow that go down into the dust; their soul liveth not:" that is, whose soul liveth not, by an Hebraism; it being meant, that he who is of
most desperate condition, being without hope of life and salvation, his sins are
so notorious, shall "eat" also of this feast, and be turned to God to "worship"
and serve him; being thus plucked out of the jaws of death and everlasting
destruction, as it were, being before this very hour ready to seize upon him. The
new translation, "None can keep alive his own soul," as it agreeth not with the
Hebrew, so it makes the sense more perplexed. By "him that goeth down to the
dust, whose soul liveth not," some understand the most miserably poor, who
have nothing to feed upon, whereby their life may be preserved, yet shall feed
also of this feast as well as the rich, and praise God. Ainsworth is for either
spiritually poor and miserable, because most wicked, or worldly poor; and there
is an exposition of Basil's, understanding by the rich, the rich in faith and grace,
touching which, or the rich properly so called, he is indifferent. But because it
is said, "The fat of the earth," I prefer the former, and that the close of the verse
may best answer to the first part; the latter by "those that are going to the dust,"
understand the miserably poor. So that there is a commonplace of comfort for
all, both richest and poorest, if they be subjects of God's kingdom of grace:
their souls shall be alike fed by him and saved. John Mayer.

Verse 29. "All they that go down to the dust;" either those who stand quivering
on the brink of the grave, or those who occupy the humble, sequestered walks
of life. As the great and opulent of the earth are intended in the first clause, it is
not by any means unnatural to suppose that the image of going "down to the
dust," is designed to represent the poor and mean of mankind, who are unable
to support themselves, and to provide for their multiplied necessities. If the
grave be alluded to, as is thought by many eminent divines, the beautiful
sentiment of the verse will be, that multitudes of dying sinners shall be brought
to worship Jehovah, and that those who cannot save or deliver themselves shall
seek that shelter which none can find but those who approach the mercy-seat.
"Rich and poor," as Bishop Horne observes, "are invited"—that is, to "worship
God;" "and the hour is coming when all the race of Adam, as many as sleep in
the 'dust' of the earth, unable to raise themselves from thence, quickened and
called forth by the voice of the Son of Man, must bow the knee to King Messiah." *John Morison.*

*Verse 29.* To be brought to the dust, is, at first, a circumlocution or description of death: "Shall the dust praise thee, shall it declare thy truth?" Psalm 30:9. That is, shall I praise thee when I am among the dead? "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?" Not that profit, sure, I cannot bring thee in the tribute of praise when my life's gone out. Secondly, to be brought to the dust is a description of any low and poor condition. "All they that be fat upon the earth" (that is, the great and mighty), "shall eat and worship" "all they that go down to the dust" (that is, the mean and base), "shall bow before him." As if he had said, rich and poor, high and low, the king and the beggar, have alike need of salvation by Jesus Christ, and must submit unto him, that they may be saved, for, as it there follows, "none can keep alive his own soul." The captivity of the Jews in Babylon is expressed under those notions of death, and of *dwelling in the dust* (Isaiah 26:19); to show how low, that no power but his who can raise the dead, could work their deliverance. *Joseph Caryl.*

*Verse 29.* "None can keep alive his own soul." And yet we look back to our conversion, and its agonies of earnestness, its feelings of deep, helpless dependence—of Christ's being absolutely our daily, hourly need—supplier—as a past something—a stage of spiritual life which is over. And we are satisfied to have it so. The Spirit of God moved over our deadness, and breathed into us the breath of life. My soul became a *living soul.* But was this enough? God's word says, No. "None can keep alive his own soul." My heart says, No. Truth must ever answer to truth. I cannot (ah! have I not tried, and failed?) I cannot keep alive my own soul. We cannot live upon ourselves. Our physical life is kept up by supply from without—air, food, warmth. So must the spiritual life. Jesus gives, Jesus feeds us day by day, else must the life fade out and die. "None can keep alive his own soul." It is not enough to be made alive. I must be fed, and guided, and taught, and kept in life. Mother, who hast brought a living babe into the world, is your work done? Will you not nurse it, and feed it, and care for it, that it may be kept alive? Lord, I am this babe. I live indeed, for I can crave and cry. Leave me not, O my Saviour. Forsake not the work of thine own hands. In thee I live. Hold me, carry me, feed me, let me abide in thee. "For thy kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul." In our work for God, we need to remember this. Is not the conversion, the arousing of sinners, the great, and with many, the sole aim in working for God? Should it be so? Let us think of this other work. Let us help to keep alive.
Perhaps it is less distinguished, as it may be less distinguished to feed a
starving child than to rescue a drowning man. But let us walk less by sight,
more by faith. Let us not indeed neglect to call to life those who are spiritually
dead. But Oh! let us watch for the more hidden needs of the living—the fading,
starving, fainting souls, which yet can walk and speak, and cover their want and
sorrow. Let us be fellow-workers with God in all his work. And with a deep
heart-feeling of the need of constant life supplies from above, let us try how
often, how freely, we may be made the channels of those streams of the "water
of life,"—for "none can keep alive his own soul." Mary B. M. Duncan, in
"Bible Hours." 1856.

Verse 29. Having considered the vastness and glory of the prospect, our Lord
next contemplates the reality and minuteness of its accomplishment. He sets
before his mind individual cases and particular facts. He appears to look upon
this picture of the future as we do upon a grand historical painting of the past. It
seems natural to gaze with silent admiration on the picture as a whole, then to
fix the attention on particular groups, and testify our sense of the general
excellence, by expatiating on the truth and beauty of the several parts. John
Stevenson.

Verse 30. "A seed shall serve him." This figurative expression signifies Christ
and his people, who yield true obedience to God—they are called by this name
in a spiritual and figurative, but most appropriate sense. The idea is taken from
the operations of the husbandman who carefully reserves every year a portion
of his grain for seed. Though it be small, compared with all the produce of his
harvest, yet he prizes it very highly and estimates it by the value of that crop
which it may yield in the succeeding autumn. Nor does he look only to the
quantity, he pays particular regard to the quality of the seed. He reserves only
the best, nay, he will put away his own if spoiled, that he may procure better.
The very smallest quantity of really good seed, is, to him, an object of great
desire, and if by grievous failure of crops, he should not be able to procure
more than a single grain, yet would he accept it thankfully, preserve it
carefully, and plant it in the most favourable soil. Such is the source from
which the metaphor is taken. John Stevenson.

Verse 31. "And shall declare his righteousness." The occupation of the seed is
to "declare," to testify from their own experience, from their own knowledge
and convictions, that grand subject, theme, or lesson, which they have learned.
. . . They will declare the righteousness of God the Holy Ghost in his convictions
of sin, in his reproofs of conscience, in his forsaking of the impenitent, and in
his abiding with the believer. And in a special manner, they will declare the
righteousness of God the Son, during his human life, in his sufferings, and
death, as man's surety, by which he "magnified the law, and made it 
honourable" (Isaiah 42:21), and on account of which they are able to address 
him by this name, "The Lord our Righteousness." (Jeremiah 23:6.) John 
Stevenson.

Verse 31. "A people that shall be born." What is this? What people is there that 
is not born? According to my apprehensions I think this is said for this 
reason—because the people of other kings are formed by laws, by customs, and 
by manners; by which, however, you can never move a man to true 
righteousness: it is only a fable of righteousness, and a mere theatrical scene or 
representation. For even the law of Moses could form the people of the Jews 
unto nothing but unto hypocrisy. But the people of this King are not formed by 
laws to make up an external appearance, but they are begotten by water and by 
the Spirit unto a new creature of truth. Martin Luther.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Whole Psalm. The volume entitled "Christ on the Cross," by Rev. J. Stevenson, 
has a sermon upon every verse. We give the headings, they are suggestive. 
Verse 1. The Cry. 2. The Complaint. 3. The Acknowledgment. 4-6. The 
of the Garments and Casting Lots. 19-21. The Importunity. 21. The 
Vow. 26. The Satisfaction of the Meek; the Seekers of the Lord Praising Him;
the Eternal Life. 27. The Conversion of the World. 28. The Enthronement. 29. 
The Author of the Faith. 30. The Seed. 31. The Everlasting Theme and 
Occupation. The Finish of the Faith.

Verse 1. The Saviour's dying cry.

Verse 2. Unanswered prayer. Enquire the reason for it; encourage our hope 
concerning it; urge to continue in importunity.

Verse 3. Whatever God may do, we must settle it in our minds that he is holy 
and to be praised.

Verse 4. God's faithfulness in past ages a plea for the present.
Verses 4, 5. Ancient saints.
   I. Their life. "They trusted."
   II. Their practice. "They cried."
   III. Their experience. "Were not confounded."
   IV. Their voice to us.

Verses 6-18. Full of striking sentences upon our Lord's suffering.

Verse 11. A saint's troubles, his arguments in prayer.

Verse 20. "My darling." A man's soul to be very dear to him.


Verse 22. Christ as a brother, a preacher, and a precentor.

Verse 22. A sweet subject, a glorious preacher, a loving relationship, a heavenly exercise.

Verse 23. A threefold duty, "praise him," "glorify him;" "fear him;" towards one object, "the Lord;" for three characters, "ye that fear him, seed of Jacob, seed of Israel," which are but one person.

Verse 23. Glory to God the fruit of the tree on which Jesus died.


   I. A delightful exercise—"praise."
   II. A personal participation—"My praise."
   III. A fitting object—"of thee."
   IV. A special source—"from thee."
   V. An appropriate place—"in the great congregation."

Verse 25. (second clause). Vows. What vows to make, when and how to make them, and the importance of paying them.

Verse 26. Spiritual feasting. The guests, the food, the host, and the satisfaction.
Verse 26. (second clause). Seekers who shall be singers. Who they are? What they shall do? When? and what is the reason for expecting that they shall?


Verse 27. Nature of true conversion, and extent of it under the reign of the Messiah. Andrew Fuller.

Verse 27. The universal triumph of Christianity certain.

Verse 27. The order of conversion. See the Exposition.

Verse 28. The empire of the King of kings as it is, and as it shall be.

Verse 29. Grace for the rich, grace for the poor, but all lost without it.

Verse 29 (last clause). A weighty text upon the vanity of self-confidence.

Verse 30. The perpetuity of the church.

Verse 30 (last clause). Church history, the marrow of all history.

   I. Conversions certain.
   II. Preachers promised.
   III. Succeeding generations blest.
   IV. Gospel published.
   V. Christ exalted.

WORK UPON THE TWENTY-SECOND PSALM

Christ on the Cross: An Exposition of the Twenty-second Psalm. By the Rev. JOHN STEVENSON, Perpetual Curate of Curry and Gunwalloe, Cornwall. 1842.
Psalm 23

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

There is no inspired title to this psalm, and none is needed, for it records no special event, and needs no other key than that which every Christian may find in his own bosom. It is David's Heavenly Pastoral; a surpassing ode, which none of the daughters of music can excel. The clarion of war here gives place to the pipe of peace, and he who so lately bewailed the woes of the Shepherd tunefully rehearses the joys of the flock. Sitting under a spreading tree, with his flock around him, like Bunyan's shepherd-boy in the Valley of Humiliation, we picture David singing this unrivalled pastoral with a heart as full of gladness as it could hold; or, if the psalm be the product of his after-years, we are sure that his soul returned in contemplation to the lonely water-brooks which rippled among the pastures of the wilderness, where in early days she had been wont to dwell. This is the pearl of psalms whose soft and pure radiance delights every eye; a pearl of which Helicon need not be ashamed, though Jordan claims it. Of this delightful song it may be affirmed that its piety and its poetry are equal, its sweetness and its spirituality are unsurpassed.

The position of this psalm is worthy of notice. It follows the twenty-second, which is peculiarly the Psalm of the Cross. There are no green pastures, no still waters on the other side of the twenty-second psalm. It is only after we have read, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that we come to "The Lord is my Shepherd." We must by experience know the value of blood-shedding, and see the sword awakened against the Shepherd, before we shall be able truly to know the Sweetness of the good Shepherd's care.

It has been said that what the nightingale is among birds, that is this divine ode among the psalms, for it has sung sweetly in the ear of many a mourner in his night of weeping, and has bidden him hope for a morning of joy. I will venture to compare it also to the lark, which sings as it mounts, and mounts as it sings, until it is out of sight, and even then is not out of hearing. Note the last words of the psalm—"I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever;" these are celestial notes, more fitted for the eternal mansions than for these dwelling places below the clouds. Oh that we may enter into the spirit of the psalm as we read it, and then we shall experience the days of heaven upon the earth!

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. "The Lord is my shepherd." What condescension is this, that the infinite Lord assumes towards his people the office and character of a Shepherd! It should be the subject of grateful admiration that the great God allows himself to be compared to anything which will set forth his great love and care for his own people. David had himself been a keeper of sheep, and understood both the needs of the sheep and the many cares of a shepherd. He compares himself to a creature weak, defenceless, and foolish, and he takes God to be his Provider, Preserver, Director, and, indeed, his everything. No man has a right to consider himself the Lord's sheep unless his nature has been renewed for the scriptural description of unconverted men does not picture them as sheep, but as wolves or goats. A sheep is an object of property, not a wild animal; its owner sets great store by it, and frequently it is bought with a great price. It is well to know, as certainly David did, that we belong to the
Lord. There is a noble tone of confidence about this sentence. There is no "if"
nor "but," nor even "I hope so;" but he says, "The Lord is my shepherd." We
must cultivate the spirit of assured dependence upon our heavenly Father. The
sweetest word of the whole is that monosyllable, "My." He does not say, "The
Lord is the shepherd of the world at large, and leadeth forth the multitude as his
flock," but "The Lord is my shepherd;" if he be a Shepherd to no one else, he is
a Shepherd to me; he cares for me, watches over me, and preserves me. The
words are in the present tense. Whatever be the believer's position, he is even
now under the pastoral care of Jehovah.

The next words are a sort of inference from the first statement—they are
sententious and positive—"I shall not want." I might want otherwise, but when
the Lord is my Shepherd he is able to supply my needs, and he is certainly
willing to do so, for his heart is full of love, and therefore "I shall not want." I
shall not lack for temporal things. Does he not feed the ravens, and cause the
lilies to grow? How, then, can he leave his children to starve? I shall not want
for spirituals, I know that his grace will be sufficient for me. Resting in him he
will say to me, "As thy day so shall thy strength be." I may not possess all that I
wish for, but "I shall not want." Others, far wealthier and wiser than I, may
want, but "I shall not." "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they
that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." It is not only "I do not want,"
but "I shall not want." Come what may, if famine should devastate the land, or
calamity destroy the city, "I shall not want." Old age with its feebleness shall
not bring me any lack, and even death with its gloom shall not find me
destitute. I have all things and abound; not because I have a good store of
money in the bank, not because I have skill and wit with which to win my
bread, but because "The Lord is my shepherd." The wicked always want, but
the righteous never; a sinner's heart is far from satisfaction, but a gracious spirit
dwells in the palace of content.

Verse 2. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside
the still waters." The Christian life has two elements in it, the contemplative
and the active, and both of these are richly provided for. First, the
contemplative. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." What are these
"green pastures" but the Scriptures of truth—always fresh, always rich, and
never exhausted? There is no fear of biting the bare ground where the grass is
long enough for the flock to lie down in it. Sweet and full are the doctrines of
the gospel; fit food for souls, as tender grass is natural nutriment for sheep.
When by faith we are enabled to find rest in the promises, we are like the sheep
that lie down in the midst of the pasture; we find at the same moment both
provender and peace, rest and refreshment, serenity and satisfaction. But
observe: "He maketh me to lie down." It is the Lord who graciously enables us
to perceive the preciousness of his truth, and to feed upon it. How grateful ought we to be for the power to appropriate the promises! There are some distracted souls who would give worlds if they could but do this. They know the blessedness of it, but they cannot say that this blessedness is theirs. They know the "green pastures," but they are not made to "lie down" in them. Those believers who have for years enjoyed a "full assurance of faith" should greatly bless their gracious God.

The second part of a vigorous Christian's life consists in gracious activity. We not only think, but we act. We are not always lying down to feed, but are journeying onward toward perfection; hence we read, "he leadeth me beside the still waters." What are these "still waters" but the influences and graces of his blessed Spirit? His Spirit attends us in various operations, like waters—in the plural—to cleanse, to refresh, to fertilise, to cherish. They are "still waters," for the Holy Ghost loves peace, and sounds no trumpet of ostentation in his operations. He may flow into our soul, but not into our neighbour's, and therefore our neighbour may not perceive the divine presence; and though the blessed Spirit may be pouring his floods into one heart, yet he that sitteth next to the favoured one may know nothing of it.

"In sacred silence of the mind
My heaven, and there my God I find."

Still waters run deep. Nothing more noisy than an empty drum. That silence is golden indeed in which the Holy Spirit meets with the souls of his saints. Not to raging waves of strife, but to peaceful streams of holy love does the Spirit of God conduct the chosen sheep. He is a dove, not an eagle; the dew, not the hurricane. Our Lord leads us beside these "still waters;" we could not go there of ourselves, we need his guidance, therefore it is said, "he leadeth me." He does not drive us. Moses drives us by the law, but Jesus leads us by his example, and the gentle drawing of his love.

Verse 3. "He restoreth my soul." When the soul grows sorrowful he revives it; when it is sinful he sanctifies it; when it is weak he strengthens it. "He" does it. His ministers could not do it if he did not. His Word would not avail by itself. "He restoreth my soul." Are any of us low in grace? Do we feel that our spirituality is at its lowest ebb? He who turns the ebb into the flood can soon restore our soul. Pray to him, then, for the blessing—"Restore thou me, thou Shepherd of my soul!"

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." The Christian delights to be obedient, but it is the obedience of love, to which he is constrained by the example of his Master. "He leadeth me." The Christian is
not obedient to some commandments and neglectful of others; he does not pick and choose, but yields to all. Observe, that the plural is used—"the paths of righteousness." Whatever God may give us to do we would do it, led by his love. Some Christians overlook the blessing of sanctification, and yet to a thoroughly renewed heart this is one of the sweetest gifts of the covenant. If we could be saved from wrath, and yet remain unregenerate, impenitent sinners, we should not be saved as we desire, for we mainly and chiefly pant to be saved from sin and led in the way of holiness. All this is done out of pure free grace; "for his name's sake." It is to the honour of our great Shepherd that we should be a holy people, walking in the narrow way of righteousness. If we be so led and guided we must not fail to adore our heavenly Shepherd's care.

Verse 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." This unspeakably delightful verse has been sung on many a dying bed, and has helped to make the dark valley bright times out of mind. Every word in it has a wealth of meaning. "Yea, though I walk," as if the believer did not quicken his pace when he came to die, but still calmly walked with God. To walk indicates the steady advance of a soul which knows its road, knows its end, resolves to follow the path, feels quite safe, and is therefore perfectly calm and composed. The dying saint is not in a flurry, he does not run as though he were alarmed, nor stand still as though he would go no further, he is not confounded nor ashamed, and therefore keeps to his old pace. Observe that it is not walking in the valley, but through the valley. We go through the dark tunnel of death and emerge into the light of immortality. We do not die, we do but sleep to wake in glory. Death is not the house but the porch, not the goal but the passage to it. The dying article is called a valley. The storm breaks on the mountain, but the valley is the place of quietude, and thus full often the last days of the Christian are the most peaceful of his whole career; the mountain is bleak and bare, but the valley is rich with golden sheaves, and many a saint has reaped more joy and knowledge when he came to die than he ever knew while he lived. And, then, it is not "the valley of death," but "the valley of the shadow of death," for death in its substance has been removed, and only the shadow of it remains. Some one has said that when there is a shadow there must be light somewhere, and so there is. Death stands by the side of the highway in which we have to travel, and the light of heaven shining upon him throws a shadow across our path; let us then rejoice that there is a light beyond. Nobody is afraid of a shadow, for a shadow cannot stop a man's pathway even for a moment. The shadow of a dog cannot bite; the shadow of a sword cannot kill; the shadow of death cannot destroy us. Let us not, therefore, be afraid. "I will fear no evil." He does not say there shall not be any evil; he had got beyond even that high
assurance, and knew that Jesus had put all evil away; but "I will fear no evil;"
as if even his fears, those shadows of evil, were gone for ever. The worst evils
of life are those which do not exist except in our imagination. If we had no
troubles but real troubles, we should not have a tenth part of our present
sorrows. We feel a thousand deaths in fearing one, but the psalmist was cured
of the disease of fearing. "I will fear no evil," not even the Evil One himself; I
will not dread the last enemy, I will look upon him as a conquered foe, an
enemy to be destroyed, "For thou art with me." This is the joy of the Christian!
"Thou art with me." The little child out at sea in the storm is not frightened like
all the other passengers on board the vessel, it sleeps in its mother's bosom; it is
good for it that its mother is with it; and it should be enough for the believer
to know that Christ is with him. "Thou art with me; I have, in having thee, all
that I can crave: I have perfect comfort and absolute security, for thou art with
me." "Thy rod and thy staff," by which thou governest and rulest thy flock, the
ensigns of thy sovereignty and of thy gracious care—"they comfort me." I will
believe that thou reignest still. The rod of Jesse shall still be over me as the
sovereign succour of my soul.

Many persons profess to receive much comfort from the hope that they
shall not die. Certainly there will be some who will be "alive and remain" at the
coming of the Lord, but is there so very much of advantage in such an escape
from death as to make it the object of Christian desire? A wise man might
prefer of the two to die, for those who shall not die, but who "shall be caught up
together with the Lord in the air," will be losers rather than gainers. They will
lose that actual fellowship with Christ in the tomb which dying saints will have,
and we are expressly told that they shall have no preference beyond those who
are asleep. Let us be of Paul's mind when he said that "To die is gain," and
think of "departing to be with Christ, which is far better." This twenty-third
psalm is not worn out, and it is as sweet in a believer's ear now as it was in
David's time, let novelty-hunters say what they will.

Verse 5. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."
The good man has his enemies. He would not be like his Lord if he had not. If
we were without enemies we might fear that we were not the friends of God,
for the friendship of the world is enmity to God. Yet see the quietude of the
godly man in spite of, and in the sight of, his enemies. How refreshing is his
calm bravery! "Thou preparest a table before me." When a soldier is in the
presence of his enemies, if he eats at all he snatches a hasty meal, and away he
hastens to the fight. But observe: "Thou preparest a table," just as a servant
does when she unfolds the damask cloth and displays the ornaments of the feast
on an ordinary peaceful occasion. Nothing is hurried, there is no confusion, no
disturbance, the enemy is at the door, and yet God prepares a table, and the
Christian sits down and eats as if everything were in perfect peace. Oh! the peace which Jehovah gives to his people, even in the midst of the most trying circumstances!

"Let earth be all in arms abroad,
They dwell in perfect peace."

"Thou anointest my head with oil." May we live in the daily enjoyment of this blessing, receiving a fresh anointing for every day's duties. Every Christian is a priest, but he cannot execute the priestly office without unction, and hence we must go day by day to God the Holy Ghost, that we may have our heads anointed with oil. A priest without oil misses the chief qualification for his office, and the Christian priest lacks his chief fitness for service when he is devoid of new grace from on high. "My cup runneth over." He had not only enough, a cup full, but more than enough, a cup which overflowed. A poor man may say this as well as those in higher circumstances. "What, all this, and Jesus Christ too?" said a poor cottager as she broke a piece of bread and filled a glass with cold water. Whereas a man may be ever so wealthy, but if he be discontented his cup cannot run over; it is cracked and leaks. Content is the philosopher's stone which turns all it touches into gold; happy is he who has found it. Content is more than a kingdom, it is another word for happiness.

Verse 6. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." This is a fact as indisputable as it is encouraging, and therefore a heavenly verily, or "surely" is set as a seal upon it. This sentence may be read, "only goodness and mercy," for there shall be unmingled mercy in our history. These twin guardian angels will always be with me at my back and my beck. Just as when great princes go abroad they must not go unattended, so it is with the believer. Goodness and mercy follow him always—"all the days of his life"—the black days as well as the bright days, the days of fasting as well as the days of feasting, the dreary days of winter as well as the bright days of summer. Goodness supplies our needs, and mercy blots out our sins. "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." "A servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever." While I am here I will be a child at home with my God; the whole world shall be his house to me; and when I ascend into the upper chamber, I shall not change my company, nor even change the house; I shall only go to dwell in the upper storey of the house of the Lord for ever.

May God grant us grace to dwell in the serene atmosphere of this most blessed Psalm!
Whole Psalm. David has left no sweeter Psalm than the short twenty-third. It is but a moment's opening of his soul; but, as when one, walking the winter street sees the door opened for some one to enter, and the red light streams a moment forth, and the forms of gay children are running to greet the comer, and genial music sounds, though the door shuts and leaves the night black, yet it cannot shut back again all that the eyes, the ear, the heart, and the imagination have seen—so in this Psalm, though it is but a moment's opening of the soul, are emitted truths of peace and consolation that will never be absent from the world. The twenty-third Psalm is the nightingale of the Psalms. It is small, of a homely feather, singing shyly out of obscurity; but, oh! it has filled the air of the whole world with melodious joy, greater than the heart can conceive. Blessed be the day on which that Psalm was born! What would you say of a pilgrim commissioned of God to travel up and down the earth singing a strange melody, which, when one heard, caused him to forget whatever sorrows he had? And so the singing angel goes on his way through all lands, singing in the language of every nation, driving away trouble by the pulses of the air which his tongue moves with divine power. Behold just such an one! This pilgrim God has sent to speak in every language on the globe. It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has remanded to their dungeon more felon thoughts, more black doubts, more thieving sorrows, than there are sands on the sea-shore. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. Dying soldiers have died easier as it was read to them; ghastly hospitals have been illuminated; it has visited the prisoner, and broken his chains, and, like Peter's angel, led him forth in imagination, and sung him back to his home again. It has made the dying Christian slave freer than his master, and consoled those whom, dying, he left behind mourning, not so much that he was gone, as because they were left behind, and could not go too. Nor is its work done. It will go singing to your children and my children, and to their children, through all the generations of time; nor will it fold its wings till the last pilgrim is safe, and time ended; and then it shall fly back to the bosom of God, whence it issued, and sound on, mingled with all those sounds of celestial joy which make heaven musical for ever. Henry Ward Beecher, in "Life Thoughts."

Whole Psalm. This Psalm may well be called David's bucolicon, or pastoral, so daintily hath he struck upon the whole string, through the whole hymn. Est Psalmis honorabilis, saith Aben-еzra; it is a noble Psalm, written and sung by David, not when he fled into the forest of Hareth (1 Samuel 22:5), as some Hebrews will have it; but when as having overcome all his enemies, and settled
his kingdom, he enjoyed great peace and quiet, and had one foot, as it were, upon the battlements of heaven. The Jews at this day use for most part to repeat this Psalm after they are sat down to meat. John Trapp.

Whole Psalm. Augustine is said to have beheld, in a dream, the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm rising before him as a tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. This twenty-third may be compared to the fairest flowers that grew around it. The former has even been likened to the sun amidst the stars—surely this is like the richest of the constellations, even the Pleiades themselves! John Stoughton, in "The Songs of Christ's Flock," 1860.

Whole Psalm. Some pious souls are troubled because they cannot at all times, or often, use, in its joyous import, the language of this Psalm. Such should remember that David, though he lived long, never wrote but one twenty-third Psalm. Some of his odes do indeed express as lively a faith as this, and faith can walk in darkness. But where else do we find a whole Psalm expressive of personal confidence, joy, and triumph, from beginning to end? God's people have their seasons of darkness and their times of rejoicing. William S. Plumer.

Verse 1. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Let them say that will, "My lands shall keep me, I shall have no want, my merchandise shall be my help, I shall have no want;" let the soldier trust unto his weapons, and the husbandman unto his labour; let the artificer say unto his art, and the tradesman unto his trade, and the scholar unto his books, "These shall maintain me, I shall not want." Let us say with the church, as we both say and sing, "The Lord is my keeper, I shall not want." He that can truly say so, contemns the rest, and he that desires more than God, cannot truly say, the Lord is his, the Lord is this shepherd, governor and commander, and therefore I shall not want. John Hull, B.D., in "Lectures on Lamentations," 1617.

Verse 1. "The Lord is my shepherd; I want nothing:" thus it may be equally well rendered, though in our version it is in the future tense. J. R. Macduff, D.D., in "The Shepherd and his Flock," 1866.

Verse 1. "The Lord is my shepherd." We may learn in general from the metaphor, that it is the property of a gracious heart to draw some spiritual use or other from his former condition. David himself having sometimes been a shepherd, as himself confesseth when he saith, "he took David from the sheepfold from following the sheep," etc., himself having been a shepherd, he beholds the Lord the same to him. Whatsoever David was to his flock—watchful over them, careful to defend them from the lion and the bear, and whatsoever thing else might annoy them, careful of their pasturage and
watering, etc., the same and much more he beholds the Lord to himself. So Paul: "I was a persecutor, and an oppressor: but the Lord had mercy on me." This we may see in good old Jacob: "With this staff," saith he, "I passed over Jordan;" and that now God had blessed him and multiplied him exceedingly. The doctrine is plain; the reasons are, first, because true grace makes no object amiss to gather some gracious instruction: it skills not what the object be, so that the heart be gracious; for that never wants matter to work upon. And secondly, it must needs be so, for such are guided by God's Spirit, and therefore are directed to a spiritual use of all things. Samuel Smith's "Chiefe Shepheard," 1625.

Verse 1. "Shepherd." May this sweet title persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem: my meaning is, that those who as yet never knew what it was to be enfolded in the bosom of Jesus, who as yet were never lambs nor ewes in Christ's fold, consider the sweetness of this Shepherd, and come in to him. Satan deals seemingly sweet, that he may draw you into sin, but in the end he will be really bitter to you. Christ, indeed, is seemingly bitter to keep you from sin, hedging up your way with thorns. But he will be really sweet if you come into his flock, even notwithstanding your sins. Thou lookest into Christ's fold, and thou seest it hedged and fenced all about to keep you in from sin, and this keeps thee from entering; but, oh! let it not. Christ, indeed, is unwilling that any of his should wander, and if they be unwilling too, it's well. And if they wander he'll fetch them in, it may be with his shepherd's dog (some affliction); but he'll not be, as we say, dogged himself. No, he is and will be sweet. It may be, Satan smiles, and is pleasant to you while you sin; but know, he'll be bitter in the end. He that sings syren-like now, will devour lion-like at last. He'll torment you and vex you, and be burning and bitterness to you. O come in therefore to Jesus Christ; let him be now the shepherd of thy soul. And know then, he'll be sweet in endeavouring to keep thee from sin before thou commit it; and he'll be sweet in delivering thee from sin after thou hast committed it. O that this thought—that Jesus Christ is sweet in his carriage unto all his members, unto all his flock, especially the sinning ones, might persuade the hearts of some sinners to come in unto his fold. John Durant, 1652.

Verse 1 (first clause). Feedeth me, or is my feeder, my pastor. The word comprehendeth all duties of a good herd, as together feeding, guiding, governing, and defending his flock. Henry Ainsworth.

Verse 1. "The Lord is my shepherd." Now the reasons of this resemblance I take to be these:——First, one property of a good shepherd is, skill to know and judge aright of his sheep, and hence is it that it is a usual thing to set mark upon sheep, to the end that if they go astray (as of all creatures they are most subject
to wander), the shepherd may seek them up and bring them home again. The same thing is affirmed of Christ, or rather indeed Christ affirmeth the same thing of himself, "I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27. Yea, doubtless, he that hath numbered the stars, and calleth them all by their names, yea, the very hairs of our head, taketh special notice of his own children, "the sheep of his pasture," that they may be provided for and protected from all danger. Secondly, a good shepherd must have skill in the pasturing of his sheep, and in bringing them into such fruitful ground, as they may battle and thrive upon: a good shepherd will not suffer his sheep to feed upon rotten soil, but in wholesome pastures . . . . Thirdly, a good shepherd, knowing the straying nature of his sheep, is so much the more diligent to watch over them, and if at any time they go astray, he brings them back again. This is the Lord's merciful dealing towards poor wandering souls. . . . Fourthly, a good shepherd must have will to feed his sheep according to his skill: the Lord of all others is most willing to provide for his sheep. How earnest is Christ with Peter, to "feed his sheep," urging him unto it three several times! Fifthly, a good shepherd is provided to defend his flock. . . . The Lord is every way provided for the safety and defence of his sheep, as David confesseth in this Psalm (verse 4), "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." And again, "I took unto me two staves" (saith the Lord), "the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock." Zechariah 11:7. Sixthly, it is the property of a good shepherd, that if any of his sheep be weak and feeble, or his lambs young, for their safety and recovery he will bear them in his arms. The Lord is not wanting to us herein. Isaiah 40:11. And lastly, it is the property of a good shepherd to rejoice when the strayed sheep is brought home. The Lord doth thus rejoice at the conversion of a sinner. Luke 15:7.

Verses 1. "The Lord is my shepherd." I notice that some of the flock keep near the shepherd, and follow whithersoever he goes without the least hesitation, while others stray about on either side, or loiter far behind; and he often turns round and scolds them in a sharp, stern cry, or sends a stone after them. I saw him lame one just now. Not altogether unlike the good Shepherd. Indeed I never ride over these hills, clothed with flocks, without meditating upon this delightful theme. Our Saviour says that the good shepherd, when he putteth forth his own sheep, goeth before them, and they follow. John 10:4. This is true to the letter. They are so tame and so trained that they follow their keeper with the utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold, or from their houses in the villages, just where he pleases. As there are many flocks in such a place as this, each one takes a different path, and it is his business to find pasture for them. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be taught to follow, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of corn which lie so temptingly on either
Any one that thus wanders is sure to get into trouble. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice, and follow on; but, if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and, if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable, it is simple fact. I have made the experiment repeatedly. The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. He is armed in order to defend his charge, and in this he is very courageous. Many adventures with wild beasts occur, not unlike that recounted by David (1 Samuel 27:34-36), and in these very mountains; for though there are now no lions here, there are wolves in abundance; and leopards and panthers, exceeding fierce, prowl about the wild wadies. They not unfrequently attack the flock in the very presence of the shepherd, and he must be ready to do battle at a moment's warning. I have listened with intense interest to their graphic descriptions of downright and desperate fights with these savage beasts. And when the thief and the robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand to defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest. A poor faithful fellow last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedawin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars, and died among the sheep he was defending. Some sheep always keep near the shepherd, and are his special favorites. Each of them has a name, to which it answers joyfully, and the kind shepherd is ever distributing to such, choice portions which he gathers for that purpose. These are the contented and happy ones. They are in no danger of getting lost or into mischief, nor do wild beasts or thieves come near them. The great body, however, are mere worldlings, intent upon their mere pleasures or selfish interests. They run from bush to bush, searching for variety or delicacies, and only now and then lift their heads to see where the shepherd is, or, rather where the general flock is, lest they get so far away as to occasion a remark in their little community, or rebuke from their keeper. Others, again, are restless and discontented, jumping into everybody's field, climbing into bushes, and even into leaning trees, whence they often fall and break their limbs. These cost the good shepherd incessant trouble. W. M. Thomson, D.D., in "The Land and the Book."

Verse 1. "Shepherd." As we sat the silent hillsides around us were in a moment filled with life and sound. The shepherds led their flocks forth from the gates of the city. They were in full view, and we watched them and listened to them with no little interest. Thousands of sheep and goats were there, grouped in dense, confused masses. The shepherds stood together until all came out. Then they separated, each shepherd taking a different path, and uttering as he
advanced a shrill peculiar call. The sheep heard them. At first the masses swayed and moved, as if shaken by some internal convulsion; then points struck out in the direction taken by the shepherds; these became longer and longer until the confused masses were resolved into long, living streams, flowing after their leaders. Such a sight was not new to me, still it had lost none of its interest. It was perhaps one of the most vivid illustrations which human eyes could witness of that beautiful discourse of our Lord recorded by John, "And the sheep hear the shepherd's voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers," chapter 10:3-5. The shepherds themselves had none of that peaceful and placid aspect which is generally associated with pastoral life and habits. They looked more like warriors marching to the battle-field—a long gun slung from the shoulder, a dagger and heavy pistols in the belt, a light battle-axe or ironheaded club in the hand. Such were the equipments; and their fierce flashing eyes and scowling countenances showed but too plainly that they were prepared to use their weapons at any moment. J. L. Porter, A.M., in "The Giant Cities of Bashan," 1867.

Verse 1. "I shall not want." You must distinguish 'twixt absence, and 'twixt indigence. Absence is when something is not present; indigence or want, is when a needful good is not present. If a man were to walk, and had not a staff, here were something absent. If a man were to walk, and had but one leg, here were something whereof he were indigent. It is confessed that there are many good things which are absent from a good person, but no good thing which he wants or is indigent of. If the good be absent and I need it not, this is no want; he that walks without his cloak, walks well enough, for he needs it not. As long as I can walk carefully and cheerfully in my general or particular calling, though I have not such a load of accessories as other men have, yet I want nothing, for my little is enough and serves the turn. . . . Our corruptions are still craving, and they are always inordinate, they can find more wants than God needs to supply. As they say of fools, they can propose more questions than twenty wise men need to answer. They in James 4:3, did ask, but received not; and he gives two reasons for it:—1. This asking was but a lusting: "ye lust and have not" (verse 4): another, they did ask to consume it upon their lusts (verse 3). God will see that his people shall not want; but withal, he will never engage himself to the satisfying of their corruptions, though he doth to the supply of their conditions. It is one thing what the sick man wants, another what his disease wants. Your ignorance, your discontents, your pride, your unthankful hearts, may make you to believe that you dwell in a barren land, far from
mercies (as melancholy makes a person to imagine that he is drowning, or killing, etc.); whereas if God did open your eyes as he did Hagar's, you might see fountains and streams, mercies and blessings sufficient; though not many, yet enough, though not so rich, yet proper, and every way convenient for your good and comfort; and thus you have the genuine sense, so far as I can judge of David's assertion, "I shall not want." Obadiah Sedgwick.

Verse 1. "I shall not want." Only he that can want does not want; and he that cannot, does. You tell me that a godly man wants these and these things, which the wicked man hath; but I tell you he can no more be said to "want" them than a butcher may be said to want Homer, or such another thing, because his disposition is such, that he makes no use of those things which you usually mean. 'Tis but only necessary things that he cares for, and those are not many. But one thing is necessary, and that he hath chosen, namely, the better part. And therefore if he have nothing at all of all other things, he does not want, neither is there anything wanting which might make him rich enough, or by absence whereof, his riches should be said to be deficient. A body is not maimed unless it have lost a principal part: only privative defects discommend a thing, and not those that are negative. When we say, there is nothing wanting to such-and-such a creature or thing that a man hath made, we mean that it hath all that belongs necessarily to it. We speak not of such things as may be added for compliments or ornaments or the like, such as are those things usually wherein wicked men excel the godly. Even so it is when we say that a godly man wanteth nothing. For though in regard of unnecessary goods he be "as having nothing," yet in regard of others he is as if he possessed all things. He wants nothing that is necessary either for his glorifying of God (being able to do that best in and by his afflictions), or for God's glorifying of him, and making him happy, having God himself for his portion and supply of his wants, who is abundantly sufficient at all times, for all persons, in all conditions. Zachary Bogan.

Verse 1. "I shall not want." To be raised above the fear of want by committing ourselves to the care of the Good Shepherd, or by placing our confidence in worldly property, are two distinct and very opposite things. The confidence in the former case, appears to the natural man to be hard and difficult, if not unreasonable and impossible: in the latter it appears to be natural, easy, and consistent. It requires, however, no lengthened argument to prove that he who relies on the promise of God for the supply of his temporal wants, possesses an infinitely greater security than the individual who confides in his accumulated wealth. The ablest financiers admit that there must be appended to their most choice investments, this felt or expressed proviso—"So far as human affairs
can be secure." . . . Since then no absolute security against want can be found on earth, it necessarily follows, that he who trusts in God is the most wise and prudent man. Who dare deny that the promise of the living God is an absolute security? John Stevenson.

Verse 1. "I shall not want." The sheep of Christ may change their pasture, but they shall never want a pasture. "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Matthew 6:25. If he grant unto us great things, shall we distrust him for small things? He who has given us heavenly beings, will also give us earthly blessings. The great Husbandman never overstocked his own commons. William Secker.

Verse 1. "I shall not want." Ever since I heard of your illness, and the Lord's mercy in sustaining and restoring, I have been intending to write, to bless the Lord with my very dear sister, and ask for some words to strengthen my faith, in detail of your cup having run over in the hour of need. Is it not, indeed, the bleating of Messiah's sheep, "I shall not want"? "shall not want," because the Lord is our Shepherd! Our Shepherd the All-sufficient! nothing can unite itself to him; nothing mingle with him; nothing add to his satisfying nature; nothing diminish from his fulness. There is a peace and fulness of expression in this little sentence, known only to the sheep. The remainder of the Psalm is a drawing out of this, "I shall not want." In the unfolding we find repose, refreshment, restoring mercies, guidance, peace in death, triumph, an overflowing of blessings; future confidence, eternal security in life or death, spiritual or temporal, prosperity or adversity, for time or eternity. May we not say, "The Lord is my Shepherd?" for we stand on the sure foundation of the twenty-third Psalm. How can we want, when united to him! we have a right to use all his riches. Our wealth is his riches and glory. With him nothing can be withheld. Eternal life is ours, with the promise that all shall be added; all he knows we want. Our Shepherd has learned the wants of his sheep by experience, for he was himself "led as a sheep to the slaughter." Does not this expression, dictated by the Spirit, imply a promise, and a full promise, when connected with his own words, "I know my sheep," by what painful discipline he was instructed in this knowledge, subjected himself to the wants of every sheep, every lamb of his fold, that he might be able to be touched with a feeling of their infirmities? The timid sheep has nothing to fear; fear not want, fear not affliction. fear not pain; "fear not;" according to your want shall be your supply, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I trust in him." Theodosia A. Howard, Viscountess Powerscourt (1830) in "Letters," etc., edited by Robert Daly, D.D., 1861.
Verse 1. "I shall not want." One of the poor members of the flock of Christ was reduced to circumstances of the greatest poverty in his old age, and yet he never murmured. "You must be badly off," said a kind-hearted neighbour to him one day as they met upon the road, "you must be badly off; and I don't know how an old man like you can maintain yourself and your wife; yet you are always cheerful!" "Oh no!" he replied, "we are not badly off, I have a rich Father, and he does not suffer me to want." "What! your father not dead yet? he must be very old indeed!" "Oh!" said he, "my Father never dies, and he always takes care of me!" This aged Christian was a daily pensioner on the providence of his God. His struggles and his poverty were known to all; but his own declaration was, that he never wanted what was absolutely necessary. The days of his greatest straits were the days of his most signal and timely deliverances. When old age benumbed the hand of his industry, the Lord extended to him the hand of charity. And often has he gone forth from his scanty breakfast, not knowing from what earthly source his next meal was to be obtained. But yet with David he could rely on his Shepherd's care, and say, "I shall not want;" and as certainly as he trusted in God, so surely, in some unexpected manner was his necessity supplied. John Stevenson.

Verse 1. In the tenth chapter of John's gospel, you will find six marks of Christ sheep: 1. They know their Shepherd; 2. They know his voice; 3. They hear him calling them each by name; 4. They love him; 5. They trust him; 6. They follow him. In "The Shepherd's King," by the Authoress of "The Folded Lamb" {Mrs. Rogers.}, 1856.

Verses 1-4. Come down to the river; there is something going forward worth seeing. Yon shepherd is about to lead his flock across; and as our Lord says of the good shepherd—you observe that he goes before, and the sheep follow. Not all in the same manner, however. Some enter boldly, and come straight across. These are the loved ones of the flock, who keep hard by the footsteps of the shepherd, whether sauntering through green meadows by the still waters, feeding upon the mountains, or resting at noon, beneath the shadow of great rocks. And now others enter, but in doubt and alarm. Far from their guide, they miss the ford, and are carried down the river, some more, some less; and yet, one by one, they all struggle over and make good their landing. Notice those little lambs. They refuse to enter, and must be driven into the stream by the shepherd's dog, mentioned by Job in his "parable." Poor things! how they leap, and plunge, and bleat in terror! That weak one yonder will be swept quite away, and perish in the sea. But no; the shepherd himself leaps into the stream, lifts it into his bosom, and bears it trembling to the shore. All safely over, how happy they appear! The lambs frisk and gambol about in high spirits, while the older
ones gather round their faithful guide, and look up to him in subdued but expressive thankfulness. Now, can you watch such a scene, and not think of that Shepherd who leadeth Joseph like a flock; and of another river, which all his sheep must cross? He, too, goes before, and, as in the case of this flock, they who keep near him "fear no evil." They hear his sweet voice, saying, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." Isaiah 43:2. With eye fastened on him, they scarcely see the stream, or feel its cold and threatening waves. W. M. Thomson.

Verse 2. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," etc. Not only he hath "green pastures" to lead me into, which shows his ability, but he leads me into them, which shows his goodness. He leads me not into pastures that are withered and dry, that would distaste me before I taste them; but he leads me into "green pastures," as well to please my eye with the verdure as my stomach with the herbage; and inviting me, as it were, to eat by setting out the meat in the best colour. A meat though never so good, yet if it look not handsomely, it dulls the appetite; but when besides the goodness, it hath also a good look, this gives the appetite another edge, and makes a joy before enjoying. But yet the goodness is not altogether in the greenness. Alas! green is but a colour, and colours are but deceitful things; they might be green leaves, or they might be green flags or rushes; and what good were to me in such a greenness? No, my soul; the goodness is in being "green pastures," for now they perform as much as they promise; and as in being green they were a comfort to me as soon as I saw them, so in being green "pastures" they are a refreshing to me now as soon as I taste them. As they are pleasant to look on, so they are wholesome to feed on: as they are sweet to be tasted, so they are easy to be digested; that I am now, methinks, in a kind of paradise and seem not to want anything, unless perhaps a little water with which now and then to wash my mouth, at most to take sometimes a sip: for though sheep be not great drinkers, and though their pastures being green, and full of sap, make drink the less needful; yet some drink they must have besides. And now see the great goodness of this Shepherd, and what just cause there is to depend upon his providence; for he lets not his sheep want this neither, but "he leadeth them besides still waters," not waters that roar and make a noise, enough to fright a fearful sheep, but waters "still" and quiet; that though they drink but little, yet they may drink that little without fear. And may I not justly say now, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want?" And yet perhaps there will be want for all this; for is it enough that he lead them into green pastures and beside still waters? May he not lead them in, and presently take them out again before their bellies be half full; and so instead of making them happy, make them more miserable? set them in a
longing with the sight, and then frustrate them of their expectation? No, my soul; the measure of this Shepherd's goodness is more than so. He not only leadeth them into green pastures, but "he makes them to lie down" in them—he leads them not in to post over their meat as if they were to eat a passover, and to take it in transita, as dogs drink Nylus; but, "he makes them to lie down in green pastures," that they may eat their fill and feed at leisure; and when they have done, "lie down" and take their ease, that their after-reckoning may be as pleasing as their repast. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 2. "He leadeth me." Our guiding must be mild and gentle, else it is not duxisti, but traxisti—drawing and driving, and no leading. Leni spiritu non durf manu—rather by an inward sweet influence to be led, than by and outward extreme violence to be forced forward . . . Touching what kind of cattle, to very good purpose, Jacob, a skilful shepherd, answereth Esau (who would have had Jacob and his flocks have kept company with him in his hunting pace), Nay, not so, sir, said Jacob, it is a tender cattle that is under my hands, and must be softly driven, as they may endure: if one "should over drive them but one day," they would all die or be laid up for many days after. Genesis 33:13. Lancelot Andrewes.

Verse 2. "He leadeth me," etc. In ordinary circumstances the shepherd does not feed his flock, except by leading and guiding them where they may gather for themselves; but there are times when it is otherwise. Late in autumn, when the pastures are dried up, and in winter, in places covered with snow, he must furnish them food or they die. In the vast oak woods along the eastern sides of Lebanon, between Baalbek and the cedars, there are there gathered innumerable flocks, and the shepherds are all day long in the bushy trees, cutting down the branches, upon whose green leaves and tender twigs the sheep and goats are entirely supported. The same is true in all mountain districts, and large forests are preserved on purpose. W. M. Thomson.

Verse 2. "Lie down"—"leadeth." Sitting Mary and stirring Martha are emblems of contemplation and action, and as they dwell in one house, so must these in one heart. Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 2. This short but touching epitaph is frequently seen in the catacombs at Rome, "In Christo, in pace"—(In Christ, in peace). Realise the constant presence of the Shepherd of peace. "HE maketh me to lie down!" "HE leadeth me." J. R. Macduff, D.D.

Verse 2 (last clause). "Easily leadeth," or "comfortably guideth me:" it noteth a soft and gentle leading, with sustaining of infirmity. H. Ainsworth.
Verse 2. "Green pastures." Here are many pastures, and every pasture rich so that it can never be eaten bare; here are many streams, and every stream so deep and wide that it can never be drawn dry. The sheep have been eating in these pastures ever since Christ had a church on earth, and yet they are as full of grass as ever. The sheep have been drinking at these streams ever since Adam, and yet they are brim full to this very day, and they will so continue till the sheep are above the use of them in heaven! *Ralph Robinson,* 1656.

Verse 2. "Green pastures . . . beside the still waters." From the top of the mound (of Arban on the Khabour) the eye ranged over a level country bright with flowers, and spotted with black tents, and innumerable flocks of sheep and camels. During our stay at Arban, the color of these great plains was undergoing a continual change. After being for some days of a golden yellow, a new family of flowers would spring up, and it would turn almost in a night to a bright scarlet, which would again as suddenly give way to the deepest blue. Then the meadows would be mottled with various hues, or would put on the emerald green of the most luxuriant of pastures. The glowing descriptions I had so frequently received from the Bedouins of the beauty and fertility of the banks of the Khabour were more than realised. The Arabs boast that its meadows bear three distinct crops of grass during the year, and the wandering tribes look upon its wooded banks and constant greensward as a paradise during the summer months, where man can enjoy a cool shade, and beast can find fresh and tender herbs, whilst all around is yellow, parched, and sapless. *Austin H. Layard,* 1853.

Verse 2. With guidance to "green pastures," the psalmist has, with good reason, associated guardianship beside "still waters:" for as we can only appropriate the word through the Spirit, so we shall ordinarily receive the Spirit through the Word; not indeed only by hearing it, not only by reading it, not only by reflecting upon it. The Spirit of God, who is a most free agent, and who is himself the source of liberty, will come into the heart of the believer when he will, and how he will, and as he will. But the effect of his coming will ever be the realisation of some promise, the recognition of some principle, the attainment of some grace, the understanding of some mystery, which is already in the word, and which we shall thus find, with a deeper impression, and with a fuller development, brought home with power to the heart. *Thomas Dale,* M.A., in "The Good Shepherd," 1847.

Verse 2. "Still waters;" which are opposed to great rivers, which both affright the sheep with their noise, and expose them to the danger of being carried away by their swift and violent streams, whilst they are drinking at them. *Matthew Poole.*
Verse 2. "Still waters;" Hebrew, "Waters of rests," ex quibus diligunt oves bibere, saith Kimchi, such as sheep love to drink of, because void of danger, and yielding a refreshing air. Popish clergymen are called the "inhabitants of the sea," Revelation 12:12, because they set abroach gross, troubled, brackish, and sourish doctrine, which rather bringeth barrenness to their hearers, and gnaweth the entrails than quencheth their thirst, or cooleth their heat. The doctrine of the gospel, like the waters of Siloe (Isaiah 8:8), run gently, but taste pleasantly. John Trapp.

Verse 3. "He restoreth my soul." etc. The subjects experimentally treated in this verse are, first, the believer's liability to fall, or deviate even within the fold of the church, else wherefore should he need to be "restored?" Next, the promptitude of the Good Shepherd to interpose for his rescue. "He restoreth my soul." Then Christ's subsequent care to "lead him in the paths of righteousness;" and lastly, the reason assigned wherefore he will do this—resolving all into the spontaneousness, the supremacy, the omnipotence of grace. He will do all "for his own name's sake." Thomas Dale.

Verse 3. "He restoreth my soul." The same hand which first rescued us from ruin, reclaims us from all our subsequent aberrations. Chastisement itself is blended with tenderness; and the voice which speaks reproof, saying, "They have perverted their way, and they have forsaken the Lord their God," utters the kindest invitation, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Nor is the voice unheard, and the call unanswered or unfelt. "Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God." Jeremiah 3:22. "When thou saidst, Seek my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." J. Thornton's "Shepherd of Israel," 1826.

Verse 3. "He restoreth my soul." He restores it to its original purity, that was now grown foul and black with sin; for also, what good were it to have "green" pastures and a black soul! He "restores" it to its natural temper in affections, that was grown distempered with violence of passions; for alas! what good were it to have still waters and turbulent spirits! He "restores" it indeed to life, that was grown before in a manner quite dead; and who could restore my soul to life, but he only that is the Good Shepherd and gave his life for his sheep? Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 3. "He shall convert my soul;" turn me not only from sin and ignorance, but from every false confidence, and every deceitful refuge. "He shall bring me forth in paths of righteousness;" in those paths of imputed righteousness which are always adorned with the trees of holiness, are always watered with the fountains of consolation, and always terminate in everlasting rest. Some,
perhaps, may ask, why I give this sense to the passage? Why may it not signify the paths of duty, and the way of our own obedience? Because such effects are here mentioned as never have resulted, and never can result, from any duties of our own. These are not "green pastures," but a parched and blasted heath. These are not "still waters," but a troubled and disorderly stream. Neither can these speak peace or administer comfort when we pass through the valley and shadow of death. To yield these blessings, is the exalted office of Christ, and the sole prerogative of his obedience. James Hervey.

Verse 3. "He restoreth my soul:" Hebrew. "He bringeth it back;" either, 1. From its errors or wandering; or, 2. Into the body, out of which it was even departing and fainting away. He reviveth or comforteth me. Matthew Poole.

Verse 3. "Paths of righteousness." Alas! O Lord, these "paths of righteousness," have a long time so little been frequented, that the prints of a path are almost clean worn out; that it is a hard matter now, but to find where the paths lie, and if we can find them, yet they are so narrow and so full of ruts, that without special assistance it is an impossible thing not to fall or go astray. Even so angels, and those no mean ones, were not able to go right in these "paths of righteousness," but for want of leading, went away and perished. O, therefore, thou the Great Shepherd of my soul, as thou art pleased of thy grace to lead me into them, so vouchsafe with thy grace to lead me in them; for though in themselves they be "paths of righteousness," yet to me they will be but paths of error if thou vouchsafe not, as well to lead me in them, as into them. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 3. "Paths." In the wilderness and in the desert there are no raised paths, the paths being merely tracks; and sometimes there are six or eight paths running unevenly along side each other. No doubt this is what is figuratively referred to in Psalm 23:3, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness," all leading to one point. John Gadsby.

Verse 3. "For his name's sake." Seeing he hath taken upon him the name of a "Good Shepherd," he will discharge his part, whatever his sheep be. It is not their being bad sheep that can make him leave being a "Good Shepherd," but he will be "good," and maintain the credit of "his name" in spite of all their badness; and though no benefit come to them of it, yet there shall glory accrue to him by it, and "his name" shall nevertheless be magnified and extolled. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." To "fear no evil," then, "in the valley of the shadow of death," is a
blessed privilege open to every true believer! For death shall be to him no death at all, but a very deliverance from death, from all pains, cares, and sorrows, miseries and wretchedness of this world, and the very entry into rest, and a beginning of everlasting joy: a tasting of heavenly pleasures, so great, that neither tongue is able to express, neither eyes to see, nor ear to hear them, no, nor any earthly man's heart to conceive them. . . . And to comfort all Christian persons herein, holy Scripture calleth this bodily death a sleep, wherein man's senses be, as it were, taken from him for a season, and yet, when he waketh, he is more fresh than when he went to bed! . . . Thus is this bodily death a door or entering into life, and therefore not so much dreadful, if it be rightly considered, as it is comfortable; not a mischief, but a remedy for all mischief; no enemy, but a friend; not a cruel tyrant, but a gentle guide; leading us not to mortality, but to immortality! not to sorrow and pain, but to joy and pleasure, and that to endure for ever! Homily against the Fear of Death, 1547.

Verse 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Though I were called to such a sight as Ezekiel's vision, a valley full of dead men's bones; though the king of terrors should ride in awful pomp through the streets, slaying heaps upon heaps, and thousands should fall at my side, and ten thousands at my right hand, I will fear no evil. Though he should level his fatal arrows at the little circle of my associates, and put lover and friend far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness, I will fear no evil. Yea, though I myself should feel his arrow sticking fast in me, the poison drinking up my spirits; though I should in consequence of that fatal seizure, sicken and languish, and have all the symptoms of approaching dissolution, still I will fear no evil. Nature, indeed, may start back and tremble, but I trust that he who knows the flesh to be weak, will pity and pardon these struggles. However I may be afraid of the agonies of dying, I will fear no evil in death. The venom of his sting is taken away. The point of his arrow is blunted, so that it can pierce no deeper than the body. My soul in invulnerable. I can smile at the shaking of his spear; look unmoved on the ravages which the unrelenting destroyer is making on my tabernacle; and long for the happy period when he shall have made a breach wide enough for my heaven-aspiring spirit to fly away and be at rest. Samuel Lavington.

Verse 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." "I want to talk to you about heaven," said a dying parent [The late Rev. Hugh Stowell, Rector of Ballaugh, Isle of Man.] to a member of his family. "We may not be spared to each other long. May we meet around the throne of glory, one family in heaven!" Overpowered at the thought, his beloved daughter exclaimed, "Surely you do not think there is any danger?"
Calmly and beautifully he replied, "Danger, my darling! Oh, do not use that word! There can be no danger to the Christian, whatever may happen! All is right! All is well! God is love! All is well! Everlastingly well! Everlastingly well!" *John Stevenson.*

**Verse 4.** "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." What not fear then? Why, what friend is it that keeps up your spirits, that bears you company in that black and dismal region? He will soon tell you God was with him, and in those slippery ways he leaned upon his staff, and these were the cordials that kept his heart from fainting. I challenge all the gallants in the world, out of all their merry, jovial clubs, to find such a company of merry, cheerful creatures as the friends of God are. It is not the company of God, but the want of it, that makes sad. Alas! you know not what their comforts be, and strangers intermeddle not with their joy. You think they cannot be merry when their countenance is so grave; but they are sure you cannot be truly merry when you smile with a curse upon your souls. They know that he spoke that sentence which could not be mistaken, "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Proverbs 14:13. Then call your roaring, and your singing, and laughter, mirth; but the Spirit of God calls it madness. Ecclesiastes 2:2. When a carnal man's heart is ready to die within him, and, with Nabal, to become like a stone, how cheerfully then can those look that have God for their friend! Which of the valiant ones of the world can outface death, look joyfully into eternity? Which of them can hug a faggot, embrace the flames? This the saint can do, and more too; for he can look infinite justice in the face with a cheerful heart; he can hear of hell with joy and thankfulness; he can think of the day of judgment with great delight and comfort. I again challenge all the world to produce one out of all their merry companies, one that can do all this. Come, muster up all your jovial blades together; call for your harps and viols; add what you will to make the concert complete; bring in your richest wines; come, lay your heads together, and study what may still add to your comfort. Well, it is done? Now, come away, sinner, this night thy soul must appear before God. Well now, what say you, man? What! doth your courage fail you? Now call for your merry companions, and let them cheer thy heart. Now call for a cup, a whore; never be daunted, man. Shall one of thy courage quail, that could make a mock at the threatenings of the Almighty God? What, so soon and jolly but now, and now down in the mouth! Here's a sudden change indeed! Where are thy merry companions, I say again? All fled? Where are thy darling pleasures? Have all forsaken thee? Why shouldst thou be dejected; there's a poor man in rags that's smiling? What! art thou quite bereft of all comfort? What's the matter? There's a question with all my heart, to ask a man that must appear before God to-morrow morning. Well,
then, it seems your heart misgives you. What then did you mean of talk of joys
and pleasures? Are they all come to this? Why, there stands one that now hath
his heart as full of comfort as ever it can hold, and the very thoughts of eternity,
which do so daunt your soul, raise his! And would you know the reason? He
knows he is going to his Friend; nay, his Friend bears him company through
that dirty lane. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for God and the
soul to dwell together in unity! This it is to have God for a friend. "Oh blessed
is the soul that is in such a case; yea, blessed is the soul whose God is the

Verse 4. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." Any
darkness is evil, but darkness and the shadow of death is the utmost of evils.
David put the worst of his case and the best of his faith when he said, "Though
I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;" that is, in the
greatest evil I will fear no evil. . . . Again, to be under the shadow of a thing, is
to be under the power of a thing. . . . Thus to be under the shadow of death, is
to be so under the power or reach of death, that death may take a man and seize
upon him when it pleaseth. "Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of
death," that is, though I be so near death, that it seems to others death may
catch me every moment, though I be under so many appearances and
probabilities of extreme danger, that there appears an impossibility, in sense, to
escape death, "yet I will not fear." Joseph Caryl.

Verse 4. "Valley of the shadow of death." A valley is a low place, with
mountains on either side. Enemies may be posted on those mountains to shoot
their arrows at the traveler, as ever was the case in the East; but he must pass
through it. The psalmist, however, said he would fear no evil, not even the fiery
darts of Satan, for the Lord was with him. The figure is not primarily, as is
sometimes supposed, our dying moments, though it will beautifully bear that
explanation; but it is the valley beset with enemies, posted on the hills. David
was not only protected in that valley, but even in the presence of those enemies,
his table was bountifully spread (verse 5). The Bedouin, at the present day
often post themselves on the hills to harass travellers, as they pass along the
valleys. John Gadsby.

Verse 4. "I will fear no evil." It hath been an ancient proverb, when a man had
done some great matter, he was said to have "plucked a lion by the beard;"
when a lion is dead, even to little children it hath been an easy matter. As boys,
when they see a bear, a lion, or a wolf dead in the streets, they will pull off their
hair, insult over them, and deal with them as they please; they will trample
upon their bodies, and do that unto them being dead, which they durst not in
the least measure venture upon whilst they are alive. Such a thing is death, a
furious beast, a ramping lion, a devouring wolf, the *helluo generis humani* (eater up of mankind), yet Christ hath laid him at his length, hath been the *death of death*, so that *God's children* triumph over him, such as those refined ones in the ore of the church, those martyrs of the primitive times, who cheerfully offered themselves to the fire, and to the sword, and to all the violence of this hungry beast; and have played upon him, scorned and derided him, by the faith that they had in the life of Christ, who hath subdued him to himself. 1 Corinthians 15. *Martin Day*, 1660.

*Verse 4.* "Though art with me." Do you know the sweetness, the security, the strength of "Thou art with me"? When anticipating the solemn hour of death, when the soul is ready to halt and ask, How shall it then be? can you turn in soul-affection to your God and say, "There is nothing in death to harm me, while thy love is left to me"? Can you say, "O death, where is thy sting"? It is said, when a bee has left its sting in any one, it has no more power to hurt. Death has left its sting in the humanity of Christ, and has no more power to harm his child. Christ's victory over the grave is his people's. "At that moment I am with you," whispers Christ; "the same arm you have proved strong and faithful all the way up through the wilderness, which has never failed, though you have been often forced to lean on it all your weakness." "On this arm," answers the believer. "I feel at home; with soul confidence, I repose on my Beloved; for he has supported through so many difficulties, from the contemplation of which I shuddered. He has carried over so many depths, that I know his arm to be the arm of love." How can that be dark, in which God's child is to have the accomplishment of the longing desire of his life? How can it be dark to come in contact with the light of life? It is "his rod," "his staff;" therefore they "comfort." Prove him—prove him now, believer! it is your privilege to do so. It will be precious to him to support your weakness; prove that when weak, then are you strong; that you may be secure, his strength shall be perfected in your perfect weakness. Omnipotent love must fail before one of his sheep can perish; for, says Christ, "none shall pluck my sheep out of my hand." "I and my Father are one;" therefore we may boldly say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." *Viscountess Powerscourt.*

*Verse 4.* "Thy rod." Of the *virga pastoralis* there are three uses: —1. *Numerare oves*—to reckon up or count the sheep; and in this sense they are said "to pass under the rod" (Leviticus 27:32), the shepherd tells them one by one. And even so are the people of God called the rod of his inheritance (Jeremiah 10:16), such as he takes special notice or account of. And take the words in this sense—"Thy rod doth comfort me"—it holds well; *q.d.* "Though I am in such
eminent dangers by reason of evil men, yet this is my comfort—I am not neglected of thee; thou dost not suffer me to perish; thou takest notice of me; thou dost take and make an account of me; thy special care looks after me." 2. *Provocare oves:* when the sheep are negligent and remiss in following or driving, the shepherd doth, with his rod, put them on, quicken their pace. And in this sense also David saith well, "*Thy rod doth comfort me;*" for it is a work which doth breed much joy and comfort in the hearts of God's people, when God doth put them out of a lazy, cold, formal walking, and doth, some way or other, cause them to mend their pace, to grow more active and fervent in his service and worship. 3. *Revocare oves:* the sheep sometimes are *petulante divagantes,* idly and inconsiderately straying from the flock, grazing alone, and wandering after other pastures, not considering the dangers which attend them by such a separation and wandering; and, therefore, the shepherd doth with his rod strike and fetch them in again, and so preserve them. In this sense also David might well say, "*Thy rod doth comfort me;*" for it is a great comfort that the Lord will not leave his sheep to the ways of discomfort, but brings them off from sinful errings and wanderings, which always do expose them to their greatest dangers and troubles. So that the words do intimate a singular part of God's gubernation or careful providence of his flock. *Obadiah Sedgwick.*

**Verse 4.** "*Rod and staff.*" The shepherd invariably carries a staff or rod with him when he goes forth to feed his flock. It is often bent or hooked at one end, which gave rise to the shepherd's crook in the hand of the Christian bishop. With this staff he rules and guides the flock to their green pastures, and defends them from their enemies. With it also he corrects them when disobedient, and brings them back when wandering. This staff is associated as inseparably with the shepherd as the goad is with the ploughman. *W. M. Thomson.*

**Verse 4.** The psalmist will trust, *even though all be unknown.* We find him doing this in Psalm 23:4: "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*" Here, surely, there is trust the most complete. We dread the unknown far above anything that we can see; a little noise in the dark will terrify, when even great dangers which are visible do not affright: the unknown, with its mystery and uncertainty, often fills the heart with anxiety, if not with foreboding and gloom. Here, the psalmist takes the highest form of the unknown, the aspect which is most terrible to man, and says, that even in the midst if it he will trust. What could be so wholly beyond the reach of human experience or speculation, or even imagination, as "*the valley of the shadow of death,*" with all that belonged to it? but the psalmist makes no reservation against it; he will trust where he cannot see. How often are we terrified at the unknown; even as the disciples were, "who feared as they entered the cloud;"
how often is the uncertainty of the future a harder trial to our faith than the pressure of some present ill! Many dear children of God can trust him in all known evils; but why those fears and forebodings, and sinkings of heart, if they trust him equally for the unknown? How much, alas! do we fall short of the true character of the children of God, in this matter of the unknown! A child practically acts upon the declaration of Christ that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," we, in this respect far less wise than he, people the unknown with phantoms and speculations, and too often forget our simple trust in God. Philip Bennet Power.

Verse 4. "For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Thou shalt prepare a table before me, against them that trouble me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full." Seeing thou art with me, at whose power and will all troubles go and come, I doubt not but to have the victory and upper hand of them, how many and dangerous soever they are; for thy rod chasteneth me when I go astray, and thy staff stayeth me when I should fall—two things most necessary for me, good Lord; the one to call me from my fault and error, and the other to keep me in thy truth and verity. What can be more blessed than to be sustained and kept from falling by the staff and strength of the Most High? And what can be more profitable than to be beaten with his merciful rod when we go astray? For he chasteneth as many as he loveth, and beateth as many as he receiveth into his holy profession. Notwithstanding, while we are here in this life, he feeds us with the sweet pastures of the wholesome herbs of his holy word, until we come to eternal life; and when we put off these bodies, and come into heaven, and know the blessed fruition and riches of his kingdom, then shall we not only be his sheep, but also the guests of his everlasting banquet; which, Lord, thou settest before all them that love thee in this world, and dost so anoint and make glad our minds with thine Holy Spirit, that no adversities nor troubles can make us sorry. In this sixth part, the prophet declares the old saying amongst wise men, "It is no less mastery to keep the thing that is won, than it was to win it." King David perceives right well the same; and, therefore, as before in the Psalm he said, the Lord turned his soul, and led him into the pleasant pastures, where virtue and justice reigned, for his name's sake, and not for any righteousness of his own; so saith he now, that being brought into the pastures of truth, and into the favour of the Almighty, and accounted and taken for one of his sheep, it is only God that keeps and maintains him, in the same state, condition, and grace. For he could not pass through the troubles and shadow of death, as he and all God's elect people must do, but only by the assistance of God, and, therefore, he saith, he passes through all peril because he was with him. John Hooper (martyr), 1495-1555.
Verse 4. By the way, I note that David amidst his green pastures, where he wanted nothing, and in his greatest ease and highest excellency, recordeth the valley of misery and shade of death which might ensue, if God so would; and therewithal reckoneth of his safest harbour and firm repose, even in God alone. And this is true wisdom indeed, in fair weather to provide for a tempest; in health to think of sickness; in prosperity, peace, and quietness, to forecast the worst, and with the wise emmet, in summer to lay up for the winter following. The state of man is full of trouble, the condition of the godly man more. Sinners must be corrected, and sons chastised, there is no question. The ark was framed for the waters, the ship for the sea; and happy is the mariner that knoweth where to cast anchor; but, oh! blessed is the man that can take a right sanctuary, and knoweth whereupon to rely, and in whom to trust in the day of his need. "I will not fear, for thou art with me." In this Psalm, I take it, is rather vouched not what the prophet always performed, but what in duty must be performed, and what David's purpose was to endeavour unto for the time to come. For after so many pledges of God's infinite goodness, and by the guidance of his rod and stay of his sheep-hook, God willing, he would not fear, and this is the groundwork of his affiance. Peter in the gospel by our Saviour, in consideration of infirmity through fear denying his Master, is willed after his conversion by that favourable aspect of our Saviour, to confirm his brethren, and to train them in constancy; for verily God requireth settled minds, resolute men, and confirmed brethren. So upon occasions past, David found it true that he should not have been heretofore at any time, and therefore professeth, that for the time to come he would be no marigold-servant of the Lord, to open with the sun and shut with the dew—to serve him in calmer times only, and at a need, to shoot neck out of collar, fearfully and faithlessly to slip aside or shrink away. Good people, in all heartless imperfections, mark, I pray you, that they who fear every mist that ariseth, or cloud that appeareth—who are like the mulberry tree, that never shooteth forth or showeth itself till all hard weather be past—who, like standers-by and lookers on, neuters and internimists—who, like Metius Suffetius, dare not venture upon, nor enter into, nor endeavour any good action of greatest duty to God, prince, or country, till all be sure in one side—are utterly reproved by this ensample. John Prime, 1588.

Verse 4. The death of those who are under sin, is like a malefactor's execution: when he is panelled and justly convicted, one pulleth the hat doggedly from him, another his band, a third bindeth his hands behind his back; and the poor man, overcome with grief and fear, is dead before he die. But I look for the death of the righteous, and a peaceable end, that it shall be as a going to bed of an honest man: his servants with respect take off his clothes and lay them down in order; a good conscience the playing the page ordereth all, so that it
confirmeth and increaseth his peace; it biddeth good night to Faith, Hope, and such other attending graces and gifts in the way—when we are come home to heaven there is no use of them— but it directeth Love, Peace, Joy, and other home graces, that as they conveyed us in the way, so they attend at death, and enter into the heavens with us. William Struther.

Verse 4. The Lord willeth us in the day of our troubles to call upon him, adding this promise—that he will deliver us. Whereunto the prophet David did so trust, feeling the comfortable truth thereof at sundry times in many and dangerous perils, that he persuaded himself (all fear set apart), to undergo one painful danger or other whatsoever; yea, if it were to "walk in the valley of the shadow of death," that he should not have cause to fear; comforting himself with this saying (which was God's promise made unto all), "For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Is God's "staff" waxen so weak, that we dare not now lean too much thereon, lest it should break? or is he now such a changeling, that he will not be with us in our trouble according to his promise? Will he not give us this "staff" to stay us by, and reach us his hand to hold us up, as he hath been wont to do? No doubt but that he will be most ready in all extremity to help, according to his promise. The Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, saith thus; Fear not, for I will defend thee," etc. Isaiah 43. Thomas Tymme.

Verse 4. Not long before he died, he blessed God for the assurance of his love, and said, He could now as easily die as shut his eyes; and added, Here am I longing to be silent in the dust, and enjoying Christ in glory. I long to be in the arms of Jesus. It is not worth while to weep for me. Then, remembering how busy the devil had been about him, he was exceedingly thankful to God for his goodness in rebuking him. Memoir of James Janeway.

Verse 4. When Mrs. Hervey, the wife of a missionary in Bombay, was dying, a friend said to her, that he hoped the Saviour would be with her as she walked through the dark valley of the shadow of death. "If this," said she, "is the dark valley, it has not a dark spot in it; all is light." She had, during most of her sickness, bright views of the perfections of God. "His awful holiness," she said, "appeared the most lovely of all his attributes." At one time she said she wanted words to express her views of the glory and majesty of Christ. "It seems," said she, "that if all other glory were annihilated and nothing left but his bare self, it would be enough; it would be a universe of glory!"

Verses 4, 5. A readiness of spirit to suffer gives the Christian the true enjoyment of life. . . . The Christian, that hath this preparation of heart, never tastes more sweetness in the enjoyment of this life, than when he dips these
morsels in the meditation of death and eternity. It is no more grief to his heart to think of the remove of these, which makes way for those far sweeter enjoyments, than it would be to one at a feast, to have the first course taken off, when he had fed well upon it, that the second course of all rare sweetmeats and banqueting stuff may come on, which it cannot till the other be gone. Holy David, in this place, brings in, as it were, a death's head with his feast. In the same breath almost, he speaks of his dying (verse 4), and of the rich feast he at present sat at through the bounty of God (verse 5), to which he was not so tied by the teeth, but if God, that gave him this cheer, should call him from it, to look death in the face, he could do it, and fear no evil when in the valley of the shadow of it. And what think you of the blessed apostle Peter? Had not he, think you, the true enjoyment of his life, when he could sleep so sweetly in a prison (no desirable place), fast bound between two soldiers (no comfortable posture), and this the very night before Herod would have brought him forth, in all probability, to his execution? no likely time, one would think, to get any rest; yet we find him, even there, thus, and then, so sound asleep, that the angel, who was sent to give him his gaol deliverance, smote him on the side to awaken him. Acts 12:6, 7. I question whether Herod himself slept so well that night, as this his prisoner did. And what was the potion that brought this holy man so quietly to rest? No doubt this preparation of the gospel of peace—he was ready to die, and that made him able to sleep. Why should that break his rest in this world, which if it had been effected, would have brought him to his eternal rest in the other? William Gurnall.

Verses 4, 6. The psalmist expresseth an exceeding confidence in the midst of most inexpressible troubles and pressures. He supposes himself "walking through the valley of the shadow of death." As "death" is the worst of evils, and comprehensive of them all, so the "shadow" of death is the most dismal and dark representation of those evils into the soul, and the "valley" of that shadow the most dreadful bottom and depth of that representation. This, then, the prophet supposed that he might be brought into. A condition wherein he may be overwhelmed with sad apprehensions of the coming of a confluence of all manner of evils upon him—and that not for a short season, but he may be necessitated to "walk" in them, which denotes a state of some continuance, a conflicting with most dismal evils, and in their own nature tending to death—is in the supposal. What, then, would he do if he should be brought into this estate? Saith he, "Even in that condition, in such distress, wherein I am, to my own and the eyes of others, hopeless, helpless, gone, and lost, 'I will fear no evil.'" A noble resolution, if there be a sufficient bottom and foundation for it, that it may not be accounted rashness and groundless confidence, but true spiritual courage and holy resolution. Saith he, "It is because the Lord is with
me." But alas! what if the Lord should now forsake thee in this condition, and
give thee up to the power of thine enemies, and suffer thee, by the strength of
thy temptations, wherewith thou art beset, to fall utterly from him? Surely then
thou wouldst be swallowed up for ever: the waters would go over thy soul, and
thou must for ever lie down in the shades of death. "Yea," saith he, "but I have
an assurance to the contrary; 'Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life.' John Owen.

Verse 5. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." God doth not at all depend upon wicked men in the benediction of his servant;
they concur not with him, neither per modum principii, for he alone is the
cause; nor per modum auxilii, for he without them can bless his all: their
malicious renitency of spirit, or attempt against God's blessing of his people, is
too impotent to frustrate God's intention and pleasure. An effectual impediment
must not only have contrariety in it, but superiority: a drop of water cannot put
out the fire, for though it hath a contrary nature, yet it hath not greater power.
Now the malice and contrivances of evil men are too short and weak for the
divine intention of blessing, which is accompanied with an almighty arm. Evil
men are but men, and God is a God; and being but men, they can do no more
than men. The Lord will clear it to all the world, that he rules the earth, and that
"his counsel shall stand;" and where he blesseth, that man shall be blessed; and
whom he curseth, that man shall be cursed; that the creatures can do neither
good nor evil; that his people are the generation of his care and love, though
living in the midst of deadly enemies. Condensed from Obadiah Sedgwick.

Verse 5. "In the presence of mine enemies:" they seeing and envying and
fretting at it, but not being able to hinder it. Matthew Poole.

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." In the East
the people frequently anoint their visitors with some very fragrant perfume; and
give them a cup or glass of some choice wine, which they are careful to fill till
it runs over. The first was designed to show their love and respect; the latter to
imply that while they remained there, they should have an abundance of
everything. To something of this kind the psalmist probably alludes in this
passage. Samuel Burder.

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." Anointing the head with oil is a
great refreshment. There are three qualities of oil—lævor, nitor, odor, a
smoothness to the touch, brightness to the sight, fragrancy to the smell, and so,
gratifying the senses, it must needs cause delight to those anointed with it. To
this Solomon alludes when persuading to a cheerful life, he saith, "Let thy head
lack no ointment." How fully doth this represent the Spirit's unction which
alone rejoices and exhilarates the soul! It is called the "oil of gladness," and the "joy of the Holy Ghost." Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." It is an act of great respect to pour perfumed oil on the head of a distinguished guest; the woman in the gospel thus manifested her respect for the Saviour by pouring "precious ointment" on his head. An English lady went on board an Arabian ship which touched at Trincomalee, for the purpose of seeing the equipment of the vessel, and to make some little purchases. After she had been seated some time in the cabin, an Arabian female came and poured perfumed oil on her head. Joseph Roberts.

Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." In the East no entertainment could be without this, and it served, as elsewhere a bath does, for (bodily) refreshment. Here, however, it is naturally to be understood of the spiritual oil of gladness. T. C. Barth.


Verse 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil." The unguents of Egypt may preserve our bodies from corruption, ensuring them a long duration in the dreary shades of the sepulchre, but, O Lord, the precious perfumed oil of thy grace which thou dost mysteriously pour upon our souls, purifies them, adorns them, strengthens them, sows in them the germs of immortality, and thus it not only secures them from a transitory corruption, but uplifts them from this house of bondage into eternal blessedness in thy bosom. Jean Baptiste Massillon, 1663-1742.

Verse 5. "My cup runneth over." He had not only a fulness of abundance, but of redundancy. Those that have this happiness must carry their cup upright, and see that it overflows into their poor brethren's emptier vessels. John Trapp.

Verse 5. "My cup runneth over." Wherefore doth the Lord make you cup run over, but that other men's lips might taste the liquor? The showers that fall upon the highest mountains, should glide into the lowest valleys. "Give, and it shall be given you," is a maxim little believed. Luke 6:38. William Secker.

Verse 5. "My cup runneth over." Or as it is in the Vulgate: And my inebriating chalice, how excellent it is! With this cup were the martyrs inebriated, when, going forth to their passion, they recognised not those that belonged to them;
not their weeping wife, not their children, not their relations; while they gave thanks and said, "I will take the cup of salvation!" Augustine.

Verse 6. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." A wicked man, it may be, will turn into God's house, and say a prayer, etc., but the prophet would (and so all godly men must) dwell there for ever; his soul lieth always at the throne of grace, begging for grace. A wicked man prayeth as the cock croweth; the cock croweth and ceaseth, and croweth again, and ceaseth again, and thinks not of crowing till he croweth again: so a wicked man prays and ceaseth, prays and ceaseth again; his mind is never busied to think whether his prayers speed or no; he thinks it is good religion for him to pray, and therefore he takes for granted that his prayers speed, though in very deed God never hears his prayers, nor no more respects them than he respects the lowing of oxen, or the grunting of hogs. William Fenner, B.D. (1600-1640), in "The Sacrifice of the Faithful."

Verse 6. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." This should be at once the crown of all our hopes for the future, and the one great lesson taught us by all the vicissitudes of life. The sorrows and the joys, the journeying and the rest, the temporary repose and the frequent struggles, all these should make us sure that there is an end which will interpret them all, to which they all point, for which they all prepare. We get the table in the wilderness here. It is as when the son of some great king comes back from foreign soil to his father's dominions, and is welcomed at every stage in his journey to the capital with pomp of festival and messengers from the throne, until at last he enters his palace home, where the travel-stained robe is laid aside, and he sits down with his father at his table. Alexander Maclaren, 1863.

Verse 6. Mark David's resolute persuasion, and consider how he came unto it, namely, by experience of God's favour at sundry times, and after sundry manners. For before he set down this resolution, he numbered up divers benefits received of the Lord; that he fed him in green pastures, and led him by the refreshing waters of God's word; that he restores him and leads him in the paths of righteousness; that he strengthened him in great dangers, even of death, and preserveth him; that in despite of his enemies, he enricheth him with many benefits. By means of all the mercies of God bestowed on him, he came to be persuaded of the continuance of the favour of God towards him. William Perkins.
Verse 1. Work out the similitude of a shepherd and his sheep. He rules, guides, feeds, and protects them; and they follow, obey, love and trust him. Examine as to whether we are sheep; show the lot of the goats who feed side by side with the sheep.

Verse 1. (second clause). The man who is beyond the reach of want for time and eternity.

Verse 2. (first clause). Believing rest.
   I. Comes from God—"He maketh."
   II. Is deep and profound—"lie down."
   III. Has solid sustenance—"in green pastures."
   IV. Is subject for constant praise.

Verse 2. The contemplative and the active element provided for.

Verse 2. The freshness and richness of Holy Scripture.

Verse 2. (second clause). Onward. The Leader, the way, the comforts of the road, and the traveller in it.


Verse 4. The soft silence of the Spirit's work.

Verse 4. God's presence the only sure support in death.

Verse 4. Life in death and light in darkness.

Verse 4. (second clause). The calm and quiet of the good man's end.

Verse 4. (last clause). The tokens of divine government—the consolation of the obedient.

Verse 5. The warrior feasted, the priest anointed, the guest satisfied.

Verse 5. (last clause). The means and uses of the continual anointings of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 5. Providential super-aboundings, and what is our duty concerning them.

Verse 6. (first clause). The blessedness of content.
Verse 6. On the road and at home, or heavenly attendants and heavenly mansions.

WORKS UPON THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM


The Chiefe Shepheard; or an Exposition upon ye Twenty-third Psalme. . . . BY SAMUEL SMITH, Minister of ye Word of God, at Prittlewell, in Essex. 1625. 8vo.

Meditations and Disquisitions upon Seven Consolatorie Psalmes of David. By Sir RICHARD BAKER. 1640. {see "WORKS," p. 10.}

The Shepherd of Israel; or, God's pastoral care over his people. Delivered in divers Sermons on the whole Twenty-third Psalm. . . . By that Reverend and Faithful Minister of the Gospel, Mr. OBADIAH SEDGWICK, B.D. 1658. 4to.

The Shepherd of Israel: a practical Exposition and Improvement of the Twenty-third Psalm. By J. THORNTON. 1826. 12mo.

The Lord our Shepherd: an Exposition of the Twenty-third Psalm. By the Rev, JOHN STEVENSON, perpetual Curate of Cury and Gunwalloe, Cornwall. 1845. 8vo.

The Good Shepherd and the Chosen Flock: shewing the progress of the sheep of Christ through the wilderness of this world to the pastures of the Heavenly Zion. An Exposition of the Twenty-third Psalm. By THOMAS DALE, M.A., Canon Residiary of St, Paul's, London. 1847. 12mo.

The Shepherd King; or Jesus seen in the Life of David. Designed for the Young. By the Authoress of "The Folded Lamb." {Mrs. Rogers.} 1856. 12mo.

The Song of Christ's Flock in the Twenty-third Psalm. By JOHN STOUGHTON. 1860. 12m0.
Psalm 24

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

Title. A Psalm of David. From the title we learn nothing but the authorship: but this is interesting and leads us to observe the wondrous operations of the Spirit upon the mind of Israel's sweet singer, enabling him to touch the mournful string in Psalm twenty-two, to pour forth gentle notes of peace in Psalm twenty-three, and here to utter majestic and triumphant strains. We can do or sing all things when the Lord strengtheneth us.

This sacred hymn was probably written to be sung when the ark of the covenant was taken up from the house of Obed-edom, to remain within curtains upon the hill of Zion. The words are not unsuitable for the sacred dance of joy in which David led the way upon that joyful occasion. The eye of the psalmist looked, however, beyond the typical upgoing of the ark to the sublime ascension of the King of glory. We will call it The Song of the Ascension.

Division. The Psalm makes a pair with the fifteenth Psalm. It consists of three parts. The first glorifies the true God, and sings of his universal dominion; the second describes the true Israel, who are able to commune with him; and the third pictures the ascent of the true Redeemer, who has opened heaven's gates for the entrance of his elect.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. How very different is this from the ignorant Jewish notion of God which prevailed in our Saviour's day? The Jews said, "The holy land is God's, and the seed of Abraham are his only people;" but their great Monarch had long before instructed them,—"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." The whole round world is claimed for Jehovah, "and they that dwell therein" are declared to be his subjects. When we consider the bigotry of the Jewish people at the time of Christ, and how angry they were with our Lord for saying that many widows were in Israel, but unto none of them was the prophet sent, save only to the widow of Sarepta, and that there were many lepers in Israel, but none of them was healed except Naaman the Syrian,—when we recollect, too, how angry they were at the mention of Paul's being sent to the Gentiles, we are amazed that they should have remained in such blindness, and yet have sung this psalm, which shows so clearly that God is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. What a rebuke is this to those wiseacres who speak of the negro and other despised races as though they were not cared for by the God of heaven! If a man be but a man the Lord claims him, and who dares to brand him as a mere piece of merchandise! The meanest of men is a dweller in the world, and therefore belongs to Jehovah. Jesus Christ had made an end of
the exclusiveness of nationalities. There is neither barbarian, Scythian, bond not free; but we all are one in Christ Jesus.

Man lives upon "the earth," and parcels out its soil among his mimic kings and autocrats; but the earth is not man's. He is but a tenant at will, a leaseholder upon the most precarious tenure, liable to instantaneous ejectment. The great Landowner and true Proprietor holds his court above the clouds, and laughs at the title-deeds of worms of the dust. The fee-simple is not with the lord of the manor nor the freeholder, but with the Creator. The "fulness" of the earth may mean its harvests, its wealth, its life, or its worship; in all these senses the Most High God is Possessor of all. The earth is full of God; he made it full and he keeps it full, notwithstanding all the demands which living creatures make upon its stores. The sea is full, despite all the clouds which rise from it; the air is full, notwithstanding all the lives which breathe it; the soil is full, though millions of plants derive their nourishment from it. Under man's tutored hand the world is coming to a greater fulness than ever, but it is all the Lord's; the field and the fruit, the earth and all earth's wonders are Jehovah's. We look also for a sublimer fulness when the true ideal of a world for God shall have been reached in millennial glories, and then most clearly the earth will be the Lord's and the fulness thereof. These words are now upon London's Royal Exchange, they shall one day be written in letters of light across the sky.

The term "world" indicates the habitable regions, wherein Jehovah is especially to be acknowledged as Sovereign. He who rules the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air should not be disobeyed by man, his noblest creature. Jehovah is the Universal King, all nations are beneath his sway: true Autocrat of all the nations, emperors and czars are but his slaves. Men are not their own, nor may they call their lips, their hearts, or their substance their own; they are Jehovah's rightful servants. This claim especially applies to us who are born from heaven. We do not belong to the world or to Satan, but by creation and redemption we are the peculiar portion of the Lord.

Paul uses this verse twice, to show that no food is unclean, and that nothing is really the property of false gods. All things are God's; no ban is on the face of nature, nothing is common or unclean. The world is all God's world, and the food which is sold in the shambles is sanctified by being my Father's, and I need not scruple to eat thereof.

Verse 2. In the second verse we have the reason why the world belongs to God, namely, because he has created it, which is a title beyond all dispute. "For he hath founded it upon the seas." It is God who lifts up the earth from out of the sea, so that the dry land, which otherwise might in a moment be submerged, as in the days of Noah, is kept from the floods. The hungry jaws of ocean would devour the dry land if a constant fiat of Omnipotence did not protect it. "He
Psalm 24

"Hath established it upon the floods." The world is Jehovah's, because from generation to generation he preserves and upholds it, having settled its foundations. Providence and Creation are the two legal seals upon the title-deeds of the great Owner of all things. He who built the house and bears up its foundations has surely a first claim upon it. Let it be noted, however, upon what insecure foundations all terrestrial things are founded. Founded on the seas! Established on the floods! Blessed be God the Christian has another world to look forward to, and rests his hopes upon a more stable foundation than this poor world affords. They who trust in worldly things build upon the sea; but we have laid our hopes, by God's grace, upon the Rock of Ages; we are resting upon the promise of an immutable God, we are depending upon the constancy of a faithful Redeemer. Oh! ye worldlings, who have built your castles of confidence, your palaces of wealth, and your bowers of pleasure upon the seas, and established them upon the floods; how soon will your baseless fabrics melt, like foam upon the waters! Sand is treacherous enough, but what shall be said of the yet more unstable sea?

Verses 3-6. Here we have the true Israel described. The men who shall stand as courtiers in the palace of the living God are not distinguished by race, but by character; they are not Jews only, nor Gentiles only, nor any one branch of mankind peculiarly, but a people purified and made meet to dwell in the holy hill of the Lord.

Verse 3. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" It is uphill work for the creature to reach the Creator. Where is the mighty climber who can scale the towering heights? Nor is it height alone; it is glory too. Whose eye shall see the King in his beauty and dwell in his palace? In heaven he reigns most gloriously, who shall be permitted to enter into his royal presence? God has made all, but he will not save all; there is a chosen company who shall have the singular honour of dwelling with him in his high abode. These choice spirits desire to commune with God, and their wish shall be granted them. The solemn enquiry of the text is repeated in another form. Who shall be able to "stand" or continue there? He casteth away the wicked, who then can abide in his house? Who is he that can gaze upon the Holy One, and can abide in the blaze of his glory? Certainly none may venture to commune with God upon the footing of the law, but grace can make us meet to behold the vision of the divine presence. The question before us is one which all should ask for themselves, and none should be at ease till they have received an answer of peace. With careful self-examination let us enquire, "Lord, is it I."

Verse 4. "He that hath clean hands." Outward, practical holiness is a very precious mark of grace. To wash in water with Pilate is nothing, but to wash in
innocency is all-important. It is to be feared that many professors have perverted the doctrine of justification by faith in such a way as to treat good works with contempt; if so, they will receive everlasting contempt at the last great day. It is vain to prate of inward experience unless the daily life is free from impurity, dishonesty, violence, and oppression. Those who draw near to God must have "clean hands." What monarch would have servants with filthy hands to wait at his table? They who were ceremonially unclean could not enter into the Lord's house which was made with hands, much less shall the morally defiled be allowed to enjoy spiritual fellowship with a holy God. If our hands are now unclean, let us wash them in Jesu's precious blood, and so let us pray unto God, lifting up pure hands. But "clean hands" would not suffice, unless they were connected with "a pure heart." True religion is heart-work. We may wash the outside of the cup and the platter as long as we please; but if the inward parts be filthy, we are filthy altogether in the sight of God, for our hearts are more truly ourselves than our hands are. We may lose our hands and yet live, but we could not lose our heart and still live; the very life of our being lies in the inner nature, and hence the imperative need of purity within. There must be a work of grace in the core of the heart as well as in the palm of the hand, or our religion is a delusion. May God grant that our inward powers may be cleansed by the sanctifying Spirit, so that we may love holiness and abhor all sin. The pure in heart shall see God, all others are but blind bats; stone-blindness in the eyes arises from stone in the heart. Dirt in the heart throws dust in the eyes.

The soul must be delivered from delighting in the grovelling toys of earth; the man who is born for heaven "hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity." All men have their joys, by which their souls are lifted up; the worldling lifts up his soul in carnal delights, which are mere empty vanities; but the saint loves more substantial things; like Jehoshaphat, he is lifted up in the ways of the Lord. He who is content with the husks will be reckoned with the swine. If we suck our consolation from the breasts of the world, we prove ourselves to be its home-born children. Does the world satisfy thee? Then thou hast thy reward and thy portion in this life; make much of it, for thou shalt know no other joy.

"Nor sworn deceitfully." The saints are men of honour still. The Christian man's word is his only oath; but that is as good as twenty oaths of other men. False speaking will shut any man out of heaven, for a liar shall not enter into God's house, whatever may be his professions or doings. God will have nothing to do with liars, except to cast them into the lake of fire. Every liar is a child of the devil, and will be sent home to his father. A false declaration, a fraudulent statement, a cooked account, a slander, a lie—all these may suit the assembly of the ungodly, but are detested among true saints: how could they have fellowship with the God of truth, if they did not hate every false way?
Verse 5. It must not be supposed that the persons who are thus described by their inward and outward holiness are saved by the merits of their works; but their works are the evidences by which they are known. The present verse shows that in the saints grace reigns and grace alone. Such men wear the holy livery of the Great King because he has of his own free love clothed them therewith. The true saint wears the wedding garment, but he owns that the Lord of the feast provided it for him, without money and without price. "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." So that the saints need salvation; they receive righteousness, and "the blessing" is a boon from God their Saviour. They do not ascend the hill of the Lord as givers but as receivers, and they do not wear their own merits, but a righteousness which they have received. Holy living ensures a blessing as its reward from the thrice Holy God, but it is itself a blessing of the New Covenant and a delightful fruit of the Spirit. God first gives us good works, and then rewards us for them. Grace is not obscured by God's demand for holiness, but is highly exalted as we see it decking the saint with jewels, and clothing him in fair white linen; all this sumptuous array being a free gift of mercy.

Verse 6. "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob." These are the regeneration, these are in the line of grace; these are the legitimate seed. Yet they are only seekers; hence learn that true seekers are very dear in God's esteem, and are entered upon his register. Even seeking has a sanctifying influence; what a consecrating power must lie in finding and enjoying the Lord's face and favour! To desire communion with God is a purifying thing. Oh to hunger and thirst more and more after a clear vision of the face of God; this will lead us to purge ourselves from all filthiness, and to walk with heavenly circumspection. He who longs to see his friend when he passes takes care to clear the mist from the window, lest by any means his friend should go by unobserved. Really awakened souls seek the Lord above everything, and as this is not the usual desire of mankind, they constitute a generation by themselves; a people despised of men but beloved of God. The expression "O Jacob" is a very difficult one, unless it be indeed true that the God of Jacob here condescendeth to be called Jacob, and takes upon himself the name of his chosen people.

The preceding verses correct the inordinate boastings of those Jews who vaunted themselves as the favourites of heaven; they are told that their God is the God of all the earth, and that he is holy, and will admit none but holy ones into his presence. Let the mere professor as he reads these verses listen to the voice which saith, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

"Selah." Lift up the harp and voice, for a nobler song is coming; a song of our Well-beloved.
Verse 7. These last verses reveal to us the great representative man, who answered to the full character laid down, and therefore by his own right ascended the holy hill of Zion. Our Lord Jesus Christ could ascend into the hill of the Lord because his hands were clean and his heart was pure, and if we by faith in him are conformed to his image we shall enter too. We have here a picture of our Lord's glorious ascent. We see him rising from amidst the little group upon Olivet, and as the cloud receives him, angels reverently escort him to the gates of heaven.

The ancient gates of the eternal temple are personified and addressed in song by the attending cohorts of rejoicing spirits.

"Lo his triumphal chariot waits,  
And angels chant the solemn lay.  
' Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates;  
Ye everlasting doors, give way."

They are called upon "to lift up their heads," as though with all their glory they were not great enough for the Allglorious King. Let all things do their utmost to honour so great a Prince; let the highest heaven put on unusual loftiness in honour of "the King of Glory." He who, fresh from the cross and the tomb, now rides through the gates of the New Jerusalem is higher than the heavens; great and everlasting as they are, those gates of pearl are all unworthy of him before whom the heavens are not pure, and who chargeth his angels with folly. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates."

Verse 8. The watchers at the gate hearing the song look over the battlements and ask, "Who is this King of glory?" A question full of meaning and worthy of the meditations of eternity. Who is he in person, nature, character, office and work? What is his pedigree? What his rank and what his race? The answer given in a mighty wave of music is, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." We know the might of Jesus by the battles which he has fought, the victories which he has won over sin, and death, and hell, and we clap our hands as we see him leading captivity captive in the majesty of his strength. Oh for a heart to sing his praises! Mighty hero, be thou crowned for ever King of kings and Lord of lords.

Verse 9. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The words are repeated with a pleasing variation. There are times of deep earnest feeling when repetitions are not vain but full of force. Doors were often taken from their hinges when Easterns would show welcome to a guest, and some doors were drawn up and down like a portcullis, and may possibly have protruded from the top; thus
literally lifting up their heads. The picture is highly poetical, and shows how wide heaven's gate is set by the ascension of our Lord. Blessed be God, the gates have never been shut since. The opened gates of heaven invite the weakest believer to enter.

Dear reader, it is possible that you are saying, "I shall never enter into the heaven of God, for I have neither clean hands nor a pure heart." Look then to Christ, who has already climbed the holy hill. He has entered as the forerunner of those who trust him. Follow in his footsteps, and repose upon his merit. He rides triumphantly into heaven, and you shall ride there too if you trust him. "But how can I get the character described?" say you. The Spirit of God will give you that. He will create in you a new heart and a right spirit. Faith in Jesus is the work of the Holy Spirit, and has all virtues wrapped up in it. Faith stands by the fountain filled with blood, and as she washes therein, clean hands and a pure heart, a holy soul and a truthful tongue are given to her.

Verse 10. The closing note is inexpressibly grand. Jehovah of hosts, Lord of men and angels, Lord of the universe, Lord of the worlds, is the King of glory. All true glory is concentrated upon the true God, for all other glory is but a passing pageant, the painted pomp of an hour. The ascended Saviour is here declared to be the Head and Crown of the universe, the King of Glory. Our Immanuel is hymned in sublimest strains. Jesus of Nazareth is Jehovah Sabaoth.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. It will be seen that this Psalm was written to be chanted in responsive parts, with two choruses. To comprehend it fully, it should be understood that Jerusalem, as the city of God, was by the Jews regarded as a type of heaven. It so occurs in the Apocalypse, whence we have adopted it in our poetical and devotional aspirations. The court of the tabernacle was the scene of the Lord's more immediate residence—the tabernacle his palace, and the ark his throne. With this leading idea in his mind, the most cursory reader—if there be cursory readers of the Bible—cannot fail to be struck with the beauty and sublimity of this composition, and its exquisite suitableness to the occasion. The chief musician, who was probably in this case the king himself, appears to have begun the sacred lay with a solemn and sonorous recital of these sentences:

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein."
Psalm 24

For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods."

The chorus of vocal music appears to have then taken up the song, and sung the same words in a more tuneful and elaborate harmony; and the instruments and the whole chorus of the people fell in with them, raising the mighty declaration to heaven. There is much reason to think that the people, or a large body of them, were qualified or instructed to take their part in this great ceremonial. The historical text says, "David, and all the house of Israel played before the Lord, upon all manner of instruments," etc. We may presume that the chorus then divided, each singing in their turns, and both joining at the close—

"For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods."

This part of the music may be supposed to have lasted until the procession reached the foot of Zion, or came in view of it, which from the nature of the enclosed site, cannot be till one comes quite near to it. Then the king must be supposed to have stepped forth, and begun again, in a solemn and earnest tone—

"Who shall ascend into the holy hill of the Lord?
Or who shall stand in his holy place?"

To which the first chorus responds—

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

And then the second chorus—

"He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation."

This part of the sacred song may, in like manner, be supposed to have lasted till they reached the gate of the city, when the king began again in this grand and exalted strain:—

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,
And the King of glory shall come in."

repeated then, in the same way as before, by the general chorus.

The persons having charge of the gates on this high occasion ask—

"Who is the King of glory?"
To which the first chorus answers—
   "It is Jehovah, strong and mighty—
    Jehovah mighty in battle."

which the second chorus then repeats in like manner as before, closing it with the grand universal chorus,
   "He is the King of glory! He is the King of glory!"

We must now suppose the instruments to take up the same notes, and continue them to the entrance to the court of the tabernacle. There the king again begins—
   "Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
    And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
    And the King of glory shall come in."

This is followed and answered as before—all closing, the instruments sounding, the chorus singing, the people shouting—
   "He is the King of glory."

*John Kitto's "Daily Bible Illustrations."*

*Whole Psalm.* The coming of the Lord of glory, the high demands upon his people proceeding from this, the absolute necessity to prepare worthily for his arrival, form the subject-matter of this Psalm. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

*Whole Psalm.* We learn from the rabbins, that this was one of certain Psalms which were sung in the performance of Jewish worship on each day in the week:—

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<th>Psalm Number</th>
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<td>24th</td>
<td>1st, Lord's-day, our Sunday.</td>
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<td>48th</td>
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This Psalm, then, appropriated to the Lord's-day, our Sunday, was intended to celebrate the resurrection of Messiah, and his ascension into heaven, there to sit as priest upon God's throne, and from thence to come down bringing blessings and mercies to his people. *R. H. Ryland.*
Whole Psalm. Anthem of praise, performed when the heads of the gates of Jerusalem were lifted up to receive the ark; and those of the Israelites who were ceremoniously clean, were alone permitted to accompany it into the court of the tabernacle. A Psalm of David. Verses 1, 2, chorus. 3. First voice. 4, 5. Second voice. 6. Chorus. 7. Semi-chorus accompanying the ark. 8. Voice from within the gates. 8. Chorus of priests accompanying the ark. 9. Chorus of priests and people with the ark. 10. Voice within the gates. 10. Grand chorus. From "The Psalms, with Prefatory Titles, etc., from the Port Royal Authors," by Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck, 1825.

Whole Psalm. How others may think upon this point, I cannot say, nor pretend to describe, but for my own part, I have no notion of hearing, or of any man's ever having seen or heard, anything so great, so solemn, so celestial, on this side the gates of heaven. Patrick Delany, D.D., 1686-1768.

Verse 1. "The earth is the Lord's," that is, Christ's, who is the "Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16); for the whole world and all the things therein are his by a twofold title. First, by donation of God his Father, having "all power given unto him in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18), even whatsoever things the Father hath are his (John 16:15); and so consequently "made heir of all things." Hebrews 1:2. Secondly, the earth is Christ's and all that therein is, by right of creation, for "he founded it," saith our prophet, and that after a wonderful manner, "upon the seas and floods." . . . All things then are Christ's, in respect of creation, by whom all things were made" (John 1:3); in respect of sustentation, as upholding all things by his mighty word (Hebrews 1:3); in respect of administration, as reaching from one end to another, and ordering all things sweetly (Wisdom 8:1): in one word—"Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." Romans 11:36. From hence we may learn (1), That Christ is "the King of glory," "Lord of Hosts," even Almighty God. For he that made all, is "Lord over all;" he that is the Creator of heaven and earth is Almighty (saith our Creed); able to do whatsoever he will, and more than he will too—more by his absolute power, than he will by his actual—"able to raise up children unto Abraham" out of the very stones of the street, though he doth not actually produce such a generation. His almightiness evidently proves him to be God, and his founding of the world his almightiness; for "The gods that have not made the heaven and earth shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." Jeremiah 10:11. (2.) Seeing the compass of the world and all they that dwell therein are the Lord's, it is plain that the church is not confined within the limits of one region, or glued, as it were, to one seat only. The Donatists in old time, would tie the church only to Cartenna in Africa, the Papists in our time to Rome in Italy; but the Scriptures plainly affirm that the
golden candlesticks are removed from one place to another, and that the
kingdom of God is taken away from one nation and given unto another country
that brings forth the fruit thereof; in every region he that feareth God and

Verse 1. "The earth is Jehovah's." The object of the beginning of the Psalm is
to show that the Jews had nothing of themselves which could entitle them to
approach nearer or more familiarly to God than the Gentiles. As God by his
providence preserves the world, the power of his government is alike extended
to all, so that he ought to be worshipped by all, even as he also shows to all
men, without exception, the fatherly care he has about them. J. Calvin.

Verse 1. "The earth is the Lord's." It is Christ's, by creation (verse 2; John 1:1,
2), and it is his by resurrection (Matthew 28:18), and by his glorious ascension
into heaven, where he is enthroned King of the world in his human nature. This
Psalm takes up the language of the first Ascension Psalm (Psalm 8.)
Christopher Wordsworth, D.D., in loc.

Verse 1. St. Chrysostom, suffering under the Empress Eudoxia, tells his friend
Cyriacus how he armed himself before hand: _ei me ' bouletai n basilissa e
xorisai me_, etc. "I thought, will she banish me? 'The earth is the Lord's and the
fulness thereof.' Take away my goods? 'Naked came I into the world, and
naked must I return.' Will she stone me? I remembered Stephen. Behead me?
John Baptist came into my mind," etc. Thus it should be with every one that
intends to live and die comfortably: they must, as we say, lay up something for
a rainy day; they must stock themselves with graces, store up promises, and
furnish themselves with experiences of God's lovingkindness to others and
themselves too, that so when the evil day comes, they may have much good
coming thereby. John Spencer.

Verse 1. "The earth is the Lord's." As David, in his youthful days, was tending
his flocks on Bethlehem's fertile plains, the spirit of the Lord descended upon
him, and his senses were opened, and his understanding enlightened, so that he
could understand the songs of the night. The heavens proclaimed the glory of
God, and glittering stars formed the general chorus, their harmonious melody
resounded upon earth, and the sweet fulness of their voices vibrated to it utmost
bounds.

_Light_ is the countenance of the Eternal," sung the setting sun: "I am the
hem of his garment," responded the soft and rosy twilight. The clouds gathered
themselves together and said, "We are his nocturnal tent." And the waters in the
clouds, and the hollow voices of the thunders, joined in the lofty chorus, "The
voice of the Eternal is upon the waters, the God of glory thundereth in the
heavens, the Lord is upon many waters."

"He flieth upon my wings," whispered the winds, and the gentle air added, "I am the breath of God, the aspirations of his benign presence." "We hear the songs of praise," said the parched earth; "all around is praise; I alone am sad and silent." Then the falling dew replied, "I will nourish thee, so that thou shalt be refreshed and rejoice, and thy infants shall bloom like the young rose."

"Joyfully we bloom," sang the refreshed meads; the full ears of corn waved as they sang, "We are the blessing of God, the hosts of God against famine."

"We bless thee from above," said the gentle moon; "We, too, bless thee," responded the stars; and the lightsome grasshopper chirped, "Me, too, he blesses in the pearly dew-drop." "He quenched my thirst," said the roe; "And refreshed me," continued the stag; "And grants us our food," said the beasts of the forest; "And clothes my lambs," gratefully added the sheep.

"He heard me," croaked the raven, "when I was forsaken and alone;" "He heard me," said the wild goat of the rocks, "when my time came, and I brought forth." And the turtle-dove cooed, and the swallow and other birds joined the song, "We have found our nests, our houses, we dwell upon the altar of the Lord, and sleep under the shadow of his wing in tranquillity and peace." "And peace," replied the night, and echo prolonged the sound, when chanticleer awoke the dawn, and crowed with joy, "Open the portals, set wide the gates of the world! The King of glory approaches. Awake! Arise, ye sons of men, give praises and thanks unto the Lord, for the King of glory approaches."

The sun arose, and David awoke from his melodious rapture. But as long as he lived the strains of creation's harmony remained in his soul, and daily he recalled them from the strings of his harp. From the "Legend of the Songs of the Night," in the Talmud, quoted in "Biblical Antiquities." By F. A. Cox, D.D., LL.D., 1852.

Verse 1. The pious mind views all things in God, and God in all things. Ingram Cobbin, 1839.

Verse 2. "He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." This founding the land upon the seas, and preparing it upon the floods, is so wonderfully wonderful, that Almighty God asked his servant Job, "Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?" Job 38:6. Xerxes commanded his soldiers to fetter the waters of Hellispontus; and so God bindeth, as it were, the floods in fetters, at St. Basil plainly, Ligatum est mare præcepto Creatoris quasi compedibus; he saith unto the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, there shall it stay thy proud waves." "He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap; he layeth up the depth in storehouses" (Job 38:11; Psalm
Psalm 24 620

33:7); so that without his leave not so much as one drop can overflow the land. John Boys.

Verse 2. (New translation.) "For he hath founded it upon the seas, and upon streams doth he make it fast." The reference is no doubt to the account of the Creation, in Genesis, the dry land having emerged from the water, and seeming to rest upon it. (Comp. 136:6; Proverbs 8:29.) It would, however, be quite out of place to suppose that in such language we have the expression of any theory, whether popular or scientific, as to the structure of the earth's surface: Job says (26:7), "He hangeth the earth upon nothing." Such expressions are manifestly poetical. See Job 38:6. J. J. Stewart Perowne.

Verse 2. "Upon the seas:" that is, upon the great abyss of water which is under the earth, enclosed in great hollow places, whence the heads of rivers do spring, and other waters bubble out upon the earth. John Diodati.

Verse 2. "Above the floods he hath established it." Both the words (Heb.) (Al) in the two clauses of this verse mean either "above" as we have rendered it, and refer to Genesis 1:9, 10, denoting that Jehovah hath called forth dry land from the midst of the seas, and established it above the floods, and hath set a boundary to the latter never to turn and overflow it (see Job 38:8; Psalm 104 chronologically Psalm 7:9); or "by, or at," as they often denote, and refer to the same subject of the omnipotence of God in relation to the same quoted passages, i.e., that though our globe is situated at or by the floods—is surrounded with mighty waters whose single wave could bury it for ever, still the Lord has so established it that this never can happen. This is a mighty reason why the earth and all its fulness and inhabitants belong to Jehovah. Benjamin Weiss.

Verse 2. Hereby is mystically meant, that he hath set his church above the waters of adversities, so that how high soever they arise, it is kept still above them in safety, and so shall be for evermore; or it may agree thus—he will take in all nations to be in his grace, because all be his creatures; he made them so admirable an habitation at the first, and upholds it still, showing hereby how much he regards them; therefore he will now extend his favour further towards them, by taking them in to be his people. Augustine, quoted by Mayer.

Verse 3. "Who shall ascend?" Indeed, if none must ascend but he that is clean and pure, and without vanity and deceit, the question is quickly answered, None shall, for there is none so: dust is our matter, so not clean; defiled is our nature, so not pure; lighter, the heaviest of us, than vanity, and deceitful upon the balance the best of us; so no ascending so high for any of us. Yet there is
One we hear of, or might have heard of to-day, that rose and ascended up on high, was thus qualified as the psalmist speaks of, all clean and pure, no chaff at all, no guile found in his mouth. 1 Peter 2:22. Yes, but it was but One that was so; what's that to all the rest? Yes, somewhat 'tis. He was our Head, and if the Head be once risen and ascended, the members will all follow after in their time. Mark Frank.

Verse 3. "The hill of the Lord," can be no other than a hill of glory. His holy place is no less than the very place and seat of glory. And being such, you cannot imagine it but hard to come by, the very petty glories of the world are so. This is a hill of glory, hard to climb, difficult to ascend, craggy to pass up, steep to clamber, no plain campagna to it, the broad easy way leads some whither else (Matthew 7:13); the way to this is narrow (verse 14); 'tis rough and troublesome. To be of the number of Christ's true faithful servants is no slight work; 'tis a fight, 'tis a race, 'tis a continual warfare; fastings and watchings, and cold and nakedness, and hunger and thirst, bonds, imprisonments, dangers and distresses, ignominy and reproach, afflictions and persecutions, the world's hatred and our friend's neglect, all that we call hard or difficult is to be found in the way we are to go. A man cannot leave a lust, shake off bad company, quit a course of sin, enter upon a way of virtue, profess his religion, or stand to it, cannot ascend the spiritual hill, but he will meet some or other of these to contest and strive with. But not only to ascend, but to stand there, as the word signifies; to continue at so high a pitch, to be constant in truth and piety, that will be hard indeed, and bring more difficulties to contest with. Mark Frank.

Verses 3, 4. The Psalm begins with a solicitous enquiry, subjoins a satisfactory answer, and closes with a most pertinent but rapturous apostrophe. This is the enquiry, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" This is the answer, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;" "he shall receive the blessing" of plenary remission "from the Lord, and righteousness also from the God of his salvation:" even that perfect righteousness which is not acquired by man, but bestowed by Jehovah; which is not performed by the saint, but received by the sinner; which is the only solid basis to support our hopes of happiness, the only valid plea for an admission into the mansions of joy. Then follows the apostrophe: the prophet foresees the ascension of Christ and his saints into the kingdom of heaven. He sees his Lord marching at the head of the redeemed world, and conducting them into regions of honour and joy. Suitably to such a view, and in a most beautiful strain of poetry, he addresses himself to the heavenly portals. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory," with all
the heirs of his grace and righteousness, shall make their triumphant entry; "shall enter in," and go out no more. James Hervey.

Verses 3, 4. It is not he who sings so well or so many Psalms, nor he who fasts or watches so many days, nor he who divides his own among the poor, nor he who preaches to others, nor he who lives quietly, kindly, and friendly; nor, in fine, is it he who knows all sciences and languages, nor he who works all virtuous and all good works that ever any man spoke or read of, but it is he alone, who is pure within and without. Martin Luther.

Verse 4. "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart." Shall I tell you, then, who is a moral man in the sight of God? It is he that bows to the divine law as the supreme rule of right; he that is influenced by a governing regard to God in all his actions; he that obeys other commands spontaneously, because he has obeyed the first and great command, "Give me thy heart." His conduct is not conformed to custom or expediency, but to one consistent, immutable standard of duty. Take this man into a court of justice, and call on him to testify, and he will not bear false witness. Give him the charge of untold treasures, he will not steal. Trust him with the dearest interests of yourself or family, you are safe, because he has a living principle of truth and integrity in his bosom. He is as worthy of confidence in the dark as at noonday; for he is a moral man, not because reputation or interest demands it, not because the eye of public observation is fixed upon him, but because the love and fear of God have predominant ascendency in his heart. Ebenezer Porter, D.D., 1834.

Verse 4. Conditions that suit none but Christ. (Bellarmine.) "He that hath clean hands;" "the clean of hands," Margin:—those hands from which went forth virtue and healing; hands ever lifted up in prayer to God, or in blessing to man; hands stretched forth on the cross for the cleansing of the whole world. Isaac Williams, in loc.

Verse 4. "Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity," is read by Arius Montanus, "He that hath not received his soul in vain." Oh! how many receive their souls in vain, making no more use of them than the swine, of whom the philosopher observes, cujus anima pro sale, their souls are only for salt to keep their bodies from stinking. Who would not grieve to think that so choice a piece should be employed about so vain a use! George Swinnock.

Verse 4. "Nor sworn deceitfully;" or inured his tongue to any other kind of language of hell's rotten communication, to the dishonouring of God, or deceiving of others. Perjury is here instanced for the rest, as one of the most heinous. But Peraldus reckoneth up four-and-twenty several sins of the tongue,
all which every burgess of the New Jerusalem is careful to avoid, as the devil's
dril, no way becoming his pure lip. John Trapp.

Verse 4. Now we come to the four conditions requisite to render such an ascent
possible. 1. Abstinence from evil doing: "He that hath clean hands." 2.
Abstinence from evil thought: "and a pure heart." 3. Who does that duty which
he is sent into the world to do: "That hath not lifted up his mind unto vanity;"
or, as it is in the Vulgate, "Who hath no received his soul in vain." And, 4.
Remembers the vows by which he is bound to God: "nor sworn to deceive."
And in the fullest sense, there was but One in whom all these things were
fulfilled; so that in reply to the question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the
Lord?" He might well answer, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that
came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." John 3:13.
"Therefore it is well-written," says St. Bernard, "that such an High Priest
became us, because he knows the difficulty of that ascent to the celestial
mountain, he knows the weakness of us that have to ascend." Lorinus and
Bernard, quoted by J. M. Neale.

Verse 4. Heaven is not won with good words and a fair profession. The doing
Christian is the man that shall stand, when the empty boaster of his faith shall
fall. The great talkers of religion are often the least doers. His religion is in vain
whose profession brings not letters testimonial from a holy life. William
Gurnall.

Verse 5. "He shall receive the blessing;" as before, "Thou shalt set him to be a
blessing." Psalm 21:6. His name is never without blessing. In him shall all the
nations of the earth be blessed. On the mount of his beatitudes, on the heavenly
Mount Sion, crowned as "the Son of the Blessed." "From the Lord;" even "the
God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 1:3. Isaac Williams.

Verse 5. "He shall receive . . . righteousness." As for our own righteousness
which we have without him, Esay telleth us, "it is a defiled cloth;" and St. Paul,
that it is but "dung." Two very homely comparisons, but they be the Holy
Ghost's own; yet nothing so homely as in the original, where they be so odious,
as what manner of defiled cloth, or what kind of dung, we have not dared to
translate. Our own then being no better, we are driven to seek for it elsewhere.
"He shall receive his righteousness," saith the prophet; and "the gift of
righteousness," saith the apostle. Philippians 3:8, 9; Romans 5:17. It is then
another, to be given us, and to be received by us, which we must seek for. And
whither shall we go for it? Job alone dispatcheth this point (chapter 15:15;
4:18; 25:5.) Not to the heavens or stars, they are unclean in his sight. Not to the
saints, for in them he found folly. Not to the angels, for neither in them found
he steadfastness. Now, if none of these will serve, we see a necessary reason why Jehovah must be a part of this name, "the LORD our righteousness." Jeremiah 23:6. Lancelot Andrewes.

Verse 6. "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face." Christians must be seekers. This is the generation of seekers. All mankind, if ever they will come to heaven, they must be a generation of seekers. Heaven is a generation of finders, of possessors, of enjoyers, seekers of God. But here we are a generation of seekers. We want somewhat that we must seek. When we are at best, we want the accomplishment of our happiness. It is a state of seeking here, because it is a state of want; we want something alway. But to come more particularly to this seeking the face of God, or the presence of God. . . . The presence of God meant here is, that presence that he shows in the time of need, and in his ordinances. He shows a presence in need and necessity, that is, a gracious presence to his children, a gracious face. As in want of direction, he shows his presence of light to direct them; in weakness he shows his strength; in trouble and perplexity he will show his gracious and comfortable presence to comfort them. In perplexity he shows his presence to set the heart at large, answerable to the necessity. So in need God is present with his children, to direct them, to comfort them, to strengthen them, if they need that. Richard Sibbes.

Verse 6. "This is the generation." By the demonstrative pronoun "this," the psalmist erases from the catalogue of the servants of God all counterfeit Israelites, who, trusting only to their circumcision and the sacrifice of beasts, have no concern about offering themselves to God; and yet, at the same time, they rashly thrust themselves into the church. John Calvin.

Verse 6. "That seek thy face, O Jacob." In Proverbs 7:15, and 29:26, we have "seeking the face of" in the sense of seeking the favour of, or showing delight in. Their delight is not in Esau, who got "the fatness of earth" (Genesis 27:39) as his portion. And those writers may be right, who consider Jacob as a name for Messiah, to whom belong the true birthright and blessing. Andrew A. Bonar.

Verse 6. "That seek thy face, O Jacob." He is "the seed of Jacob;" he is "the Holy One of Israel;" "the face of thine Anointed" is the face of him who is both God and man; for "we shall see him as he is." Isaac Williams.

Verse 6. "O Jacob," or O God of Jacob. As the church is called Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12), so God is here called "Jacob:" such a near union there is betwixt him and his people. Or, this is Jacob. So the true seekers are fitly called, first because Israelites indeed (John 1:47; Romans 9:6); secondly,
because they see God face to face, as Jacob did at Peniel (Genesis 32:24-30); thirdly, because they also, as he, do bear away a blessing (Hosea 12:4), even "righteousness from the God of their salvation," as in the verse aforegoing.

John Trapp.

Verse 7. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." The gates of the temple were indeed as described, very lofty and magnificent, in proportion to the gigantic dimensions of that extraordinary edifice. But the phrase, "Lift up your heads," refers not so much to their loftiness, as to the upper part being formed so as to be lifted up; while the under portion opened in folding doors. Robert Jamieson, in "Paxton's Illustrations of Scriptures."

Verse 7. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." At the castle of Banias, in Syria, are the remains of an ancient gate which was drawn up, like a blind, the gate fitting in grooves. This will fully explain the term. John Gadsby.

Verse 7. "Lift up." A phrase or term taken from triumphal arches, or great porticoes, set up, or beautified and adorned for the coming in of great, victorious, and triumphant captains. John Diodati.

Verse 7. "Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Some interpret this of the doors of our heart, according to that (Revelation 3:20), "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him," etc. In the gospel history, we find that Christ had a fourfold entertainment among men. Some received him into house, not into heart, as Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:44), who gave him no kiss nor water to his feet; some into heart, but not into house, as the faithful centurion (Matthew 8:8), esteeming himself unworthy that Christ should come under his roof; some neither into house nor heart, as the graceless Gergesites (Matthew 8:34); some both into house and heart, as Lazarus, Mary, Martha. John 3:15; Luke 10:38. Now that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and that our bodies may be temples of his Holy Spirit, we must as our prophet exhorts here, lift up our souls, that is, in the words of St. Paul (Colossians 3:2), our affections must be set on things which are above, and not on things which are on earth: if we desire to lift up our hearts unto Christ's verity, we may not lift them up unto the world's vanity; that is, we must not fasten our love too much upon the things of this life, but on those pleasures at God's right hand which are evermore; that as we have borne the image of the first Adam, who was earthly, so we should bear the image of the second Adam, which is heavenly. 1 Corinthians 15:49. The prophane worldling sings a Nunc dimittis unto Christ, and saith as the devils, "Ah! what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?" (Mark 1:24); and as Job reports his words, "Depart from us, for we
Psalm 24

Verse 7. "Everlasting doors." Heaven's gates are called "everlasting," because they shall endure for ever, or because they be the doors unto the life which is everlasting. John Boys.

Verse 7. Whatever we may think of these things, David thought it high time for him to bid such a messenger welcome, and to open his heart for the receiving of his God. Hear what he saith to his own heart and others: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." And because the door of men's hearts is locked, and barred, and bolted, and men are in a deep sleep, and will not hear the knocking that is at the gate, though it be loud, though it be a king; therefore David knocks again, "Lift up, ye everlasting doors." Why, what haste, saith the sinner? What haste? Why, here's the King at your gates; and that not an ordinary king neither; he is a glorious King, that will honour you so far, if you open quickly, as to lodge within, to take up his abode in your house, to dwell with you. But the soul for all this doth not yet open, but stands still questioning, as if it were an enemy rather than a friend that stood there, and asks, "Who is this King of glory?" Who? He answers again, "It is the Lord of Hosts;" he, that if you will not open quickly and thankfully too, can easily pull your house down about your ears; he is the Lord of hosts, that King who hath a mighty army always at his command, who stand ready to their commission, and then you should know who it is you might have had for your friend; "Lift up, therefore, your heads, O ye gates." Open quickly, ye that had rather have God for your friend, than for your enemy. Oh, why should not the soul of every sinner cry out, Lord, the door is desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Job 21:14. On the contrary, the religious soul, enjoying the possession of the Saviour, chanteth a merry Magnificat, and a pleasant Te Deum: she saith unto Christ, as Ruth unto Naomi (Ruth 1:16), "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee." Nay, death itself shall not part us, for when I am loosed out of my body's prison, I hope to be with Christ; as Ittai then unto David, I say unto Jesus, "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death, or life, even there also will thy servant be." 2 Samuel 15:21. O Lord, which art the God of my salvation, I lift my heart to thee, desirous to seek thee, both in the right ubi—where thou mayest be found, and in the right quando—while thou mayest be found. Psalm 18:47; 25:1. Open my dull ears and hard heart, that thy Son my Saviour may come in and dwell with me. Grant me grace that I may still hear while he calleth, open while he knocketh, and hold him also when I have him; that I may both ascend thine hill, and stand in thy holy place; that I may not only sojourn in thy tabernacle, but also rest and dwell upon the mountain of thine holiness. John Boys.
locked, and thou hast the key; I have been trying what I can do, but the wards are so rusty that I cannot possibly turn the key? But, Lord, throw the door off the hinges, anything in the world, so thou wilt but come in and dwell here. Come, O mighty God, break through doors of iron, and bars of brass, and make way for thyself by thy love and power. Come, Lord, and make thyself welcome; all that I have is at thy service; O fit my soul to entertain thee! *James Janeway.*

*Verse 7.* He hath left with us the earnest if the Spirit, and taken from us the earnest of our flesh, which he hath carried into heaven as a pledge that the whole shall follow after. *Tertullian.*

*Verse 7.* Christ is gone to heaven as a victor; leading sin, Satan, death, hell, and all his enemies, in triumph at his chariot wheels. He has not only overcome his enemies for himself, but for all his people, whom he will make conquerors, yea, "more than conquerors." As he has overcome, so shall they also overcome; and as he has gone to heaven a victor, they shall follow in triumph. He is in heaven as a Saviour. When he came from heaven it was in the character of a Saviour; when on earth he obtained eternal salvation; in heaven he lives as a Saviour; when he comes again from heaven he will come as a Saviour; and when he will return, he will return as a Saviour. He is also gone to heaven as the rightful heir. He is not gone to heaven as a sojourner, but as "the heir of all things." He is the heir of heavenly glory and happiness, and believers are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." *Henry Pendlebury,* 1626-1695.

*Verse 7.* O clap your hands together, all ye people; sing unto God with the voice of melody. God is gone up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trump." *Psalm 47:* 1, 5. This Ark, which has saved the world from destruction, after floating on a deluge of blood, rests at length on the mountain. This innocent Joseph, whose virtue has been oppressed by the synagogue, is brought out of the dungeon to receive a crown. This invincible Samson has carried away the gates of hell, and goes in triumph to the everlasting hills. This victorious Joshua has passed over Jordan with the ark of the covenant, and taken possession of the land of the living. This Sun of righteousness, which had gone down ten degrees, returns backward to the place which it had left. He who was "a worm" at his birth, a Lamb in his passion, and a Lion in his resurrection, now ascends as an Eagle to heaven, and encourages us to follow him thither. This day heaven learns to endure man's presence, and men to walk above the stars; the heavenly Jerusalem receives its rightful King, the church its High Priest, the house of God its Heritor, the whole world its Ruler. "O sing praises, sing praises unto our God: O sing praises, sing praises unto our King." *Psalm 47:* 6-8. "God reigneth over the heathen, God sitteth upon his holy seat." "The
princes of the people are joined unto" him; "he is very highly exalted" above them. From "The Life of Jesus Christ in Glory," translated from the French of James Nouet.

Verses 7, 8. Christ being now arrived at heaven's doors, those heavenly spirits that accompanied him began to say, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in!" to whom some of the angels that were within, not ignorant of his person, but admiring his majesty and glory, said again, "Who is the King of glory?" and then they answered "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," and thereupon those twelve gates of the holy city, of New Jerusalem, opened of their own accord, and Jesus Christ with all his ministering spirits entered in. O my soul, how should this heighten thy joy and enlarge thy comforts, in that Christ is now received up into glory? Every sight of Christ is glorious, and in every sight thou shouldst wait on the Lord Jesus Christ for some glorious manifestations of himself. Come, live up to the rate of this great mystery; view Christ as entering into glory, and thou wilt find the same sparkle of glory on thy heart. O! this sight is a transforming sight: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. Isaac Ambrose.

Verses 7, 8. Ye that are thus the living temples of the Lord, and have already entertained his sanctifying Spirit into you, do you lift up your hearts in the use of holy ordinances through faith, in joyful desires and assured expectation of him; yea, be you abundantly lift up by faith in the use of holy means who are the everlasting habitation of an everlasting God, with a joyful and assured welcome of him; for so shall you invite and undoubtedly entertain the high and mighty Potentate the Lord Christ into your souls, with the glorious manifestation and ravishing operation of his love, benefits, and graces. And know, O all ye faithful and obedient ones, for your courage and comfort, who, and of what quality this glorious King, the Lord Jesus is, whom the world despises but you honour. Why, he is the Almighty God, of power all-sufficient to preserve and defend his people and church, that in trust of him do love and serve him, against all the strength and power of men and devils that do or shall malign or oppose themselves against them, and to put them to the foil, as we his Israel in the letter have found by experience for your instruction and corroboration that are his people in spirit. George Abbot, in "Brief notes upon the whole Book of Psalms," 1651.

Verses 7-10. Oh, what tongue of the highest archangel of heaven can express the welcome of thee, the King of glory, into these blessed regions of immortality? Surely the empyreal heaven never resounded with so much joy:
God ascended with jubilation and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet. It is not for us, weak and finite creatures, to wish to conceive those incomprehensible, spiritual, divine gratulations, that the glorious Trinity gave to the victorious and now glorified human nature. Certainly if, when he brought his only-begotten Son into the world, he said, "Let all the angels worship him;" much more now that he, "ascendeth on high, and hath led captivity captive, hath he given him a name above all names, that at the name of Jesus all knees should bow." And if the holy angels did so carol at his birth, in the very entrance into that state of humiliation and infirmity, with what triumph did they receive him now returning from the perfect achievement of man's redemption? and if, when his type had vanquished Goliath, and carried his head into Jerusalem, the damsels came forth to meet him with dances and timbrels, how shall we think those angelic spirits triumphed, in meeting of the great Conqueror of hell and death? How did they sing, "Lift up your heads, ye gates! and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

Surely, as he shall come, so he went; and, "Behold, he shall come with thousands of his holy ones; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand thousands stood before him;" from all whom, methinks I hear that blessed applause, "Worthy is the Lamb that was killed, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and praise: praise and honour, and glory, and power, be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore." And why dost not thou, O my soul, help to bear thy part with that happy choir of heaven? Why art not thou rapt out of my bosom, with an ecstasy of joy, to see this human nature of ours exalted above all the powers of heaven, adored of angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, and all those mighty and glorious spirits, and sitting there crowned with infinite glory and majesty? Joseph Hall.

Verses 7-10. In the twenty-fourth Psalm, we have an account of the actual entrance of Christ into heaven. When the King of England wishes to enter the city of London through Temple Bar, the gate being closed against him, the herald demands entrance. "Open the gate." From within a voice is heard, "Who is there?" The herald answers, "The King of England!" The gate is at once opened, and the king passes, amidst the joyful acclamations of his people. This is an ancient custom, and the allusion is to it in this Psalm. "The Lord ascended with a shout;" he approached the heavenly portal —the herald in his escort demanded an entrance, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The celestial watchers within ask, "Who is the King of glory?" The heralds answer, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." The question and answer being repeated once more, the gates lift up their heads, and the everlasting doors are lifted up.
The Prince enters his Father's palace, greeted with the acclamations of heaven, all whose inhabitants unite in one shout of joy ineffable: "The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of glory!" Christmas Evans.

Verses 7-10. If we follow our Redeemer in his ascension and session at the right hand of God, where he is constituted Lord of all, angels, principalities, and powers being made subject to him, and where he sits till his enemies are made his footstool, we shall observe the tide of celestial blessedness rise higher and higher still. The return of a great and beloved prince, who should by only hazarding his life, have saved his country, would fill a nation with ecstasy. Their conversation in every company would turn upon him, and all their thoughts and joys concentrate in him. See then the King of kings, after having by death abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light; after spoiling the powers of darkness, and ruining all their schemes; see him return in triumph! There was something like triumph when he entered into Jerusalem. All the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" And the multitude answered, It is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth; and the very children sung, Hosannah to the Son of David: blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosannah in the highest! How much greater then must be the triumph of his entry into the heavenly Jerusalem! Would not all the city be "moved" in this case, saying, "Who is this?" See thousands of angels attending him, and ten thousand times ten thousand come forth to meet him! The entrance of the ark into the city of David was but a shadow of this, and the responsive strains which were sung on that occasion would on this be much more applicable. Andrew Fuller.

Verses 7-10. Why is the song repeated? Why are the everlasting gates invited to lift up their heads a second time? We may not pretend here, or in any place, to know all the meaning of the divine Psalms. But what if the repetition of the verse was meant to put us in mind that our Saviour's ascension will be repeated also? He will not indeed die any more; death can no more have any dominion over him; "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Neither of course can he rise again any more. But as he will come again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead, so after that descent he will have to ascend again. And I say, this second ascension may be signified by the psalmist, calling on the everlasting doors to lift up their heads a second time, and make way for the King of glory. Now observe the answer made this second time, "Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." Before it was, "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle;" now it is "The Lord of hosts." Christ ascending the first time, to
intercede for us at his Father's right hand, is called "The Lord mighty in battle." But Christ, ascending the second time, after the world hath been judged, and the good and bad separated for ever, is called "the Lord of hosts." Why this difference in his divine titles? We may reverently take it, that it signifies to us the difference between his first and second coming down to earth, his first and second ascension into heaven. As in other respects his first coming was with great humility, so in this, that he came, in all appearance, alone. The angels were indeed waiting round him, but not visibly, not in glory. "He trode the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him." He wrestled with death, hell, and Satan, alone. Alone he rose from the dead: alone, as far as man could see, he went up to heaven. Thus he showed himself "the Lord mighty in battle," mighty in that single combat which he, as our champion, our David, victoriously maintained against our great enemy. But when he shall come down and go up the second time, he will show himself "the Lord of hosts." Instead of coming down alone in mysterious silence, as in his wonderful incarnation, he will be followed by all the armies of heaven. "The Lord my God will come, and all his saints with him." "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints." "The Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father, and all the holy angels with him." "Thousand thousands will stand around him, and ten thousand times ten thousand will minister unto him." Instead of the silence of that quiet chamber at Nazareth, and of the holy Virgin's womb, there will be the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God accompanying him. Thus he will come down as the Lord of hosts, and as the Lord of hosts, he will ascend again to his Father. After the judgment, he will pass again through the everlasting doors, with a greater company than before; for he will lead along with him, into the heavenly habitation, all those who shall have been raised from their graves and found worthy. Hear how the awful sight is described by one who will doubtless have a high place in that day near the Judge. The great apostle and prophet St. Paul, says, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." John Keble, M.A.

Verses 7-10.—

In this blessed life
I see the path, and in his death the price,
And in his great ascent the proof supreme
Of immortality. And did he rise?
Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!
He rose! He rose! He burst the bars of death.
Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the King of glory to come in.
Who is the King of glory? He who left
His throne of glory for the pangs of death.
Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the King of glory to come in.
Who is the King of glory? He who slew
The ravenous foe that gorged all human race.
The King of glory, he whose glory filled
Heaven with amazement at his love to man,
And with divine complacency beheld
Powers most illumined 'wilder'd in the theme.

Edward Young.

Verses 7-10.—

Lift up your heads, ye gates, and, O prepare,
Ye living orbs, your everlasting doors,
The King of glory comes!
What King of glory? He whose puissant might
Subdued Abaddon, and the infernal powers
Of darkness bound in adamantine chains:
Who, wrapp'd in glory, with the Father reigns,
Omnipotent, immortal, infinite!

James Scott.

Verse 8. "Who is the King of glory?" Christ in two respects is "the King of glory." 1. For that all honour and glory belongs properly to him —his is "the kingdom, the power, and the glory" (Matthew 6:13), called in this regard, "The Lord of glory." 1 Corinthians 2:8. 2. For that Christ maketh us partakers of his glory, termed in this respect our glorious Lord Jesus. James 2:1. If the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty in battle, be the King of glory, then Christ (having conquered all his enemies, and made them his footstool, triumphing over death, and the devil which is the founder of death, and sin which is the sting of death, and the grave which is the prison of death, and hell itself which is the proper dominion of the devil and death) is doubtless in himself, "the King of glory." And for as much as he died for our sins, and is risen again for our justification, and is ascended on high to give gifts unto men—in this life grace, in the next glory—what is he less than a "King of glory" towards us, of whom and through whom alone we find that fight his battles are delivered from the hands of all
that hate us, and so made victors (1 Corinthians 15:57), yea, "more than conquerors." Romans 8:37. *John Boys.*

*Verse 8.* "The Lord strong and mighty." "Strong and mighty" in subduing all adversaries; and overcoming death and the devil who had the power of death. *Ludolphus, quoted by Isaac Williams.*

*Verse 10.* "Jehovah of hosts," or, as the Hebrew is, *Jehovah Tsebaoth,* for so the word is used by the apostles, untranslated in the Greek, *Sabaoth.* Romans 9:29. It signifieth *hosts* or *armies* standing ready in martial order, and in battle array, and comprehendeth all creatures in heaven and in earth, which are pressed to do the will of God. *Henry Ainsworth.*

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

*Verse 1.* The great Proprietor, his estates and his servants, his rights and wrongs.

*Verse 1.* "The earth is the Lord's."

1. Mention other claimants—idols: pope, man, devil, etc.,
2. Try the suit.
3. Carry out the verdict. Use our substance, preach everywhere, claim all things for God.
4. *See how glorious the earth looks when she bears her Master's name.*

*Verse 1 (last clause).* All men belong to God. His sons or his subjects, his servants or his serfs, his sheep or his goats, etc.

*Verse 2.* Divine purposes accomplished by singular means.

*Verse 2.* *Founded on the seas.* Instability of terrestrial things.

*Verse 3.* The all-important question.

*Verse 4 (first clause).* Connection between outward morality and inward purity.

*Verse 4 (second clause).* Men judged by their delights.

*Verse 4.* "Clean hands."

1. How to get them clean.
2. How to keep them clean.
III. How to defile them  
IV. How to get them clean again.

Verses 4, 5. Character manifested and favour received.

Verse 5 (second clause). The good man receiving righteousness and needing salvation, or the evangelical meaning of apparently legal passages.

Verse 6. Those who truly seek fellowship with God. Verse 7. Accommodate the text to the entrance of Jesus Christ into our hearts.

I. There are obstacles, "gates," "doors."
II. We must will to remove them: "lift up."
III. Grace must enable us: "be ye lift up."
IV. Our Lord will enter.
V. He enters as "King." and "King of glory."

Verse 7. The ascension and its teachings. Verses 7-10.—
I. His title—the Lord of hosts.
II. His victories, implied in the expression. The Lord strong and mighty in battle.
III. His mediatorial title, The King of glory.
IV. His authoritative entrance into the holy place.

John Newton's "Messiah."

Verse 8. The mighty Hero. His pedigree, his power, his battles, his victories.

Verse 10. The sovereignty and glory of God in Christ.

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WORK UPON THE TWENTY-FOURTH PSALM

In the "Works" of John Boys, 1626, folio, pp. 908-913, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.
Psalm 25

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

TITLE. A Psalm of David. David is pictured in this Psalm as in a faithful miniature. His holy trust, his many conflicts, his great transgression, his bitter repentance, and his deep distresses are all here; so that we see the very heart of "the man after God's own heart." It is evidently a composition of David's later days, for he mentions the sins of his youth, and from its painful references to the craft and cruelty of his many foes, it will not be too speculative a theory to refer it to the period when Absalom was heading the great rebellion against him. This has been styled the second of the seven Penitential Psalms. It is the mark of a true saint that his sorrows remind him of his sins, and his sorrow for sin drives him to his God.

SUBJECT AND DIVISION. The twenty-two verses of this Psalm begin in the original with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in their proper order. It is the first instance we have of an inspired acrostic or alphabetical song. This method may have been adopted by the writer to assist the memory; and the Holy Spirit may have employed it to show us that the graces of style and the arts of poetry may lawfully be used in his service. Why should not all the wit and ingenuity of man be sanctified to noblest ends by being laid upon the altar of God? From the singularity of the structure of the Psalm, it is not easy to discover any marked divisions; there are great changes of thought, but there is no variation of subject; the moods of the writer's mind are twofold—prayer and meditation; and as these appear in turns, we should thus divide the verses. Prayer from Ps 25:1-7; meditation, Ps 25:8-10; prayer, Ps 25:11; meditation, Ps 25:12-15; prayer, Ps 25:16-22.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. Unto thee, O Lord. See how the holy soul flies to its God like a dove to its cote. When the storm winds are out, the Lord's vessels put about and make for their well remembered harbour of refuge. What a mercy that the Lord will condescend to hear our cries in time of trouble, although we may have almost forgotten him in our hours of fancied prosperity. Unto thee, O Jehovah, do I lift up my soul. It is but a mockery to uplift the hands and the eyes unless we also bring our souls into our devotions. True prayer may be described as the soul rising from earth to have fellowship with heaven; it is taking a journey upon Jacob's ladder, leaving our cares and fears at the foot, and meeting with a covenant God at the top. Very often the soul cannot rise, she has lost her wings, and is heavy and earth bound; more like a burrowing mole than a soaring eagle. At such dull seasons we must not give over prayer, but must, by God's assistance, exert all our powers to lift up our hearts. Let faith be the lever and grace be the arm, and the dead lump will yet be stirred. But what a lift it has sometimes proved! With all our tugging and straining we have been utterly defeated, until the heavenly loadstone of our Saviour's love has displayed its
omnipotent attractions, and then our hearts have gone up to our Beloved like mounting flames of fire.

Verse 2. *O my God.* This title is more dear than the name Jehovah, which is used in the first sentence. Already the sweet singer has drawn nearer to his heavenly helper, for he makes bold to grasp him with the hand of assured possession, calling him, my God. Oh the more than celestial music of that word—"My God!" It is to be observed that the psalmist does not deny expression to those gracious feelings with which God had favoured him; he does not fall into loathsome mock modesty, but finding in his soul a desire to seek the Lord he avows it; believing that he had a rightful interest in Jehovah he declares it, and knowing that he had confidence in his God he professes it; *O my God, I trust in thee.* Faith is the cable which binds our boat to the shore, and by pulling at it we draw ourselves to the land; faith unites us to God, and then draws us near to him. As long as the anchor of faith holds there is no fear in the worst tempest; if that should fail us there would be no hope left. We must see to it that our faith is sound and strong, for otherwise prayer cannot prevail with God. Woe to the warrior who throws away his shield; what defence can be found for him who finds no defence in his God? *Let me not be ashamed.* Let no my disappointed hopes make me feel ashamed of my former testimonies of thy faithfulness. Many were on the watch for this. The best of men have their enemies, and should pray against them that they may not see their wicked desires accomplished. *Let not mine enemies triumph over me.* Suffer no wicked mouth to make blasphemous mirth out of my distresses by asking, "Where is thy God?" There is a great jealousy in believers for the honour of God, and they cannot endure that unbelievers should taunt them with the failure of their expectations from the God of their salvation. All other trusts will end in disappointment and eternal shame, but our confidence shall never be confounded.

Verse 3. *Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.* Suffering enlarges the heart by creating the power to sympathize. If we pray eagerly for ourselves, we shall not long be able to forget our fellow sufferers. None pity the poor like those who have been or are still poor, none have such tenderness for the sick as those who have been long in ill health themselves. We ought to be grateful for occasional griefs if they preserve us from chronic hardheartedness; for of all afflictions, an unkind heart is the worst, it is a plague to its possessor, and a torment to those around him. Prayer when it is of the Holy Ghost's teaching is never selfish; the believer does not sue for monopolies for himself, but would have all in like case to partake of divine mercy with him. The prayer may be viewed as a promise; our Heavenly Father will never let his trustful children
find him untrue or unkind. He will ever be mindful of his covenant. Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. David had given his enemies no provocation; their hatred was wanton. Sinners have no justifiable reason or valid excuse for transgressing; they benefit no one, not even themselves by their sins; the law against which they transgress is not harsh or unjust; God is not a tyrannical ruler, providence is not a bondage: men sin because they will sin, not because it is either profitable or reasonable to do so. Hence shame is their fitting reward. May they blush with penitential shame now, or else they will not be able to escape the everlasting contempt and the bitter shame which is the portion of fools in the world to come.

Verse 4. *Shew me thy ways, O Lord.* Unsanctified natures clamour for their own way, but gracious spirits cry, "Not my will, but thine be done." We cannot at all times discern the path of duty, and at such times it is our wisdom to apply to the Lord himself. Frequently the dealings of God with us are mysterious, and then also we may appeal to him as his own interpreter, and in due time he will make all things plain. Moral, providential and mental forms of guidance are all precious gifts of a gracious God to a teachable people. The second petition, *teach me thy paths,* appears to mean more than the first, and may be illustrated by the case of a little child who should say to his father, "Father, first tell me which is the way, and then teach my little trembling feet to walk in it." What weak dependent creatures we are! How constantly should we cry to the Strong for strength!

Verse 5. *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me.* The same request as in the last verse. The little child having begun to walk, asks to be still led onward by its parent's helping hand, and to be further instructed in the alphabet of truth. Experimental teaching is the burden of this prayer. Lead me according to thy truth, and prove thyself faithful; lead me into truth that I may know its preciousness, lead me by the way of truth that I may manifest its spirit. David knew much, but he felt his ignorance and desired to be still in the Lord's school; four times over in these two verses he applies for a scholarship in the college of grace. It were well for many professors if instead of following their own devices, and cutting out new paths of thought for themselves, they would enquire for the good old ways of God's own truth, and beseech the Holy Ghost to give them sanctified understandings and teachable spirits. *For thou art the God of my salvation.* The Three One Jehovah is the Author and Perfector of salvation to his people. Reader, is he the God of your salvation? Do you find in the Father's election, in the Son's atonement, and in the Spirit's quickening all the grounds of your eternal hopes? If so, you may use this as an argument for obtaining further blessings; if the Lord has ordained to save you, surely he will
not refuse to instruct you in his ways. It is a happy thing when we can address the Lord with the confidence which David here manifests, it gives us great power in prayer, and comfort in trial. *On thee do I wait all the day.* Patience is the fair handmaid and daughter of faith; we cheerfully wait when we are certain that we shall not wait in vain. It is our duty and our privilege to wait upon the Lord in service, in worship, in expectancy, in trust all the days of our life. Our faith will be tried faith, and if it be of the true kind, it will bear continued trial without yielding. We shall not grow weary of waiting upon God if we remember how long and how graciously he once waited for us.

**Verse 6.** *Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses.* We are usually tempted in seasons of affliction to fear that our God has forgotten us, or forgotten his usual kindness towards us; hence the soul doth as it were put the Lord in remembrance, and beseech him to recollect those deeds of love which once he wrought towards it. There is a holy boldness which ventures thus to deal with the Most High, let us cultivate it; but there is also an unholy unbelief which suggests our fears, let us strive against it with all our might. What gems are those two expressions, *"tender mercies and lovingkindnesses!"* They are the virgin honey of language; for sweetness no words can excel them; but as for the gracious favours which are intended by them, language fails to describe them.

"When all thy mercies, O my God, My rising soul surveys, Transported with the view, I am lost In wonder, love and praise."

If the Lord will only do unto us in the future as in the past, we shall be well content. We seek no change in the divine action, we only crave that the river of grace may never cease to flow. *For they have been ever of old.* A more correct translation would be "from eternity." David was a sound believer in the doctrine of God's eternal love. The Lord's lovingkindnesses are no novelties. When we plead with him to bestow them upon us, we can urge use and custom of the most ancient kind. In courts of law men make much of precedents, and we may plead them at the throne of grace. "Faith, "saith Dickson, "must make use of experiences and read them over unto God, out of the register of a sanctified memory, as a recorder to him who cannot forget." With a unchangeable God it is a most effectual argument to remind him of his ancient mercies and his eternal love. By tracing all that we enjoy to the fountain head of everlasting love we shall greatly cheer our hearts, and those do us but sorry service who try to dissuade us from meditating upon election and its kindred topics.
Verse 7. Remember not the sins of my youth. Sin is the stumbling block. This is the thing to be removed. Lord, pass an act of oblivion for all my sins, and especially for the hot blooded wanton follies of my younger years. Those offences which we remember with repentance God forgets, but if we forget them, justice will bring them forth to punishment. The world winks at the sins of younger men, and yet they are none so little after all; the bones of our youthful feastings at Satan's table will stick painfully in our throats when we are old men. He who presumes upon his youth is poisoning his old age. How large a tear may wet this page as some of us reflect upon the past! Nor my transgressions. Another word for the same evils. Sincere penitents cannot get through their confessions at a gallop; they are constrained to use many bemoanings, for their swarming sins smite them with so innumerable griefs. A painful sense of any one sin provokes the believer to repentance for the whole mass of his iniquities. Nothing but the fullest and clearest pardon will satisfy a thoroughly awakened conscience. David would have his sins not only forgiven, but forgotten. According to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord. David and the dying thief breathe the same prayer, and doubtless they grounded it upon the same plea, viz., the free grace and unmerited goodness of Jehovah. We dare not ask to have our portion measured from the balances of justice, but we pray to be dealt with by the hand of mercy.

Verses 8-10. These three verses are a meditation upon the attributes and acts of the Lord. He who toils in the harvest field of prayer should occasionally pause awhile and refresh himself with a meal of meditation.

Verse 8. Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. Here the goodness and rectitude of the divine character are beheld in friendly union; he who would see them thus united in bonds of perfect amity must stand at the foot of the cross and view them blended in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. It is no less true than wonderful that through the atonement the justice of God pleads as strongly as his grace for the salvation of the sinners whom Jesus died to save. Moreover, as a good man naturally endeavours to make others like himself, so will the Lord our God in his compassion bring sinners into the way of holiness and conform them to his own image; thus the goodness of our God leads us to expect the reclaiming of sinful men. We may not conclude from God's goodness that he will save those sinners who continue to wander in their own ways, but we may be assured that he will renew transgressors' hearts and guide them into the way of holiness. Let those who desire to be delivered from sin take comfort from this. God himself will condescend to be the teacher of sinners. What a ragged school is this for God to
teach in! God's teaching is practical; he teaches sinners not only the doctrine but the way.

**Verse 9.** The meek will he guide in judgment. Meek spirits are in high favour with the Father of the meek and lowly Jesus, for he sees in them the image of his only begotten Son. They know their need of guidance, and are willing to submit their own understandings to the divine will, and therefore the Lord condescends to be their guide. Humble spirits are in this verse endowed with a rich inheritance; let them be of good cheer. Trouble puts gentle spirits to their wit's ends, and drives them to act without discretion, but grace comes to the rescue, enlightens their minds to follow that which is just, and helps them to discern the way in which the Lord would have them to go. Proud of their own wisdom fools will not learn, and therefore miss their road to heaven, but lowly hearts sit at Jesu's feet, and find the gate of glory, for the meek will he teach his way. Blessed teacher! Favoured scholar! Divine lesson! My soul, be thou familiar with the whole.

**Verse 10.** This is a rule without exception. God is good to those that be good. Mercy and faithfulness shall abound towards those who through mercy are made faithful. Whatever outward appearances may threaten we should settle it steadfastly in our minds that while grace enables us to obey the Lord's will we need not fear that Providence will cause us any real loss. There shall be mercy in every unsavoury morsel, and faithfulness in every bitter drop; let not our hearts be troubled, but let us rest by faith in the immutable covenant of Jehovah, which is ordered in all things and sure. Yet this is not a general truth to be trampled upon by swine, it is a pearl for a child's neck. Gracious souls, by faith resting upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus, keep the covenant of the Lord, and, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, they walk in his testimonies; these will find all things working together for their good, but to the sinner there is no such promise. Keepers of the covenant shall be kept by the covenant; those who follow the Lord's commandments shall find the Lord's mercy following them.

**Verse 11.** This sentence of prayer would seem out of place were it not that prayer is always in its place, whether in season or out of season. Meditation having refreshed the Psalmist, he falls to his weighty work again, and wrestles with God for the remission of his sin. *For thy name's sake, O Lord.* Here is a blessed, never failing plea. Not for our sakes or our merit's sake, but to glorify thy mercy, and to show forth the glory of thy divine attributes. *Pardon mine iniquity.* It is confessed, it is abhorred, it is consuming my heart with grief; Lord forgive it; let thine own lips pronounce my absolution. *For it is great.* It weighs so heavily upon me that I pray thee remove it. Its greatness is no
difficulty with thee, for thou art a great God, but the misery which it causes to me is my argument with thee for speedy pardon. Lord, the patient is sore sick, therefore heal him. To pardon a great sinner will bring thee great glory, therefore for thy name's sake pardon me. Observe how this verse illustrates the logic of faith, which is clean contrary to that of a legal spirit; faith looks not for merit in the creature, but hath regard to the goodness of the Creator; and instead of being staggered by the demerits of sin it looks to the precious blood, and pleads all the more vigorously because of the urgency of the case.

**Verse 12.** *What man is he that feareth the Lord?* Let the question provoke self examination. Gospel privileges are not for every pretender. Art thou of the seed royal or no? *Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.* Those whose hearts are right shall not err for want of heavenly direction. Where God sanctifies the heart he enlightens the head. We all wish to choose our way; but what a mercy is it when the Lord directs that choice, and makes free will to be goodwill! If we make our will God's will, God will let is have our will. God does not violate our will, but leaves much to our choice; nevertheless, he instructs our wills, and so we choose that which is well pleasing in his sight. The will should be subject to law; there is a way which we should choose, but so ignorant are we that we need to be taught, and so wilful that none but God himself can teach us effectually.

**Verse 13.** He who fears God has nothing else to fear. *His soul shall dwell at ease.* He shall lodge in the chamber of content. One may sleep as soundly in the little bed in the corner as in the Great Bed of Ware; it is not abundance but content that gives true ease. Even here, having learned by grace both to abound and be empty, the believer dwells at ease; but how profound will be the ease of his soul for ever! There he will enjoy the *otium cum dignitate,* ease and glory shall go together. Like a warrior whose battles are over, or a husbandman whose barns are full, his soul shall take its ease, and be merry for ever. *His seed shall inherit the earth.* God remembers Isaac for the sake of Abraham, and Jacob for the sake of Isaac. Good men's sons have a goodly portion to begin the world with, but many of them, alas! turn a father's blessing into a curse. The promise is not broken because in some instances men wilfully refuse to receive it; moreover, it is in its spiritual meaning that it now holds good; our spiritual seed do inherit all that was meant by "the earth," or Canaan; they receive the blessing of the new covenant. May the Lord make us the joyful parents of many spiritual children, and we shall have no fears about their maintenance, for the Lord will make each one of them princes in all the earth.

**Verse 14.** *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* Some read it "the friendship:" it signifies familiar intercourse, confidential intimacy, and select
fellowship. This is a great secret. Carnal minds cannot guess what is intended by it, and even believers cannot explain it in words, for it must be felt to be known. The higher spiritual life is necessarily a path which the eagle's eye hath not known, and which the lion's whelp has not travelled; neither natural wisdom nor strength can force a door into this inner chamber. Saints have the key of heaven's hieroglyphics; they can unriddle celestial enigmas. They are initiated into the fellowship of the skies; they have heard words which it is not possible for them to repeat to their fellows. And he will shew them his covenant. Its antiquity, security, righteousness, fulness, graciousness and excellence, shall be revealed to their hearts and understandings, and above all, their own part in it shall be sealed to their souls by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The designs of love which the Lord has to his people in the covenant of grace, he has been pleased to show to believers in the Book of Inspiration, and by his Spirit he leads us into the mystery, even the hidden mystery of redemption. He who does not know the meaning of this verse, will never learn it from a commentary; let him look to the cross, for the secret lies there.

Verse 15. *Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord.* The writer claims to be fixed in his trust, and constant in his expectation; he looks in confidence, and waits in hope. We may add to this look of faith and hope the obedient look of service, the humble look of reverence, the admiring look of wonder, the studious look of meditation, and the tender look of affection. Happy are those whose eyes are never removed from their God. "The eye," says Solomon, "is never satisfied with seeing," but this sight is the most satisfying in the world. *For he shall pluck my feet out of the net.* Observe the conflicting condition in which a gracious soul may be placed, his eyes are in heaven and yet his feet are sometimes in a net; his nobler nature ceases not to behold the glories of God, while his baser parts are enduring the miseries of the world. A net is the common metaphor for temptation. The Lord often keeps his people from falling into it, and if they have fallen he rescues them. The word "pluck" is a rough word, and saints who have fallen into sin find that the means of their restoration are not always easy to the flesh; the Lord plucks at us sharply to let us feel that sin is an exceeding bitter thing. But what a mercy is here: Believer, be very grateful for it. The Lord will deliver us from the cunning devices of our cruel enemy, and even if through infirmity we have fallen into sin, he will not leave us to be utterly destroyed but will pluck us out of our dangerous state; though our feet are in the net, if our eyes are up unto God, mercy certainly will interpose.

Verse 16. His own eyes were fixed upon God, but he feared that the Lord had averted his face from him in anger. Oftentimes unbelief suggests that God has
turned his back upon us. If we know that we turn to God we need not fear that he will turn from us, but may boldly cry, *Turn thee unto me.* The ground of quarrel is always in ourselves, and when that is removed there is nothing to prevent our full enjoyment of communion with God. *Have mercy upon me.* Saints still must stand upon the footing of mercy; notwithstanding all their experience they cannot get beyond the publican's prayer, "Have mercy upon me." *For I am desolate and afflicted.* He was lonely and bowed down. Jesus was in the days of his flesh in just such a condition; none could enter into the secret depths of his sorrows, he trod the winepress alone, and hence he is able to succour in the fullest sense those who tread the solitary path.

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than he went through before; He that into God's kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door."

**Verse 17.** *The troubles of my heart are enlarged.* When trouble penetrates the heart it is trouble indeed. In the case before us, the heart was swollen with grief like a lake surcharged with water by enormous floods; this is used as an argument for deliverance, and it is a potent one. When the darkest hour of the night arrives we may expect the dawn; when the sea is at its lowest ebb the tide must surely turn; and when our troubles are enlarged to the greatest degree, then we may hopefully pray, *O bring thou me out of my distresses.*

**Verse 18.** *Look upon mine affliction and my pain.* Note the many trials of the saints; here we have no less than six words all descriptive of woe. "Desolate, and afflicted, troubles enlarged, distresses, affliction, and pain." But note yet more the submissive and believing spirit of a true saint; all he asks for is, "Lord, look upon my evil plight; "he does not dictate, or even express a complaint; a look from God will content him, and that being granted he asks no more. Even more noteworthy is the way in which the believer under affliction discovers the true source of all the mischief, and lays the axe at the root of it. *Forgive all my sins,* is the cry of a soul that is more sick of sin than of pain, and would sooner be forgiven than healed. Blessed is the man to whom sin is more unbearable than disease, he shall not be long before the Lord shall both forgive his iniquity and heal his diseases. Men are slow to see the intimate connection between sin and sorrow, a grace taught heart alone feels it.

**Verse 19.** *Consider mine enemies.* Watch them, weigh them, check them, defeat them. *For they are many.* They need the eyes of Argus to watch them, and the arms of Hercules to match them, but the Lord is more than sufficient to defeat them. The devils of hell and the evils of earth are all vanquished when the Lord makes bare his arm. *They hate me with cruel hatred.* It is the breath of
the serpent's seed to hate; their progenitor was a hater, and they themselves must needs imitate him. No hate so cruel as that which is unreasonable and unjust. A man can forgive one who had injured him, but one whom he has injured he hates implacably. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, "is still our Master's word to us.

**Verse 20.** *O keep my soul* out of evil, *and deliver me* when I fall into it. This is another version of the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." *Let me not be ashamed.* This is the one fear which like a ghost haunted the psalmist's mind. He trembled lest his faith should become the subject of ridicule through the extremity of his affliction. Noble hearts can brook anything but shame. David was of such a chivalrous spirit, that he could endure any torment rather than be put to dishonour. *For I put my trust in thee.* And therefore the name of God would be compromised if his servants were deserted; this the believing heart can by no means endure.

**Verse 21.** *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.* What better practical safeguards can a man require? If we do not prosper with these as our guides, it is better for us to suffer adversity. Even the ungodly world admits that "honesty is the best policy." The heir of heaven makes assurance doubly sure, for apart from the rectitude of his public life, he enlists the guardian care of heaven in secret prayer: *for I wait on thee.* To pretend to wait on God without holiness of life is religious hypocrisy, and to trust to our own integrity without calling upon God is presumptuous atheism. Perhaps the integrity and uprightness referred to are those righteous attributes of God, which faith rests upon as a guarantee that the Lord will not forfeit his word.

**Verse 22.** *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.* This is a very comprehensive prayer, including all the faithful and all their trials. Sorrow had taught the psalmist sympathy, and given him communion with the tried people of God; he therefore remembers them in his prayers. *Israel,* the tried, the wrestling, the conquering hero, fit representative of all the saints. Israel in Egypt, in the wilderness, in wars with Canaanites, in captivity, fit type of the church militant on earth. Jesus is the Redeemer from trouble as well as sin, he is a complete Redeemer, and from every evil he will rescue every saint. Redemption by blood is finished: O God, send us redemption by power. Amen and Amen.
Whole Psalm. This is the first of the seven alphabetical Psalms, the others being the 34th, 37th, 111th, 112th, 119th, and 145th. They are specimens of that acrostic mode of writing which seems to have been once so fashionable among the Jews, as is testified by numerous instances of such composition, which are to be met with in their works. Other poetic artifices were likewise adopted. We find many instances of poems being so constructed, that a proper name, or some particular sentiment, would not infrequently be expressed by the initial letters of the verses. See Bartolocci's "Bibliotheca Rabbinica," vol. 2 pg 260, where examples of such artifices are cited. George Phillips, B.D., in "The Psalms in Hebrew, with a Commentary." 1846

Whole Psalm. This is the first fully alphabetic Psalm...The only lesson which the use of the alphabetic form may teach is this:—that the Holy Spirit was willing to throw his words into all the moulds of human thought and speech; and whatever ingenuity man may exhibit in intellectual efforts, he should consecrate these to his Lord, making him the "Alpha and Omega" of his pursuits. Andrew A. Bonar.

Whole Psalm. Saving grace is a secret that no man knows but the elect, and the elect cannot know it neither without special illumination:—1. Special showing—Shew me thy ways, O Lord, saith David. 2. Barely showing will not serve the turn, but there must be a special teaching—Teach me thy paths, Ps 25:4. 3. Bare teaching will not avail neither, but there must be a special inculcative teaching—Teach me in thy ways, to Ps 25:8. 4. Inculcative teaching will not do the deed neither, but there must be a special directive teaching—Guide in judgment and teach, Ps 25:9. 5. Directive teaching will not be sufficient neither, but there must be a special manuductive teaching—Lead me forth in thy truth, and teach me, Ps 25:5. 6. Manuductive teaching will not be effectual, but there must be also a special, choice teaching, a determining of the very will, an elective teaching—Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose, Ps 25:12. And what secret is this? not common grace, for that is not the secret of the elect, but special and peculiar grace. 1. The special grace of prayer—Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul Ps 25:1. 2. A special grace of faith—My God, I trust in thee, Ps 25:2. 3. A special grace of repentance—Remember not the sins of my youth, etc., Ps 25:7. 4. A special grace of hope—My hope is in thee, Ps 25:21. 5. A special grace of continual living in God's sight, and dependence upon God—Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord, Ps 25:15. 6. Which is the root of all God's special and eternal favour and mercy—Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old, Ps 25:6; even God's special mercy to him in particular, Ps 25:11. William Fenner, in "Hidden Manna," 1626.
Whole Psalm. In these four Psalms which immediately follow one another, we may find the soul of David presented in all the several postures of piety—lying, standing, sitting, kneeling. In the twenty-second Psalm, he is lying all along, falling flat on his face, low grovelling on the ground, even almost entering into a degree of despair. Speaking of himself in the history of Christ in the mystery, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In the twenty-third Psalm, he is standing, and through God's favour, in despite of his foes, trampling and triumphing over all opposition; "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore shall I lack nothing." In the twenty-fourth Psalm he is sitting, like a doctor in his chair, or a professor in his place, reading a lecture of divinity, and describing the character of that man—how he must be accomplished—"who shall ascend into thy holy hill," and hereafter be partaker of happiness. In this twenty-fifth Psalm, he is kneeling, with hands and voice lifted up to God, and on these two hinges the whole Psalm turneth; the one is a hearty beseeching of God's mercy, the other a humble bemoaning of his own misery. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 1. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. The lifting up of the heart presupposes a former dejection of his soul. The soul of man is pressed down with sin and with the cares of this world, which, as lead doth the net, draweth is so down, that it cannot mount above till God send spiritual prayers, as cork to the net, to exalt it; which arise out of faith, as the flame doth out of the fire, and which must be free of secular cares, and all things pressing down, which showeth unto us that worldlings can no more pray than a mole is able to fly. But Christians are as eagles which mount upward. Seeing then the heart of man by nature is fixed to the earth, and of itself is no more able to rise therefrom than a stone which is fixed to the ground, till God raises it by his power, word, and workmen; it should be our principal petition to the Lord that it would please him to draw us, that we might run after him; that he would exalt and lift up our hearts to heaven, that they may not lie still in the puddle of this earth. Archibald Symson.

Verse 1. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. A godly man prays as a builder builds. Now a builder first layeth a foundation, and because he cannot finish in one day, he comes the second day, and finds the frame standing that he made the first day, and then he adds a second day's work; and then he comes a third day and finds his two former day's work standing; then he proceeds to a third day's work, and makes walls to it, and so he goes on till his building be finished. So prayer is the building of the soul till it reach up to heaven; therefore a godly heart prays, and reacheth higher and higher in prayer, till at last his prayers reach up to God. William Fenner.
Verse 1. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul: unto thee in the fulness of thy merits, unto thee in the riches of thy grace; unto thee in the embraces of thy love and comforts of thy Spirit; unto thee, that thy thorns may be my crown, thy blood my balsam, thy curse my blessing, thy death my life, thy cross my triumph. Thus is my "life hid with Christ in God; "and if so, then where should be my soul, but where is my life? And, therefore, unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. ...O make good thy name of Lord unto me; as Lord, rebuke Satan and restrain all earthly and carnal affections, that they do not once dare to whisper a temptation to my soul, a distraction to my thoughts, whilst I am in communion with thee, in prayer at thy holy ordinance. Do thou as Lord, rule me by thy grace, govern me by thy Spirit, defend me by thy power, and crown me with thy salvation. Thou, Lord, the preserver of heaven and earth, "thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Ps 145:16. O open now thine hand, thy bosom, thy bounty, thy love, and satisfy the desires of my longing soul, which I here "lift up unto thee." Robert Mossom, 1657.

Verse 1. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Cyprian saith, that in the primitive times the minister was wont to prepare the people's minds to pray, by prefacing, Sursum corda, lift up your hearts. The Jews at this day write upon the walls of their synagogues these words, Tephillah belo cavannah ceguph belo neshamah; that is, A prayer without the intention of the affection is like a body without a soul. And yet their devotion is a mere outside, saith one—a brainless head and a soulless body: "This people draw nigh to me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Isa 29:13. A carnal man can as little lift up his heart in prayer, as a mole can fly. A David finds it a hard task; since the best heart is lumpish, and naturally beareth downwards, as the poise of a clock, as the lead of a net. Let us therefore "lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us; "and pray to God to draw us up to himself, as the lodestone doth the iron. John Trapp.

Verse 1. Unto thee, I lift up my soul. This follows by a natural consequence after the sublime appeal in the foregoing Psalm to the gates of heaven to lift up their heads to receive Christ, the Lord of hosts and the King of glory, ascending into heaven. As the Collect for Ascension day expresses it, "Grant O Lord, that like as we do believe thy only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also, in heart and mind thither ascend; "and for the Sunday after Ascension, "O God, who hast exalted thine only Son with great triumph to thy kingdom in heaven, send thy Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us to the same place, whither our Saviour Christ is gone before." Christopher Wordsworth, in loc.
Verse 1. *I lift up my soul*, alluding to the sacrifices, which were wont to be *lifted up*. Hence prayers not answered, not accepted, are said to be stopped from ascending. La 3:44. When you meet with such expressions in the Old Testament concerning prayer, you must still understand them to be allusions to the sacrifices, because the sacrifices were *lifted up* and did ascend. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 1. *My soul.* But how shall I call it mine, seeing it is thine, thine by purchase, thine, having bought it with thy blood? Yea, is it not thy spouse, whom thou hast wedded to thyself by the Spirit through faith? And is not this holy sacrament the marriage feast? If so, sure then, my Jesus, I was lost in myself, till found in thee; and therefore my soul is now, and not till now, truly mine, in being wholly thine; so that I can say with confidence, "*I lift up my soul unto thee."* *Robert Mossom.*

Verses 2-3. When David had prayed, *O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed!* In the next verse, as if conscious to himself that his prayers were too restrictive, narrow, and niggardly, he enlargeth the bounds thereof, and builds them on a broader bottom, "*Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.*" Thus it is that charity in the midst of our religious devotions must have *rehoboth* (room enough to expatiate in). Our petitions must not be pent or confined to our own private good, but extended to the benefit of all God's servants, in what condition soever. *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 3. *Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.* To wit, neither by their own disappointments, nor mine. For this last some add because if he should fail of his hopes, he knew this would be a great discouragement to others. *Arthur Jackson, M.A.*, 1593-1666.

Verse 3. *Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.* All persons who transgress, do it, in some sense, without cause; since they cannot excuse of justify their conduct. God is so amiable and excellent in every part of his great name, that he deserves our constant reverence and love. His law is so holy, just, and good, and all his precepts concerning all things so righteous and calculated to make us happy, that the mouth of every transgressor must be stopped. Hence we must all be covered with shame, if dealt with according to our deserts, for all have sinned. But since God has promised to be merciful to those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel, shame will be the portion of those only who wilfully persist in their wickedness, and refuse to return to God by Jesus Christ. These then are the persons whom the psalmist speaks of as transgressing without cause, and doubtless these have no cloak for their sin. *William Richardson*, 1825.
Verse 3. Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Let shame be sent to the right owner, even to those that deal disloyally, unprovoked on my part. And so it was; for Achitophel hanged himself; Absalom was trussed up by the hand of God, and dispatched by Joab; the people that conspired with him, partly perished by the sword, and partly fled home, much ashamed of their enterprise. Oh, the power of prayer! What may not the saints have for asking? John Trapp.

Verse 4. Shew me thy ways, O Lord, etc. There are the "ways" of men, and the "ways" of God; the "paths" of sin, and the "paths" of righteousness: there are "thy ways," and there are my ways; thine the ways of truth, mine the ways of error; thine which are good in thine eyes, and mine which are good in mine eyes; thine which lead to heaven, mine which lead to hell. Wherefore, Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths, lest I mistake mine own ways for thine; yea, lead me in the truth, and teach me, lest I turn out of thy ways into mine own: shew me thy ways, by the ministry of thy word; teach me thy paths, in the guidance of thy Spirit, "lead me in thy truth," by the assistance of thy grace. Robert Mossom.

Verses 4-5, 9. Do what you know, and God will teach you what to do. Do what you know to be your present duty, and God will acquaint you with your future duty as it comes to be present. Make it your business to avoid known omissions, and God will keep you from feared commissions. This rule is of great moment, and therefore I will charge it upon you by express Scripture. Shew me thy ways, O Lord, i.e., those ways wherein I cannot err. Teach me thy paths, i.e., that narrow path which is too commonly unknown, those commands that are most strict and difficult, Verse 5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, i.e., teach me evidently, that I may not be deceived; so teach me, that I may not only know thy will, but do it. Here's his prayer, but what grounds hath he to expect audience? For thou art the God of my salvation, q.d., thou Lord, wilt save me, and therefore do not refuse to teach me. On thee do I wait all the day, i.e., the whole day, and every day. Other arguments are couched in the following verses, but what answer? Verse 9. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way, i.e., those that submit their neck to his yoke, those that are not conceited that they can guide themselves; in necessary, great and weighty matters they shall not err. Samuel Annesley, D.D. (1620-1696), in "Morning Exercises at Cripplegate."

Verse 5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me. The soul that is unsatiable in prayer, he proceeds, he gets near to God, he gains something, he winds up his heart higher. As a child that seeth the mother have an apple in her hand, and it would fain have it, it will come and pull at the mother's hand for it; now she
lets go one finger, and yet she holds it, and then he pulls again; and then she
lets go another finger, and yet she keeps it, and then the child pulls again, and
will never leave pulling and crying till it hath got it from its mother. So a child
of God, seeing all graces to be in God, he draws near to the throne of grace
begging for it, and by his earnest and faithful prayers he opens the hands of
God to him; God dealing as parents to their children, holds them off for awhile;
not that he is unwilling to give, but to make them more earnest with God; to
draw them the nearer to himself. William Fenner.

Verse 5. On thee do I wait all the day. We must wait all the day. 1. Though it
be a long day, though we be kept waiting a great while, quite beyond our own
reckoning; though when we have waited long, we are still put to wait longer,
and are bid, with the prophet's servant, to go yet seven times 1Ki 18:43, before
we perceive the least sign of mercy coming...2. Though it be a dark day, yet let
us wait upon God all the day. Though while we are kept waiting for what God
will do, we are kept in the dark concerning what he is doing, and what is best
for us to do, yet let us be content to wait in the dark. Though we see not our
signs, though there is none to tell us how long, yet let us resolve to wait, how
long soever it may be; for though what God doth we know not now, yet we
shall know hereafter when the mystery of God shall be finished...3. Though it
be a stormy day, yet we must wait upon God all the day. Though we are not
only becalmed, and do not get forward, but though the wind be contrary, and
drive us back; nay, though it be boisterous, and the church be tossed with
tempests, and ready to sink, yet we must hope the best, yet we must wait, and
weather the storm by patience. It is some comfort that Christ is in the ship; the
church's cause is Christ's own cause, he has espoused it, and he will own it; he
is embarked in the same bottom with his people, and therefore why are you
fearful? ... To wait on God, is—1. To live a life of desire towards God; to wait
on him as the beggar waits on his benefactor, with earnest desire to receive
supplies from him, as the sick and sore at Bethesda's pool waited for the stirring
of the water, and attended in the porches with desire to be helped in and
healed... 2. It is to live a life of delight in God, as the lover waits on his
beloved. Desire is love in motion, as a bird upon the wing; delight is love at
rest, as a bird upon the nest; now, though our desire must still be so towards
God, as that we must be wishing for more of God, yet our delight must be so in
God, as that we must never wish for more than God...3. It is to live of
dependence on God, as the child waits on his father, whom he has confidence
in, and on whom he casts all his care. To wait on God is to expect all good to
come to us from him, as the worker of all good for us and in us, the giver of all
good to us, and the protector of us from all evil. Thus David explains himself
Ps 62:5, "My soul, wait thou only upon God, " and continue still to do so, for
my expectation is from him." ... 4. It is to live a life of devotedness to God, as the servant waits on his master, ready to observe his will, and to do his work, and in everything to consult his honour and interest. To wait on God is entirely and unreservedly to refer ourselves to his wise and holy directions and disposals, and cheerfully to acquiesce in them, and comply with them. The servant that waits on his master, chooseth not his own way, but follows his master step by step. Thus must we wait on God, as those that have no will of our own but what is wholly resolved into his, and must therefore study to accommodate ourselves to his. Condensed from Matthew Henry, on "Communion with God."

Verse 5. On thee do I wait all the day. On thee, whose hand of bounty, whose bosom of love, yea, whose bowels of mercy are not only opened, but enlarged to all humble penitents. On thee do I wait, wait to hear the secret voice of thy Spirit, speaking peace unto my conscience, wait to feel the reviving vigour of thy grace, quickening mine obedience; wait to see the subduing power of the Holy Spirit quelling my rebellious sin; wait to feel the cheering virtue of thy heavenly comforts, refreshing my fainting soul; for all these thy blessings, O thou God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day. "All the day:" being never so satisfied with thy goodness, as not more eagerly to long after thy heavenly fulness; wherefore now refresh my faintings, quench not my desires; but the more freely thou givest, let me the more eagerly covet; the more sweet is thy mercy, let be the more eager my longings, that so my whole life on earth may be a continual breathing after that eternal fellowship and communion with thee in heaven; thus, thus, let me wait, even all my life, all the day. Robert Mossom.

Verse 6. Thy tender mercies. O how does one deep call upon another! The depths of my multiplied miseries, calls, loudly calls, upon the depth of thy manifold mercies; even that mercy whereby thou dost pardon my sin and help mine infirmities; that mercy whereby thou dost sanctify me by thy grace, and comfort me by thy Spirit; that mercy whereby thou dost deliver me from hell, and possess me of heaven. Remember, O Lord, all those thy mercies, thy tender mercies, which have been of old unto thy saints. Robert Mossom.

Verse 6. Thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses...have been ever of old. Let the ancientness of divine love draw up our hearts to a very dear and honourable esteem of it. Pieces of antiquity, though of base metal, and otherwise of little use or value, how venerable are they with learned men! and ancient charters, how careful are men to preserve them; although they contain but temporary privileges, and sometimes but of trivial moment! How then should the great charter of heaven, so much older than the world, be had in
everlasting remembrance, and the thoughts thereof be very precious to us; lying
down, rising up, and all the day long accompanying of us! ...That which is from
everlasting shall be to everlasting; if the root be eternal, so are the branches
...Divine love is an eternal fountain that never leaves running while a vessel is
empty or capable of holding more; and it stands open to all comers: therefore,
come; and if ye have not sufficient of your own, go and borrow vessels, empty
vessels, not a few; "pay your debts out of it, and live on the rest" 2Ki 4:7, to
eternity. Elisha Coles on "God's Sovereignty", 1678.

Verse 7. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions. In the
first place, considering that he had not begun only of late to commit sin, but
that he had for a long time heaped up sin upon sin, he bows himself, if we may
so speak, under the accumulated load; and, in the second place, he intimates,
that if God should deal with him according to the rigour of the law, not only the
sins of yesterday, or of a few days, would come into judgment against him, but
all instances in which he had offended, even from his infancy, might now with
justice be laid to his charge. As often, therefore, as God terrifies us by his
judgments and the tokens of his wrath, let us call to our remembrance, not only
the sins which we have lately committed, but also all the transgressions of our
past life, proving to us the ground of renewed shame and renewed lamentation.
John Calvin.

Verse 7. Remember not the sins of my youth. This may seem but a superfluous
prayer of David; for whereas in charity it may and must be presumed that
David long since had begged pardon for his youthful sins, that upon his
begging God hath granted it, that upon his granting God never revoked it. What
need now had David to prefer this petition for pardon of antiquated sin, time
out of mind committed by him, time out of mind remitted by God? To this
objection I shape a fourfold answer. First, though David no doubt long since
had been truly sorrowful for his youthful sins, yet he was sensible in himself
that if God would be extreme to mark what was done amiss, though he had
repented of those sins, yet he had sinned in that his repentance. Secondly,
though God had forgiven David's sins so far forth as to pardon him eternal
damnation, yet he had not remitted unto him temporal afflictions which
perchance pressing upon him at this present, he prayeth in this Psalm for the
removing or mitigating of them. So then the sense of his words sound thus,
Remember not, Lord, the sins of my youth, that is, Lord, lighten and lessen the
afflictions which lie upon me in this mine old age, justly inflicted on me for my
youthful sins. Thirdly, God's pardon for sins past, is ever granted with this
condition, that the party so pardoned is bound to his good behaviour for the
time to come, which if he breaks, he deserves in the strictness of justice for
forfeit the benefit of his pardon. Now David was guilty afterward in that grand transgression of Bathsheba and Uriah, which might in the extremity of justice have made all his youthful sins to be punished afresh upon him. Lastly, grant David certainly assured of the pardon of his youthful sins, yet God's servants may pray for those blessings they have in possession, not for the obtaining of that they have—that is needless—but for the keeping of what they have obtained, that is necessary. Yea, God is well pleased with such prayers of his saints, and interprets them to be praises unto him, and then these words, *Remember not the sins of my youth,* amount to this effect: blessed be thy gracious goodness, who hast forgiven me the sins of my youth. *Thomas Fuller.*

**Verse 7.** *Remember not the sins of my youth.* David, after he was called by the power of the word, cries out, *"Lord, remember not, " etc., that gravelled and galled his conscience, the *sins* of his *youth* before his call. O beloved, the sins of your youth, though you should be Jobs converted, yet they will bring great disquietness and great horror when you come to age. The lusts of youth, and the vanities of youth, and the sensual pleasures of your youthful days, they will lay a foundation of sorrow when you come to gray hairs to be near your graves. So Job 20:11. *Christopher Love,* 1654.

**Verse 7.** *Remember not the sins of my youth;* let them not move thee to punish or be avenged on me for them; as men, when they remember injuries, seek to be avenged on those who have done them. *William Greenhill.*

**Verse 7.** *Remember not the sins of my youth.* It is not safe to be at odds with the *"Ancient of days."* *John Trapp.*

**Verse 7.** *The sins of my youth.* Before we come to the principal point we must first clear the text from the incumbrance of a double objection. The first is this:—It may seem (some may say) very improbable that David should have any sins of his youth, if we consider the principals whereupon his youth was past. The first was *poverty.* We read that his father Jesse passed for an *old* man, we read not that he passed for a *rich* man; and probably his seven sons were the principal part of his wealth. Secondly, *painfulness.* David, though the youngest, was not made a darling, but a drudge; sent by his father to follow the ewes big with young; where he may seem to have learned innocence and simplicity from the sheep he kept. Thirdly, *piety* Ps 71:5, *"For thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth."
And again in the seventeenth verse of the same Psalm, *"O God, thou hast taught me from my youth:"* David began to be good betimes, *a young saint,* and yet crossed that pestilent proverb, was no *old devil.* And what is more still, he was constantly in the furnace of affliction. Ps 88:15. *"Even from my youth up, thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled*
mind." The question then will be this, How could that water be corrupted which was daily clarified? How could that steel gather rust which was duly filed? How could David's soul in his youth be sooty with sin, which was constantly scoured with suffering? But the answer is easy; for though David for the main were a man after God's own heart (the best transcript of the best copy), yet he, especially in his youth, had his faults and infirmities, yea, his sins and transgressions. Though the Scripture maketh mention of no eminent sin in his youth, the business with Bathsheba being justly to be referred to David's reduced and elder age. I will not conclude that David was of a wanton constitution because of a ruddy complexion. It is as injurious an inference to conclude all bad which are beautiful, as it is a false and flattering consequence to say all are honest who are deformed. Rather we may collect David's youth guilty of wantonness from his having so many wives and concubines. But what go I about to do? Expect not that I should tell you the particular sins, when he could not tell his own. Psalm 19. "Who can tell how oft he offendeth?" Or, how can David's sins be known to me, which he confesseth were unknown to himself, which made him say, "O Lord, cleanse me from secret sins"? But to silence our curiosity, that our conscience may speak:—If David's youth, which was poor, painful, and pious, was guilty of sins, what shall we say, of such whose education hath been wealthy, wanton, and wicked? And I report the rest to be acted with shame, sorrow, and silence in every man's conscience. Thomas Fuller.

Verse 7. The sins of my youth. Two aged disciples, one eighty-seven years old, one day met. "Well," enquired the younger, of his fellow pilgrim, "how long have you been interested in religion?" "Fifty years," was the old man's reply. "Well, have you ever regretted that you began when young to devote yourself to religion?" "Oh no!" said he, and the tears trickled down his furrowed cheeks; "I weep when I think of the sins of my youth; it is this which makes me weep now." From K. Arvine's "Cyclopaedia of Moral and Religious Anecdotes," 1859.

Verse 7. According to THY mercy, not mine; for I have forsaken those mercies thou madest mine own, Jon 2:8 Ps 59:10,17, in being cruel to myself by my sin, through distrust of thy promise, and upon presumption in thy mercy; yea, let it be, for THY goodness' sake, not mine, for in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no manner of thing that is good. Let thy goodness, then, be the motive, thy mercy the rule of all that grace, and of all those blessings you vouchsafe unto my soul. Robert Mossom.

Verse 7. According to thy mercy. Moses was the first that brought up this happy expression, According to thy mercy (I know not where it is used by any
other man), that is, according to the infinite mercy that is in thy heart and nature. David did next use it (Psalm 25), and in the great case of his sin and adultery Ps 51:1, "that he would be merciful to him, according to the multitude of his mercies." And as he needed all the mercies in God, so he confessed the sin of his nature, and hath recourse to the mercies in God's nature. But it is Ps 25:7, I pitch on; there he doth not content himself only with this expression, According to thy mercy, but he adds another phrase, "For thy mercy's sake, "and goodness sake. Muis observes in this coherence, "Good and upright is the Lord" Ps 25:8, that he centres in his nature. Thou hast a merciful nature; deal with me according to that, and for the sake of that, "according to thy mercy, "for thy goodness sake." The mediation of that attribute was the foundation of his faith and prayer herein. When he has done, he refers himself to Moses: Ps 25:11, For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great. He refers to that name proclaimed before Moses. Ex 34:6,7. But you will say, how do these expressions, "for thy name's sake, "for thy goodness sake, "for thy mercy's sake, "imply the same as "for himself, "for his own sake"? how do they involve the Godhead? Look to Isa 43:25, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, "that is, for myself. Isa 48:11. "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it." You have it twice in one verse; and that which is "for mercy's sake" in one place, is "for mine own sake" in another, "and behold it is I, I am he, as I am God, who doth it. What is this, but Jehovah, Jehovah, God merciful"? Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 8. Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. As election is the effect of God's sovereignty, our pardon the fruit of his mercy, our knowledge a stream from his wisdom, our strength an impression of his power; so our purity is a beam from his holiness. As the rectitude of the creature at the first creation was the effect of his holiness, so the purity of the creature by a new creation, is a draught of the same perfection. He is called the Holy One of Israel more in Isaiah, that evangelical prophet, in erecting Zion, and forming a people for himself, than in the whole Scripture besides. Stephen Charnock.

Verse 8. Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. Will not the Lord, who is good, be as gracious to his enemies as he requires us to be to ours? It is his own law, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again." Ex 23:4. Now God meets us sinners, and all sinners as such are his enemies; he meets us straying like the beast without understanding; and what? will he not bring us again unto himself, the sole proprietary, by that first right of creation, and that more firm right of redemption? Robert Mossom.
Verse 9. The meek will he guide in judgment; or the poor (namely, in spirit), will he make to tread in judgment, to foot it aright, to walk judiciously, to behave themselves wisely, as David did 1Sa 24:1-22, so that Saul feared him. Natural conscience cannot but stoop to the image of God, shining in the hearts and lives of the really religious. John Trapp.

Verse 9. The meek will he guide in judgment. They have been made meek i.e., desirous of being taught, and praying to be so; but, being now sensible of unworthiness, they are afraid that God will not teach them. This may be done to other sinners but not to them. Therefore they are told who may expect teaching, even they who desire and pray for teaching. John Berridge, 1716-1793.

Verse 9. He will guide the poor in judgment. Never will this docility be found in any man, until the heart, which is naturally elated and filled with pride, has been humbled and subdued. As the Hebrew word denotes the poor or afflicted, and is employed in a metaphorical sense, to denote the meek and humble, it is probable that David, under this term, includes the afflictions which serve to restrain and subdue the frowardness of the flesh, as well as the grace of humility itself; as if he had said, When God has first humbled them, then he kindly stretches forth his hand to them, and leads and guides them throughout the whole course of their life. John Calvin.

Verse 9. The meek, etc. Pride and anger have no place in the school of Christ. The Master himself is "meek and lowly of heart; " much more, surely, ought the scholars to be so. He who hath no sense of his ignorance, can have no desire, or capability of knowledge, human or divine. George Horne.

Verse 9 (last clause). The Lord will teach the humble his secrets, he will not teach proud scholars. Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 9 (last clause). Such as lie at his feet and say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth, "such whose hearts are supple and soluble, tractable, and teachable, so that a little child may lead them. Isa 11:6. Austin was such an one. Saith he, "I am here an old man ready to learn of a young man, my coadjutor in the ministry, who hath scarce been one year in the service." John Trapp.

Verse 10. All the paths of the Lord, (twxra) orchoth signifies the tracks or ruts made by the wheels of wagons by often passing over the same ground. Mercy and truth are the paths in which God constantly walks in reference to the children of men; and so frequently does he show them mercy, and so frequently does he fulfil his truth, that his paths are easily discerned. How frequent, how deeply indented, and how multiplied are those tracks to every family and
individual! Wherever we go, we see that God's mercy and truth have been there by the deep tracks they have left behind them. But he is more abundantly merciful to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies; i.e., those who are conformed, not only to the letter, but to the spirit of his pure religion. Adam Clarke.

**Verse 10.** *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.* As his nature is love and truth, so all his ways are mercy and truth. They are "mercy" in respect if aiming at out good, and "truth" in respect of fulfilling his promises and faithful carriage to us; therefore, whatsoever befalls thee, though it be clean contrary to thy expectation, interpret it in love. Many actions of men are such as a good interpretation cannot be put upon them, nor a good construction made of them; therefore interpreters restrain those sayings of love, that it believes all, etc.; that is, credibilia, all things believable, otherwise to put all upon charity, will eat out charity. But none of God's ways are such, but love and faith may pick a good meaning out of these. A bono Deo nil nisi bonum, from a good God there comes nothing but what is good; and therefore says Job, "Though he kill me, I will trust in him." Endeavour to spy out some end of his for good at the present, and if none ariseth to thy conjecture, resolve it into faith, and make the best of it. Thomas Goodwin.

**Verse 10.** "Unto such as keep, "etc.: he is never out of the road of mercy unto them. Thomas Goodwin.

**Verse 11.** *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.* I cannot do better than quote one of those beautiful passages of the great Vieyra, which gave him the character of the first preacher of his age:—"I confess, my God, that it is so; that we are all sinners in the highest degree." He is preaching on a fast on occasion of the threatened destruction of the Portuguese dominion in Brazil by the Dutch. But so far am I from considering this any reason why I should cease from my petition, that I behold in it a new and convincing argument which may influence thy goodness. All that I have said before is based on no other foundation than the glory and honour of thy most holy Name. Propter nomen tuum. And what motive can I offer more glorious to that same Name, than that our sins are many and great? *For thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.* I ask thee, saith David, to pardon, not everyday sins, but numerous sins, but great sins: multum est enim. O motive worthy of the breast of God! Oh, consequence which can have force only when it bears on supreme goodness! So that in order to obtain remission of his sins, the sinner alleges to God that they are many and great. Verily so; and that not for love of the sinner nor for the love of sin, but for the love of the honour and glory of God; which glory, by how much the sins he forgives are greater and
more numerous, by so much the more ennobles and exalts itself. The same David distinguishes in the mercy of God greatness and multitude: greatness, *secundum magnam misericordiam tuam*; multitude, *et secundum multititudinem miserationum tuarum*. And as the greatness of the divine mercy is immense, and the multitude of his lovingkindnesses infinite; and forasmuch as the immense cannot be measured, nor the infinite counted, in order that the one and the other may in a certain manner have a proportionate material of glory, it is necessary to the very greatness of mercy that the sins to be pardoned should be great, and necessary to the very multitude of lovingkindnesses that they should be many. *Multum est enim.* Reason have I then, O Lord, not to be dismayed because our sins are many and great. Reason have I also to demand the reason from thee, why thou dost not make haste to pardon them?—*Vieyra, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

**Verse 11. For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity.** It is a very usual notion by "name" to understand honour and glory. When God saith to David, "I have made thee a name like the name of men that are in the earth; "when the church saith to God, "Thou didst get thee a name as it is this day; "it is manifest that by name glory is intended. Suitable to this it is that famous men are called by the Hebrews, (Mvhyvna) Ge 6:4, and by the Latins, *viri nominum*, men of name, in which the poet adorneth it with these epithets—*Magnum et memorabile nomen*, or, great and memorable. Thus, when God forgiveth sin, he doth it for his name's sake, that is, for his own honour and glory. Indeed, God's own glory is the ultimate end of all his actions. As he is the first, so is he the last, the efficient, and the final cause; nor is there anything done by him which is not for him. The end of our actions must be in his glory, because both our being and working are from him; but the end of his work is his own glory, because his being and acting are of and from himself. Among all divine works, there is none which more setteth forth his glory than this of remission. Sin, by committing it, brings God a great deal of dishonour, and yet, by forgiving it, God raiseth to himself a great deal of honour. "It is the glory of a man, "and much more of God, "to pass by an offence; "as acts of power, so acts of grace, are exceeding honourable. The attributes of God's grace, mercy, goodness, clemency, shine forth in nothing so much as in pardoning sins. Paul speaks of riches of goodness which attend God's forbearance; how much greater riches must there needs be in forgiveness? Nay, indeed, God hath so ordered the way of pardon, that not only the glory of his mercy, but justice, yea, of his wisdom in the wonderful contemplation of both these, is very illustrious. *Nomen quasi notamen, quia notificat*, the name is that which maketh one known; and by remission of sins, God maketh known his choice and glorious attributes; and for this end it is that he vouchsafes it. It is a consideration that may be our
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consolation. Since God forgiveth sins for his name's sake, he will be ready to
forgive many sins as well as few, great as small; indeed, the more and greater
our sins are, the greater is the forgiveness, and, consequently, the greater is
God's glory; and therefore David, upon this consideration of God's name and
glory, maketh the greatness of his iniquity a motive of forgiveness. Indeed, to
run into gross sins, that God may glorify himself by forgiving them, is an
odious presumption, but to hope that those gross sins we have run into may,
and will, be forgiven by God to us, being truly penitent, for his name's sake, is
a well grounded expectation, and such as may support our spirits against the
strongest temptations to despair. Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 11. Pardon mine iniquity; for it is great. He pleads the greatness of his
sin, and not the smallness of it: he enforces his prayer with this consideration,
that his sins are very heinous. But how could he make this a plea for pardon? I
answer, Because the greater his iniquity was, the more need he had of pardon.
It is as much as if he had said, Pardon mine iniquity, for it is so great that I
cannot bear the punishment; my sin is so great that I am in necessity of pardon;
my case will be exceedingly miserable, unless thou be pleased to pardon me.
He makes use of the greatness of his sin, to enforce his plea for pardon, as a
man would make use of the greatness of calamity in begging for relief. When a
beggar begs for bread, he will plead the greatness of his poverty and necessity.
When a man in distress cries for pity, what more suitable plea can be urged
than the extremity of his case? And God allows such a plea as this: for he is
moved to mercy towards us by nothing in us, but the miserableness of our case.
He doth not pity sinners because they are worthy, but because they need his
pity...Herein doth the glory of grace by the redemption of Christ much consist;
namely, in its sufficiency for the pardon of the greatest sinners. The whole
contrivance of the way of salvation is for this end, to glorify the free grace of
God. God had it on his heart from all eternity to glorify this attribute; and
therefore it is, that the device of saving sinners by Christ was conceived. The
greatness of divine grace appears very much in this, that God by Christ saves
the greatest offenders. The greater the guilt of any sinner is, the more glorious
and wonderful is the grace manifested in his pardon. Ro 5:20: "Where sin
abounded, grace did much more abound." The apostle, when telling how great a
sinner he had been, takes notice of the abounding of grace in his pardon, of
which his great guilt was the occasion. 1Ti 1:13-14. "Who was before a
blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I
did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant
with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." The Redeemer is glorified, in that
he proves sufficient to redeem those who are exceeding sinful, in that his blood
proves sufficient to wash away the greatest guilt, in that he is able to save men
to the uttermost, and in that he redeems even from the greatest misery. It is the honour of Christ to save the greatest sinners, when they come to him, as it is the honour of a physician that he cures the most desperate diseases or wounds. Therefore, no doubt, Christ will be willing to save the greatest sinners, if they come to him; for he will not be backward to glorify himself, and to commend the value and virtue of his own blood. Seeing he hath so laid out himself to redeem sinners, he will not be unwilling to show he is able to redeem to the uttermost. Jonathan Edwards.

Verse 11. Pardon mine iniquity; for it is great. Is any man miserable are his miseries great, are they spiritual, are they temporal? Undoubtedly, if he be humbled in the sense of them, and see himself unworthy of any mercy, he may still be assured of mercy. Though there be spiritual evils, yet if a man see himself wretched, and miserable, the more heavy he finds his iniquity to be, the more hope of mercy there is for him: the Lord's mercy is over all his works, therefore is he much more merciful to such. If a man hath a feeling of his miseries and unworthiness, then he may use this argument for mercy, my miseries are great: even as David did, "O Lord, be merciful to me, and pardon my iniquity, for it is great." And the more miserable man are under their own sense, the fitter objects they are for God to show mercy unto. Thus is was with the publican, and so with the prodigal; therefore never doubt, though thy iniquities be never so great, there is a sea of mercy in God. Bernard well observes the difference between justice and mercy; justice requires that there should be desert, but mercy looks upon them that are miserable; and, saith the father, true mercy doth affect misery; mercy doth not stand upon inquisition, but it is glad to find occasion of exercising itself. Richard Stock.

Verse 11. Mine iniquity...is great. Such who come to God to have their sins pardoned, they look upon them as great sins. Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great. The original word as well signifies many as great—"My sins are great and many," many great sins lie upon me, pardon, oh! pardon them, O Lord, etc... In the opening of this point, I would show why such as come in a right way for pardon do look upon their sins as great sins. 1. Sinners that come to God for pardon and find it, do look upon their sins as great sins, because against a great God, great in power, great in justice, great in holiness. I am a worm, and yet sin, and that boldly against a God so great; for a worm to lift up himself against a great and infinite God; oh! this makes every little sin great, and calls for great vengeance from so great a God. 2. Because they have sinned against great patience, despising the goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering of God, which is called, "treasuring up wrath." Ro 2:4-5 ...3. Sins do appear great because against great mercies. Oh! against how many mercies and
kindnesses do sinners sin, and turn all the mercies of God into sin! ... 4. That which increases sin in the eyes of poor sinners that cry for pardon, is, that they have sinned against great light—light in the conscience; this heightens sin exceedingly, especially to such are are under gospel means; and is indeed the sin of all in this nation; there's nothing more abases a soul than this, nothing makes it more difficult to believe pardon, when humbled for it...5. Continuance in sin much increases sin to a poor soul that is after pardon; especially such as are not very early converted. Ps 68:21. Oh! I added sin unto sin, saith a poor soul, spending the choice time of my youth in sin, when I might have been getting the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and honouring of God. This lay close upon David's spirit as appears from the seventh verse: "Oh! remember not the sins of my youth." Yet we do not find that David's youth was notoriously sinful; but inasmuch as he spent not his youth to get knowledge, and to serve the Lord fully, it was his burden and complaint before the Lord; much more such whose youth was spent in nothing but vanity, profaneness, lying, swearing, profaning of the Sabbath, sports, pastimes, excess of riot, and the like, when God lays it in upon their consciences, must be grievous and abominable to their souls...6. Multitudes of sins do make sin appear great; this made David cry out for "multitudes of mercies." Ps 51:1-19 40:12 ...7. Another thing that increases sin is, that it was against purpose and resolutions of forsaking such and such sins; and yet all broken, sometimes against solemn vows, against prayers...8. Sin appears great when seen by a poor soul, because it was reigning sin. Ro 5:6. "Sin reigned unto death," etc. Oh! saith a poor humbled sinner, I did not only commit sin, but I was the servant and slave of sin...9. Sin in the fountain makes it great. As it may be said, there is more water in the fountain than in the pools and streams it makes...So in the nature, in the heart, is there, as in the fountain, and therefore 'tis more there than in the breakings forth of it in the outward man...10. A sinner drawing nigh to God for pardon sees his sin as great, because thereby he was led captive by the devil at his will...11. Sin appears great because great is the wrath of God against sin. Ro 2:12. The way of any sinner's deliverance from such wrath shows sin to be exceeding great in the price and ransom that is paid for the salvation of him from his sins—the price of the blood of the eternal Son of God... 13. Lastly, this consideration also increases sin, inasmuch as a poor creature hath drawn and tempted others to sin with him, especially such as have lived more vainly and loosely, and it lies hard upon many a poor soul after thorough conviction. Anthony Palmer (—1678), in "The Gospel New Creature."

**Verse 11.** I plead not, Lord, my merits, who am less than the least of thy mercies; and as I look not upon my merit, so nor do thou look upon my demerit; as I do not view my worthiness, so nor do thou view my unworthiness;
but thou who art called the God of mercy be unto me what thou art called; make good the glory of thine own name in being merciful unto my sin, of which I cannot say as Lot of Zoar, "Is it not a little one?" No, it is great, for that it is against thee so great a God and so good to me: great, for that my place, my calling, my office is great. The sun the higher it is, the less it seems; but my sins, the higher I am the greater they are, even in thine and other's eyes. Robert Mossom.

**Verse 11.** Plead we the greatness of our sins not to keep us from mercy, but to prevail for it: Pardon mine iniquity; why so? for it is great. "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee, "Ps 41:4. "Do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee." Jer 14:7. This is a strong plea, when sincerely urged by an humble and contrite spirit. It glorifieth God as one that is abundant in goodness, rich in mercy, and one with whom are forgivensesses and plenteous redemption; and it honoureth Christ as infinite in mercy. Hence also the Lord himself, when he would stir up himself to choice acts of mercy to his poor people, he first aggravates their sin against him to the highest, and then he expresses his royal act of grace to them. So Isa 43:22-25. "Thou hast not called upon me O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel; thou hast not honoured me with thy sacrifices, but thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Thomas Cobbet, 1608-1686.

**Verse 11.** "Oh, "says Pharaoh, "take away these filthy frogs, this dreadful thunder!" But what says holy David? "Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant!" The one would be freed from punishment, the effect of sin; the other from sin, the cause of punishment. And it is most true that a true Christian man is more troubled at sin than at frogs and thunder; he sees more filthiness in sin than in frogs and toads, more horror than in thunder and lightning. *Jeremiah Dyke's* "Worthy Communicant, "1645.

**Verse 11.** Pharaoh more lamented the hard strokes that were upon him, than the hard heart which was within him. Esau mourned not because he sold the birthright, which was his sin, but because he lost the blessing, which was his punishment. This is like weeping with an onion; the eye sheds tears because it smarts. A mariner casts overboard that cargo in a tempest, which he courts the return of when the winds are silenced. Many complain more of the sorrows to which they are born, than of the sins with which they were born; they tremble more at the vengeance of sin, than at the venom of sin; one delights them, the other scares them. William Secker.
Verse 12. What man is he that feareth the Lord? Blessed shall he be—1. In the sacred knowledge of Christ's will; Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. 2. Blessed shall he be in the quiet peace of a good conscience; "His soul shall dwell at ease." 3. Blessed he shall be in the present comfort of a hopeful progeny; "His seed shall inherit the earth." Robert Mossom.

Verse 12. What man is he that feareth the Lord? There is nothing so effectual to obtain grace, to retain grace, as always to be found before God not over wise, but to fear: happy art thou, if thy heart be replenished with three fears; a fear for received grace, a greater fear for lost grace, a greatest fear to recover grace. Bernard.

Verse 12. He that feareth the Lord. Present fear begetteth eternal security: fear God, which is above all, and no need to fear man at all. Augustine.

Verse 12. Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose, i.e., that the good man shall pitch upon. God will direct him in all dealings to make a good choice, and will give good success. This is not in a man's own power to do. Jer 10:23. John Trapp.

Verse 13. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. The holy fear of God shall destroy all sinful fears of men, even as Moses' serpent devoured all those serpents of the magicians. The fear of God hath this good effect, that it makes other things not to be feared; so that the soul of him that feareth the Lord doth dwell, as in rest, so in goodness; as in peace, so in patience, till this moment of time be swallowed up in the fulness of eternity, and he change his earthly dwelling for an heavenly mansion, and his spiritual peace for an everlasting blessedness. Robert Mossom.

Verse 13. His soul shall dwell at ease. Shall tarry in good things, as it is in the Vulgate. Unlike the soul of Adam, who, being put into possession of the delights of paradise, tarried there but a few days or hours. Gerhohus, quoted by J. M. Neale.

Verse 13. His soul shall dwell at ease. He expresses with great sweetness spiritual delectation, when he says, "His soul shall tarry in good things." For whatever is carnally sweet yields without doubt a delectation for the time to such as enjoy it, but cannot tarry long with them; because, while by its taste it provokes appetite, by its transit it cheats desire. But spiritual delights, which neither pass away as they are tasted, nor decrease while they refresh, nor cloy while they satiate, can tarry for ever with their possessors. Hugo Victorinus (1130), quoted by J. M. Neale.
Verse 13 (first clause). In the reception of the gifts of God, they do not devour them without feeling a sense of their sweetness, but really relish them, so that the smallest competency is of more avail to satisfy them that the greatest abundance is to satisfy the ungodly. Thus, according as every man is contented with his condition, and cheerfully cherishes a spirit of patience and tranquillity, his soul is said to dwell in good. John Calvin.

Verse 13. "The earth, "or the land, to wit Canaan; which was promised and given, as an earnest of the whole covenant of grace, and all its promises, and therefore it is synecdochically put for all of them. The sense is, his seed shall be blessed. Matthew Poole.

Verse 14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, etc. It is the righteous that is God's friend, it is to him that God is joined in a loving familiarity, it is to him that God revealeth his secret, telling him what misery and torments he hath reserved for them who by wickedness flourish in this world. And indeed the Lord doth not more hate the wicked than he loves the godly: if he keeps far from the froward, as being an abomination unto him, his very secret shall be with the righteous, as with his dearest friend. It is an honour to him to whom a secret is committed by another, a greater honour to him to whom the king shall commit his own secret; but how is he honoured to whom God committed his secret? for where the secret of God is, there is his heart and there is himself. Thus was his secret with St. John, of whom St. Bernard saith, by occasion of the beginning of his gospel, "Doth he not seem unto thee to have dived into the bowels of the divine Word, and from the secrets of his breast, to have drawn a sacred pith of concealed wisdom?" Thus was his secret with St. Paul, who saith, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew." 1Co 2:7-8. St. Gregory reads, for the secret of God, as the Vulgar Latin doth, sermocinatio Dei, the communication of God is with the righteous; but then addeth, Dei sermocinari est per illustrationem suae praesentiae humanis mentibus arcana revelare, God's communication is, by the illustration of his presence, to reveal secrets to the minds of men. But to consider the words somewhat more generally. There is no less a secret of godliness, than there is of any other trade or profession. Many profess am art or a trade, but thrive not by it, because they have not the secret and mystery of it; and many profess godliness, but are little the better for it, because they have not the true secret of it: he hath that, with whom God is in secret in his heart; and he that is righteous in secret, where no man sees him, he is the righteous man with whom the secret of the Lord is. Michael Jermin, D.D., 1591-1659.
Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, etc. There is a vital sense in which "the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God; "and in which all the realities of Christian experience are utterly hid from his perceptions. To speak to him of communion with God, of the sense of pardon, of the lively expectation of heaven, of the witness of the Holy Ghost, of the struggles of the spiritual life, would be like reasoning with a blind man about colours, or with one deaf about musical harmony. *John Morison.*

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, etc. Albeit the Lord's covenant with the visible church be open, and plain in itself to all men in all the articles thereof, yet it is a mystery to know the inward sweet fellowship which a soul may have with God by virtue of this covenant; and a man fearing God shall know this mystery, when such as are covenanters only in the letter do remain ignorant thereof; for to the fearers of God only is this promise made—that to them the Lord will show his covenant. *David Dickson.*

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* The gospel, though published to all the world, yet it is entitled a mystery, and a mystery hid, for none know it but the saints, who are taught of God, and are his scholars. Joh 6:45. That place shows that there must be a secret teaching by God, and a secret learning. "If they have heard, and been taught of God." Now God teacheth none but saints, for all that are so taught come unto him: "Every one who hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Aye, but you will say, Do not many carnal men know the gospel, and discourse of things in it, through strength of learning, etc? I answer out of the text Col 1:26-27, that though they may know the things which the gospel reveals, yet not the riches and glory of them, that same rich knowledge spoken of in the word, they want, and therefore know them not; as a child and a jeweller looking upon a pearl, both look upon it, and call it by the same name; but the child yet knows it not as a pearl in the worth and riches of it as the jeweller doth, and therefore cannot be said to know it. Now in Mt 13:45, a Christian only is likened to a merchantman, that finds a pearl of great price, that is, discovered to be so, and sells all he hath for it, for he knows the worth of it. But you will say, Do not carnal men know the worth of the things in the gospel, and can they not discourse of the rich grace of Christ, and of his worth? I answer, yes, as a man who hath gotten an inventory by heart, and the prices also, and so may know it; yet never was he led into the exchequer and treasury, to see all the jewels themselves, the wardrobe of grace, and Christ's righteousness, to see the glory of them; for these are all "spiritually discerned," as the apostle says expressly, 1Co 2:14. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* The truth and sincerity of God to his people appears in the openness and plainness of his heart.
to them. A friend that is close and reserved, deservedly comes under a cloud in
the thoughts of his friends; but he who carries, as it were, a window of crystal
in his breast, through which his friend may read what thoughts are writ in his
very heart, delivers himself from the least suspicion of unfaithfulness. Truly,
thus open hearted is God to his saints: "The secret of the Lord is with them that
fear him." He gives us his key, that will let us into his very heart, and acquaint
us what his thoughts are, yea, were, towards us, before a stone was laid in the
world's foundation; and this is no other than his Spirit 1Co 2:10-11, "One who
knows the deep things of God; "for he was at the council table in heaven, where
all was transacted. This, his Spirit, he employed to put forth and publish in the
Scriptures, indited by him, the substance of those counsels of love which had
passed between the Trinity of Persons for our salvation; and that nothing may
be wanting for our satisfaction, he hath appointed the same Holy Spirit to abide
in his saints, that as Christ in heaven presents our desires to him, so he may
interpret his mind out of his word to us; which word answers the heart of God,
as face answers face in the glass. William Gurnall.

Verse 14. The secret of the Lord. This "secret" is called a secret three ways. 1. 
Secret to the eye of sole nature, and thus it is not meant; for so the grace of
Christ is a secret only to heathens and such as are blind as they, for common
Christians know it—the rind of it. 2. Secret to the eye of taught nature, nor thus
is it meant; for so the grace of Christ is a secret only to the ignorant sort of
Christians; many carnal gospellers that sit under a good ministry know it and
the bark of it. 3. Secret to the eye of enlightened nature, and thus it is meant; for
so the grace of Christ is a secret to all unsanctified professors, whether learned
or unlearned, namely, the pith of it; for though great doctors and profound
clerks, and deep studied divines unconverted, know the doctrine of grace, and
the truth of grace; though they can dispute of grace and talk of the glory of
grace, yea, and taste a little the good word of grace, yea, and understand it
generally, it may be as well as St. Paul and St. Peter, as Judas did, yet the
special and the spiritual knowledge thereof, for all their dogmatical
illumination, is a secret unto them. William Fenner.

Verse 14. The secret. Arminius and his company ransack all God's secrets,
divulge and communicate them to the seed of the woman, and of the serpent all
alike; they make God's eternal love of election no secret, but a vulgar idea; they
make the mystery of Christ, and him crucified, no secret, but like an
apothecary's drug, catholical; they make the especial grace of God no secret,
but a common quality; faith no secret, but a general virtue; repentance and the
new creature no secret, but an universal gift; no secret favour to St. Peter, but
make God a party ante, not to love St. Peter more than Judas; no secret intent to
any one person more than another; but that Christ might have died for all him, and never a man saved; no secret working of the Lord in any more than other; but for anything that either God the Father hath done by creating, God the Son by redeeming, or God the Holy Ghost by sanctifying, all the world were left to their scrambling—take it if you will, if you will not, refuse. They say God would have men to be saved, but that he will not work it for his own part, rather for this man or that man determinatively that he be saved. William Fenner.

Verse 14. He will shew them his covenant, or and he will make them to know (for the infinitive is here thought to be put for the future tense of the indicative, as it is in Ec 3:14-15,18 Ho 9:13 12:3, his covenant, i.e., )he will make them clearly understand it, both its duties or conditions, and its blessings or privileges; neither of which ungodly men rightly understand. Or, he will make them to know it by experience, or by God's making it good to them; as, on the contrary, God threatens to make ungodly men to know his breach of promise. Nu 14:34. Or, as it is in the margins of our Bibles, and his covenant, (is i.e., he hath engaged himself by his promise or covenant) to make them know it, to wit, his secret, i.e., that he will manifest either his word or his favour to them. Matthew Poole.

Verse 14. It is neither learning nor labour than can give insight into God's secrets, those Arcana imperii, "The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Mt 13:11. "The mind of Christ." 1Co 2:16. These things come by revelation rather than by discourse of reason, and must therefore be obtained by prayer. Those that diligently seek him shall be of his Cabinet Council, shall know his soul secrets, and be admitted into a gracious familiarity and friendship. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Joh 15:15. John Trapp.

Verse 14. Walking with God is the best way to know the mind of God; friends who walk together impart their secrets one to another: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Noah walked with God, and the Lord revealed a great secret to him, of destroying the old world, and having him in the ark. Abraham walked with God, and God made him one of his privy council: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" Ge 24:40 18:17. God doth sometimes sweetly unbosom himself to the soul in prayer, and in the holy supper, as Christ made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread. Lu 24:35. Thomas Watson.

Verse 15. Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord. Though we cannot see him by reason of our present distance and darkness, yet we must look towards him,
towards the place where his honour dwells, as those that desire the knowledge of him and his will, and direct all to his honour as the mark we aim at, labouring in this, that "whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." Matthew Henry.

Verse 15. Mine eyes. As the sense of sight is very quick, and exercises an entire influence over the whole frame, it is no uncommon thing to find all the affections denoted by the term "eyes." John Calvin.

Verse 15. He shall pluck my feet out of the net. An unfortunate dove, whose feet are taken in the snare of the fowler, is a fine emblem of the soul, entangled in the cares or pleasures of the world; from which she desires, through the power of grace, to fly away, and to be at rest, with her glorified Redeemer. George Horne.

Verse 17. The troubles of my heart are enlarged. Let no good man be surprised that his affliction is great, and to him of an unaccountable character. It has always been so with God's people. The road to heaven is soaked with the tears and blood of the saints. William S. Plumer.

Verse 17. O bring thou me out of my distresses. We may not complain of God, but we may complain to God. With submission to his holy will we may earnestly cry for help and deliverance. William S. Plumer.

Verse 17. Special seasons of trouble and special resort to prayer for special deliverance.

Verse 18. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. We may observe here, that sickness and weakness of the body come from sin, and is a fruit of sin. Some are weak, and some are sick, "for this cause." I shall not need to be long in the proof of that, which you have whole chapters for, as De 28:27, seq; and many Psalms, 107, and others. It is for the sickness of the soul that God visits with the sickness of the body. He aims at the cure of the soul in the touch of the body. And therefore in this case, when God visits us in this kind, we should think our work is more in heaven with God than with men or physic. Begin first with the soul. So David Ps 32:5, till he dealt roundly with God, without all kind of guile, and confessed his sins, he roared; his moisture was turned into the drought of summer. But when he dealt directly and plainly with God, and confessed his sins, then God forgave him them, and healed his body too. And therefore the best method, when God visits us in this kind, is to think that we are to deal with God. Begin the cure there with the soul. When he
visits the body, it is for the soul's sake: "Many are weak and sickly among you." Richard Sibbes.

**Verse 18.** *Look upon mine affliction and my pain.* In sickness of body trust to Jesus, he is as powerful and as willing to help us now as he was to help others in the days of his flesh. All things are possible to us if we believe. It is but a word from him to rebuke all storms and tempests whatsoever. Let us not do like Asa, trust only in the physician, or in subordinate means, but know that all physic is but dead means without him. 2Ch 16:12. Therefore, with the means, run to Christ, that he may work with them, and know that virtue and strength comes form him to bless or curse all sorts of means. Richard Sibbes.

**Verse 19.** *Consider mine enemies,* etc. Or *look* upon them; but with another kind of look; so as he looked through the pillar of fire upon the Egyptians, and troubled them Ex 14:24, with a look of wrath and vengeance. The arguments he uses are taken both from the quantity and quality of his enemies, their number and their nature, *For they are many;* the hearts of the people of Israel, in general, being after Absalom 2Sa 15:12-13; and so the spiritual enemies of the Lord's people are many; their sins and corruptions, Satan, and his principalities and powers, and the men of this world. *And they hate me with cruel hatred;* like that of Simeon and Levi Ge 44:7; their hatred broke out in a cruel manner, in acts of force and cruelty; and it was the more cruel, inasmuch as it was without cause; and such is the hatred of Satan and his emissaries against the followers of Christ; who breathe out cruelty, thirst after their blood, and make themselves drunk with it; even their tender mercies are cruel, and much more their hatred. John Gill.

**Verse 19.** *Consider mine enemies.* God needeth not hound out many creatures to punish man, he doeth that on himself. There is no kind of creature so hurtful to itself as he. Some hurt other kinds and spare their own, but mankind in all sorts of injuries destroyeth itself. Man to man is more crafty than a fox, more cruel than the tiger, and more fierce than a lion, and in a word, if he be left to himself man unto man is a devil. William Struther's "Christian Observations," 1629.

**Verses 19-20.**—*Consider mine enemies...O keep my soul and deliver me.* We may say of original concupiscence, strengthened and heightened by customary transgressions, its name is legion, for it is many. Hydra like, it is a body with many heads; and when we cut off one head, one enormous impiety, there presently sprouts up another of like monstrous nature, like venomous guilt. From the womb then it is of original sin and sinful custom, as from the belly of the Trojan horse, there does issue forth a whole army of unclean lusts, to
surround the soul in all its faculties, and the body too in all its members. Robert Mossom.

Verses 19-20.—Consider mine enemies...O keep my soul and deliver me. See Psalms on "Ps 25:19" for further information.

Verse 20. Let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. When David reaches verse 20, we are reminded of Coriolanus betaking himself to the hall of Attius Tullus, and sitting as a helpless stranger there, claiming the king's hospitality, though aware of his having deserved to die at his hands. The psalmist throws himself on the compassion of an injured God with similar feelings; "I trust in thee!" Andrew A. Bonar.

Verse 21. "For I trust in, or wait on thee." As preservation is a continued creation, so is waiting a continued trusting; for, what trust believes by faith, it waits for by hope; and thus is trust a compound of both. Robert Mossom.

Verse 22. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. If thou wilt not pity and help me, yet spare thy people, who suffer for my sake, and in my sufferings. Matthew Poole.

Verse 22. Redeem Israel, etc. In vita vel post mortem meam, (Rabbi David), either whiles I live, or after my death. This is every good man's care and prayer. None is in case to pray for the church, that hath not first made his own peace with God. John Trapp.

Verse 22. This most beautiful of "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" closes with a sweet petition—such an one, as every one of the true Israel of God would wish to depart with on his lips. " Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles." It breathes the same holy aspiration as the aged Simeon's "Lord! now lettest thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Barton Bouchier.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Heavenly machinery for uplifting an earthbound soul.

Verse 1. Genuine devotion described and commended.
Verse 2. The soul at anchor, and the two rocks from which it would be delivered.

Verse 3. Shame out of place and in place.

Verse 4. Practical divinity the best study; God the best teacher; Prayer the mode of entrance into the school.

Verses 4-5. Shew. Teach. Lead. Three classes in the school of grace.

Verses 4-5. Shew. Teach. Lead. Three classes in the school of grace.

Verse 5. 1. Sanctification desired.
2. Knowledge sought.
3. Assurance enjoyed.
4. Patience exercised.

Verse 5. Thou art the God of my salvation. A rich and overflowing text.

Verse 5 (last clause). How to spend the day with God. Matthew Henry.

Verse 6. The antiquity of mercy.

Verses 6-7. The Three Remembers.


Verse 7. Oblivion desired and remembrance entreated. Note "my", and "thy."


Verse 9. The meek. Who are they? What are their privileges? How to be like them?

Verse 9 (first clause). Moral purity needful to a well balanced judgment.

Verse 10. God's mercy and faithfulness in providence, and the persons who may derive comfort therefrom.

Verse 11. A model prayer. Confession, argument, entreaty, etc.
Verse 11. Great guilt no obstacle to the pardon of the returning sinner.  
*Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 12. Holiness the best security for a well ordered life. Free will at school, questioned and instructed.

Verse 13. A man at ease for time and eternity.

Verse 14. 1. A secret, and who know it.  
2. A wonder, and who see it.

Verse 15. 1. What we are like. A silly bird.  
2. What is our danger? "Net."  
3. Who is our friend? "The Lord."  
4. What is our wisdom? "Mine eyes," etc.

Verse 16. A desolate soul seeking heavenly company, and an afflicted spirit crying for divine mercy. Our God the balm of all our wounds.

Verses 16-18. David is a petitioner as well as a sufferer; and those sorrows will never injure us that bring us near to God. Three things he prays for:—1. *Deliverance.* This we are called to desire, consistently with resignation to the divine will.

2. *Notice.* A kind look from God is desirable at any time in any circumstances; but in affliction and pain, it is like life from the dead.


Verse 18. Two things are here taught us:—1. That a kind look from God is very desirable in affliction: (a) It is a look of special observation; (b) It is a look of tender compassion; (c) It is a look of support and assistance (with God, power and compassion go together).

2. The sweetest cordial under trouble would be an assurance of divine forgiveness: (a) Because trouble is very apt to bring our sins to remembrance; (b) Because a sense of pardon will in great measure remove all distressing fears of death and judgment.
Improvement 1. Let us adore the goodness of God, that one so great and glorious should bestow a favourable look upon any of our sinful race.

2. Let the benefit we have received from the Lord's looking upon us in former afflictions, engage us to pray, and encourage us to hope, that he will now look upon us again.

3. If a kind look from God be so comfortable, what must heaven be! Samuel Lavington.

Verse 18. 1. It is well when our sorrows remind us of our sins.

2. When we are as earnest to be forgiven as to be delivered.

3. When we bring both to the right place in prayer.

4. When we are submissive about our sorrows—"Look, "etc.—but very explicit about our sins—"forgive," etc.

Verse 19. The spiritual enemies of the saint. Their number, malice, craft, power, etc.

Verse 20. Soul preservation. 1. Its twofold character, "Keep, "and "deliver."

2. Its dreadful alternative, "Let me not be ashamed."

3. Its effectual guarantee, "I put my trust in thee."

Verse 20. A superhuman keeping, a natural fear, a spiritual trust.


Verse 22. Jacob's life, as typical of ours, may illustrate this prayer.

Verse 22. A prayer for the church militant.

WORKS UPON THE TWENTY-FIFTH PSALM

A Godly and Fruitful Exposition on the Twenty-fifth Psalme, the second of the Penitentials; (in "A Sacred Septenarie."") By ARCHIBALD SYMSON. 1638. (See page 74.)

Six Sermons in "Expository Discourses," by the late Rev. WILLIAM RICHARDSON, Subchanter of York Cathedral. 1825.
Title:

A Psalm of David. The sweet singer of Israel appears before us in this Psalm as one enduring reproach; in this he was the type of the great Son of David, and is an encouraging example to us to carry the burden of slander to the throne of grace. It is an ingenious surmise that this appeal to heaven was written by David at the time of the assassination of Ishboseth, by Baanah and Rechab, to protest his innocence of all participation in that treacherous murder; the tenor of the Psalm certainly agrees with the supposed occasion, but it is not possible with such a slender clue to go beyond conjecture.

Division:

Unity of subject is so distinctly maintained, that there are no sharp divisions. David Dickson has given an admirable summary in these words:—"He appeals to God", the supreme Judge, in the testimony of a good conscience, bearing him witness; first, of his endeavour to walk uprightly as a believer, Ps 26:1-3; secondly, of his keeping himself from the contagion of the evil counsel, sinful causes, and examples of the wicked, Ps 26:4-5; thirdly, of his purpose still to behave himself holily and righteously, out of love to be partaker of the public privileges of the Lord's people in the congregation, Ps 26:6-8. Whereupon he prayeth to be free of the judgment coming upon the wicked, Ps 26:9-10 according as he had purposed to eschew their sins, Ps 26:11 and he closes the prayer with comfort and assurance of being heard, Ps 26:12.

Exposition:

Verse 1. Judge me, O Jehovah. A solemn appeal to the just tribunal of the heart searching God, warranted by the circumstances of the writer, so far as regarded the particular offences with which he was wrongly charged. Worried and worn out by the injustice of men, the innocent spirit flies from its false accusers to the throne of Eternal Right. He had need have a clear case who dares to carry his suit into the King's Bench of heaven. Such an appeal as this is not to be rashly made on any occasion; and as to the whole of our walk and conversation, it should never be made at all, except as we are justified in Christ Jesus: a far more fitting prayer for a sinful mortal is the petition, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant." For I have walked in mine integrity. He held integrity as his principle, and walked in it as his practice. David had not used any traitorous or unrighteous means to gain the crown, or to keep it; he was conscious of having been guided by the noblest principles of honour in all his actions with regard to Saul and his family. What a comfort it is to have the approbation of one's own conscience! If there be peace within the soul, the blustering storms of slander which howl around us are of little consideration. When the little bird in my bosom sings a merry song, it is no matter to me if a thousand owls hoot at me from without. I have trusted also in the Lord. Faith is the root and sap of
integrity. He who leans upon the Lord is sure to walk in righteousness. David knew that God's covenant had given him the crown, and therefore he took no indirect or unlawful means to secure it; he would not slay his enemy in the cave, nor suffer his men at arms to smite him when he slept unguarded on the plain. Faith will work hard for the Lord, and in the Lord's way, but she refuses so much as to lift a finger to fulfil the devices of unrighteous cunning. Rebecca acted out a great falsehood in order to fulfil the Lord's decree in favour of Jacob—this was unbelief; but Abraham left the Lord to fulfil his own purposes, and took the knife to slay his son—this was faith. Faith trusts God to accomplish his own decrees. Why should I steal when God has promised to supply my need? Why should I avenge myself when I know that the Lord has espoused my cause? Confidence in God is a most effectual security against sin. Therefore I shall not slide. Slippery as the way is, so that I walk like a man upon ice, yet faith keeps my heels from tripping, and will continue to do so. The doubtful ways of policy are sure sooner or later to give a fall to those who run therein, but the ways of honesty, though often rough, are always safe. We cannot trust in God if we walk crookedly; but straight paths and simple faith bring the pilgrim happily to his journey's end.

Verse 2. There are three modes of trial here challenged, which are said in the original to refer to trial by touch, trial by smell, and trial by fire. The psalmist was so clear from the charge laid against him, that he submitted himself unconditionally to any form of examination which the Lord might see fit to employ. Examine me, O Lord. Look me through and through; make a minute survey; put me to the question, cross examine my evidence. And prove me. Put me again to trial; and see if I would follow such wicked designs as my enemies impute to me. Try my reins and my heart. Assay me as metals are assayed in the furnace, and do this to my most secret parts, where my affections hold their court; see, O God, whether or no I love murder, and treason, and deceit. All this is a very bold appeal, and made by a man like David, who feared the Lord exceedingly, it manifests a most solemn and complete conviction of innocence. The expressions here used should teach us the thoroughness of the divine judgment, and the necessity of being in all things profoundly sincere, lest we be found wanting at the last. Our enemies are severe with us with the severity of spite, and this a brave man endures without fear; but God's severity is that of unswerving right. Who shall stand against such a trial? The sweet singer says "Who can stand before his cold?" and we may well enquire, "Who can stand before the heat of his justice?"

Verse 3. For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes. An object of memory and a ground of hope. A sense of mercy received sets a fair prospect before the
Psalm 26

faithful mind in its gloomiest condition, for it yields visions of mercies yet to come, visions not visionary but real. Dwell, dear reader, upon that celestial word *lovingkindness*. It has a heavenly savour. Is it not an unmatchable word, unexcelled, unrivalled? The goodness of the Lord to us should be before our eyes as a motive actuating our conduct; we are not under the bondage of the law, but we are under the sweet constraints of grace, which are far more mighty, although far more gentle. Men sin with the law before their eyes, but divine love, when clearly seen, sanctifies the conversation. If we were not so forgetful of the way of mercy in which God walks toward us, we should be more careful to walk in the ways of obedience toward him. *And I have walked in thy truth.* The psalmist was preserved from sin by his assurance of the truthfulness of God's promise, which truth he endeavoured to imitate as well as to believe. Observe from this verse that an experience of divine love will show itself in a practical following of divine truth; those who neglect either the doctrinal or practical parts of truth must not wonder if they lose the experimental enjoyment of it. Some *talk of* truth, it is better to *walk in* it. Some vow to do well in future, but their resolutions come to nothing; only the regenerate man can say "*I have walked in thy truth.*"

**Verses 4-5.** So far from being himself an open offender against the laws of God, the psalmist had not even associated with the lovers of evil. He had kept aloof from the men of Belial. A man is known by his company, and if we have kept ourselves apart from the wicked, it will always be evidence in our favour should our character be impugned. He who was never in the parish is not likely to have stolen the corn. He who never went to sea is clearly not the man who scuttled the ship.

**Verse 4.** *I have not sat with vain persons.* True citizens have no dealings with traitors. David had no seat in the parliament of triflers. They were not his boon companions at feasts, nor his advisers in council, nor his associates in conversation. We must needs see, and speak, and trade, with men of the world, but we must on no account take our rest and solace in their empty society. Not only the profane, but the vain are to be shunned by us. All those who live for this life only are vain, chaffy, frothy men, quite unworthy of a Christian's friendship. Moreover as this vanity is often allied with falsehood, it is well to save ourselves altogether from this untoward generation, lest we should be led from bad to worse and from tolerating the vain should come to admire the wicked. *Neither will I go in with dissemblers.* Since I know that hypocritical piety is double iniquity, I will cease all acquaintance with pretenders. If I must need walk the same street, I will not enter the same door and spend my time in their society. The congregation of the hypocrites is not one with which we
should cultivate communion; their ultimate rendezvous will be the lowest pit of hell, let us drop their acquaintance now! for we shall not desire it soon. They hang their beads around their necks and carry the devil in their hearts. This clause is in the future tense, to indicate that the writer felt no desire to begin an acquaintance with the characters whom up till then he had shunned. We must maintain the separated path with more and more circumspection as we see the great redemption day approaching. Those who would be transfigured with Jesus, must not be disfigured by conformity to the world. The resolution of the psalmist suggests, that even among professed followers of truth we must make distinctions, for as there are vain persons out of the church, so there are dissemblers in it and both are to be shunned with scrupulous decision.

**Verse 5.** *I have hated the congregation of evil doers.* A severe sentence, but not too severe. A man who does not hate evil terribly, does not love good heartily. Men, as men, we must always love, for they are our neighbours, and therefore to be loved as ourselves; but evil doers, as such, are traitors to the Great King, and no loyal subject can love traitors. What God hates we must hate. The congregation or assembly of evil doers, signifies violent men in alliance and conclave for the overthrow of the innocent; such synagogues of Satan are to be held in abhorrence. What a sad reflection it is that there should be a congregation of evil doers as well as a congregation of the upright, a church of Satan as well as a church of God; a seed of the serpent as well as a seed of the woman; an old Babylon as well as a new Jerusalem: a great whore sitting upon many waters, to be judged in wrath, as well as a chaste bride of the Lamb to be crowned at his coming. *And will not sit with the wicked.* Saints have a seat at another table, and will never leave the King's dainties for the husks of the swine trough. Better to sit with the blind, and the halt, and the lame, at the table of mercy, than with the wicked in their feasts of ungodliness, yea, better to sit on Job's dunghill than on Pharaoh's throne. Let each reader see well to his company, for such as we keep in this world, we are likely to keep in the next.

**Verse 6.** *I will wash mine hands in innocency.* He would publicly avow himself to be altogether clear of the accusations laid against him, and if any fault in other matters could be truthfully alleged against him, he would for the future abstain from it. The washing of the hands is a significant action to set forth our having no connection with a deed, as we still say, "I wash my hands of the whole business." As to perfect innocence, David does not here claim it, but he avows his innocence of the crimes whereof he was slanderously accused; there is, however, a sense in which we may be washed in absolute innocency, for the atoning blood makes us clean every whit. We ought never to rest satisfied short of a full persuasion of our complete cleansing by Jesus' precious blood. *So will*
I compass thine altar, O Lord. Priests unto God must take great care to be personally cleansed; the brazen laver was as needful as the golden altar; God's worship requires us to be holy in life. He who is unjust to man cannot be acceptably religious towards God. We must not bring our thank offerings with hands defiled with guilt. To love justice and purity is far more acceptable to God, than ten thousands of the fat of fed beasts. We see from this verse that holy minds delight in the worship of the Lord, and find their sweetest solace at his altar; and that it is their deepest concern never to enter upon any course of action which would unfit them for the most sacred communion with God. Our eye must be upon the altar which sanctifies both the giver and the gift, yet we must never draw from the atoning sacrifice an excuse for sin, but rather find in it a most convincing argument for holiness.

Verse 7. That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving. David was so far instructed that he does not mention the typical offering, but discerns the spiritual offering which was intended thereby, not the groans of bullocks, but songs of gratitude the spiritual worshipper presents. To sound abroad the worthy praises of the God of all grace should be the everyday business of a pardoned sinner. Let men slander us as they will, let us not defraud the Lord of his praises; let dogs bark, but let us like the moon shine on. And tell of all thy wondrous works. God's people should not be tongue tied. The wonders of divine grace are enough to make the tongue of the dumb sing. God's works of love are wondrous if we consider the unworthiness of their objects, the costliness of their method, and the glory of their result. And as men find great pleasure in discoursing upon things remarkable and astonishing, so the saints rejoice to tell of the great things which the Lord hath done for them.

Verse 8. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house. Into the abodes of sin he would not enter, but the house of God he had long loved, and loved it still. We were sad children if we did not love our Father's dwelling place. Though we own no sacred buildings, yet the church of the living God is the house of God, and true Christians delight in her ordinances, services, and assemblies. O that all our days were Sabbaths! And the place where thine honour dwelleth. In his church where God is had in honour at all times, where he reveals himself in the glory of his grace, and is proclaimed by his people as the Lord of all. We come not together as the Lord's people to honour the preacher, but to give glory to God; such an occupation is most pleasant to the saints of the Most High. What are those gatherings where God is not honoured, are they not an offence to his pure and holy eyes, and are they not a sad stumbling block to the people of God? It brings the scalding tear upon our cheek to hear sermons in which the honour of God is so far from being the preacher's object, that one might almost
imagine that the preacher worshipped the dignity of manhood, and thought more of it than of the Infinite Majesty of God.

**Verse 9.** *Gather not my soul with sinners.* Lord, when, like fruit, I must be gathered, put me not in the same basket with the best of sinners, much less with the worst of them. The company of sinners is so distasteful to us here, that we cannot endure the thought of being bound up in the same bundle with them to all eternity. Our comfort is, that the Great Husbandman discerns the tares from the wheat, and will find a separate place for distinct characters. In the former verses we see that the psalmist kept himself clear of profane persons, and this is to be understood as a reason why he should not be thrust into their company at the last. Let us think of the doom of the wicked, and the prayer of the text will forcibly rise to our lips; meanwhile, as we see the rule of judgment by which like is gathered to its like, we who have passed from death unto life have nothing to fear. *Nor my life with bloody men.* Our soul sickens to hear them speak; their cruel dispatches, in which they treat the shooting of their fellow men as rare sport, are horrifying to us; Lord, let us not be shut up in the same prison with them; nay, the same paradise with such men would be a hell, if they remained as they are now.

**Verse 10.** *In whose hands is mischief.* They have both hands full of it, plotting it and carrying it out. *And their right hand,* with which they are most dexterous, *is full of bribes;* like thieves who would steal with impunity, they carry a sop for the dogs of justice. He who gives bribes is every way as guilty as the man who takes them, and in the matter of our parliamentary elections the rich villain who give the bribe is by far the worse. Bribery, in any form or shape, should be as detestable to a Christian as carrion to a dove, or garbage to a lamb. Let those whose dirty hands are fond of bribes remember that neither death nor the devil can be bribed to let them escape their well earned doom.

**Verse 11.** Here is the lover of godliness entering his personal protest against unrighteous gain. He is a Nonconformist, and is ready to stand alone in his Nonconformity. Like a live fish, he swims against the stream. Trusting in God, the psalmist resolves that the plain way of righteousness shall be his choice, and those who will, may prefer the tortuous paths of violence and deceit. Yet, he is by no means a boaster, or a self righteous vaunter of his own strength, for he cries for redemption and pleads for mercy. Our integrity is not absolute nor inherent, it is a work of grace in us, and is marred by human infirmity; we must, therefore, resort to the redeeming blood and to the throne of mercy, confessing that though we are saints among men, we must still bow as sinners before God.
Verse 12. The song began in the minor, but it has now reached the major key. Saints often sing themselves into happiness. The even place upon which our foot stands is the sure, covenant faithfulness, eternal promise and immutable oath of the Lord of Hosts; there is no fear of falling from this solid basis, or of its being removed from under us. Established in Christ Jesus, by being vitally united to him, we have nothing left to occupy our thoughts but the praises of our God. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and when assembled, let us not be slow to contribute our portion of thanksgiving. Each saint is a witness to divine faithfulness, and should be ready with his testimony. As for the slanderers, let them howl outside the door while the children sing within.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is coupled on to the foregoing by thoughts and words. At the close of the foregoing the psalmist had prayed for integrity Ps 26:1. Unless this Psalm is regarded as a sequel to the preceding one, it will seem vainglorious; but being combined with the penitential acknowledgments of sin, and with the earnest supplications for pardon and grace, and with the earnest profession of faith that God has heard his prayer, which breathe forth in the foregoing Psalm, it will be seen that the declarations which the psalmist now makes of integrity, are not assertions of human merit, but acknowledgments of divine mercy. As Augustine says, "Non merita mea, sed misericordia tua, ante oculos meos est." Christopher Wordsworth.

Verse 1. Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity. A good cause, a good conscience, and a good deportment, are good grounds of appeal to God. Ingram Cobbin.

Verse 1. Judge me, O Lord. Nothing is so pleasing to him that is upright as to know that God knoweth he is so. As it is a small matter with those who are sincere to be condemned by men, so it is not much with them to be condemned or approved by them; for indeed neither "he that commendeth himself, "as the apostle speaks 2Co 10:18, nor he that is commended by others, "is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." The testimony, or letters commendatory of all the men in the world will do us no good, unless God give us his also. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 1. Judge me, O Lord. As an instance of appeal to heaven, we quote that mighty preacher of the word, George Whitfield. "However some may account me a mountebank and an enthusiast, one that is only going to make you
methodically mad; they may breathe out their invectives against me, yet Christ knows all; he takes notice of it, and I shall leave it to him to plead my cause, for he is a gracious Master. I have already found him so, and am sure he will continue so. Vengeance is his, and he will repay it." **George Whitfield, 1714-1770.**

**Verse 1.** "Integrity." (Mh), or (Mymt) is used of whatever is uninjured, or is free from any spot or blemish; and hence we find the term applied to an unblemished animal offering in sacrifice. Le 1:3 3:9. **George Phillips.**

**Verse 1.** Mine integrity. There is a force in the possessive pronoun "my, "which must be attended to. The psalmist intimates that he had proceeded in one uniform course, notwithstanding all the devices of his enemies. **W. Wilson, D.D.**

**Verse 1.** I have trusted in the Lord. Trust in God is the fountain of "integrity." Whoever places his hope in God need not seek to advance his worldly interests by violating his duty towards his neighbour: he waits for everything from above, and is, at the same time, always determined that he will not be deprived of the favour of his heavenly Father through violating his commandments. **E. W. Hengstenberg.**

**Verse 1.** I shall not slide. It is a striking word, as fully expressive of the completeness of God's protection and the security of his upholding hand as the psalmist's language of the integrity of his walk and trust in God. It is not, as in our Prayer book version, "I shall not fall," but it is, "I shall not even slide; "not even make a false step or stumble. **Barton Bouchier.**

**Verse 2.** The psalmist uses three words, examine, prove, try. These words are designed to include all the modes in which the reality of anything is tested; and they imply together that he wished the most thorough investigation to be made; he did not shrink from any test. **Albert Barnes.**

**Verse 2.** Examine—prove—try. As gold, by fire, is severed and parted from dross, so singleness of heart and true Christian simplicity is best seen and made most evident in troubles and afflictions. In prosperity every man will seem godly, but afflictions do draw out of the heart whatsoever is there, whether it be good or bad. **Robert Cawdray.**

**Verse 2.** Prove me. The work of conscience within us doth prove us. God hath set up a light within us, and when this is enlightened by the Word, then it makes a man's breast full of light. Now a faithful godly man loveth that this
should be tender, active, speaking out of God's Word for every duty, and against every sin. You see the quickness of it in David, when it is said, "His heart smote him; "and 1 John 3., "If thy heart condemn thee, God is greater than thy heart." Alas! if thou within thine own self judgest thyself to sin thus and thus, God doth much more. Try thy integrity; art thou willing to have a tender conscience, and an informed conscience? Dost thou love to hear what that speaks out of God's Word? whether peace or duty? this is comfortable. But on the other side, if thou art a man that rebellest against the light of it, wouldst fain put out the sting of it, wouldst be glad to feel no such living thing in thy breast, then thou hast cause to suspect thyself. Oh, it is to be feared that there are many that give themselves to lusts, and carnal pleasures, that so they may put a foggy mist between their conscience and themselves. Others dig into the world, labouring to become senseless, that so there may be an eclipse of this light by the interposition of the earth. Others run to damnable heresies, denying Scriptures, God, heaven, hell; pleading for an universal salvation of all. What are these but refuges of guilty consciences? We must distinguish between our carnal concupiscence, and conscience; between deluded imaginations, and conscience; between an erroneous and scrupulous conscience, and a well grounded and truly informed conscience; and when we have done so, we must follow conscience as far as that follows the Word. Anthony Burgess.

**Verse 2.** Reins...heart. The "reins," as the seat of the lower animal passions; the "heart," as comprising not only the higher affections, but also the will and the conscience. He thus desires to keep nothing back; he will submit himself to the searching flame of the Great Refiner, that all dross of self deception may be purged away. J. J. Stewart Perowne.

**Verse 3.** The practical effect of divine goodness is seen in this text. As the chief thing communicated from God is the divine nature, whereby we are made to resemble him, so the promises of God set home upon the soul are the means of communication; they are the milk and honey of the Scripture, which do not cherish the old man, but support the new; they are no pillows for sinful sloth, but spurs to holy diligence. The promises of grace animate the soul to duty; and when we thus see the goodness of the Lord, it encourages our subjection to his government. Timothy Cruso.

**Verses 3-4.** I have walked in thy truth, I have not sat with vain persons. Be as careful as thou canst, that the persons thou choosest for thy companions be such as fear God. The man in the gospel was possessed with the devil, who dwelt among the tombs, and conversed with graves and carcasses. Thou art far from walking after the good Spirit, if thou choosest to converse with open sepulchres, and such as are dead in sins and trespasses. God will not shake the
wicked by the hand, as the Vulgate reads Job 8:20, neither must the godly man. David proves the sincerity of his course, by his care to avoid such society: I have walked in thy truth; I have not sat with vain persons.

There is a twofold "truth." 1. Truth of doctrine. Thy law is the truth, free from all dross of corruption and falsehood of error. 2. Truth of affection, or of the inward parts. This may be called "thy truth," or God's truth, though man be the subject of it, partly because it proceedeth from him, partly because it is so pleasant to him; in which respect a broken heart is called the "sacrifice of God." Ps 51:6. As if he had said, I could not have walked in the power of religion, and in integrity, if I had associated with vile and vain company; I could never have walked in thy precepts if I had "sat with vain persons."

Observe the phrase, "I have not sat with vain persons." 1. Sitting is a posture of choice. It is at a man's liberty, whether he will sit or stand. 2. Sitting is a posture of pleasure. Men sit for their ease, and with delight; therefore, the glorified are said to "sit in heavenly places." Eph 2:6. 3. Sitting is a posture of staying or abiding. 2Ki 5:3. Standing is a posture of going, but sitting of staying. The blessed, who shall forever be with the Lord and his chosen, are mentioned "to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Mt 8:11. David in neither of these senses durst sit with vain persons. He might, as his occasions required, use their company, but durst not knowingly choose such company. They could not be the object of his election who were not the object of his affection. "I hate the congregation of evil doers," saith he. As sitting is a posture of pleasure, he did not sit with vain persons. He was sometimes amongst them to his sorrow, but not to his solace. They were to him, as the Canaanites to the Israelites, pricks in his eyes, and thorns in his sides. "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" Ps 120:5. It caused grief, not gladness, that he was forced to be amongst the profane. George Swinnock.

Verses 3-4. I have walked in thy truth, I have not sat with vain persons. See Psalms on "Ps 26:3" for further information.

Verse 4. I have not sat with vain persons. There is a necessary commerce with men in buying and selling, or as the apostle says, "We must needs go out of the world, "but do not voluntarily choose the company of the wicked. 1Co 5:10. "I have written unto you not to keep company, "etc. 1Co 5:11. Do not be too familiar with them. What do Christ's doves among birds of prey? What do virgins among harlots? The company of the wicked is very defiling, it is like going among them that have the plague. "They were mingled among the heathen and learned their works." If you mingle bright armour with rusty, the
bright armour will not brighten the rusty, but the rusty armour will spoil the bright. Pharaoh taught Joseph to swear, but Joseph did not teach Pharaoh to pray. *Thomas Watson.*

**Verse 4.** *Neither will I go with dissemblers.* Chaldee: "I will not go in with those that hide themselves to do evil." Wickedness is not candid, and loves concealment, while truth and righteousness are open, and seek scrutiny. Job 24:13-17 Joh 3:20-21. None will deny that the candid man has far fewer troubles with his own conduct than the tortuous and deceitful. The righteous shun the wicked both for the *sin* and for the misery that are in their ways. *William S. Plumer.*

**Verse 4.** *Dissemblers.* The hypocrite has much angel without, more devil within. He fries in words, freezes in works; speaks by ells, doth good by inches. He is a stinking dunghill, covered over with snow; a loose hung mill that keeps great clacking, but grinds no grist; a lying hen that cackles when she hath not laid. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 4.** *Dissemblers.* Perhaps when the bright sunbeams of an early spring have robed all nature in a smiling garb, you have taken your little baskets, and gone in quest of a bank of sweet smelling modest violets, and you may have found flowers so like them, in form and colour, that you have been deceived, and eagerly grasped you prize; but alas! the sweet odour which should have scented the gale, was found wanting, and betrayed the dog violet. An apt emblem this of those, who, "having the form of godliness, deny the power thereof." 2Ti 3:5. *Mrs. Rogers, in "The Shepherd King."*

**Verses 4-5.** As rotten apples corrupt those sound ones that do touch them and lie close to them, even so the evil manners and bad conditions of the ungodly do infect those that keep them company. *Robert Cawdray.*

**Verses 4-5.** "It is difficult (saith a late ingenious writer) even to a miracle to keep God's commandments and evil company too." How suddenly after your soul refreshments in your closet communion have you lost all your heats and spiritual fervencies, which you had in secret, and have instantly cooled by going forth into cold and corrupt air! When a saint hath been in private ravished with the love of God and the joys of heaven, and afterwards meets with company, which neither doth nor can speak one word of such matters, what a damp it is to him! What a quenching, as it were, of the Spirit of God in him! Nay, is not that true which one saith, that "the people of God do generally lose more by worldly men, that are of a blameless conversation before men, than they lose by wicked and profane men"? *Lewis Stuckley.*
Verses 4-5, 9. He that would not be found among sinners in the other world, must take heed that he do not frequent their company in this. Those whom the constable finds wandering with vagrants, may be sent with them to the house of correction. "Lord, "said a good woman, on her death bed, when in doubt of her salvation, "send me not to hell amongst wicked men, for thou knowest I never loved their company all my life long." David deprecates their future doom upon the like ground, and argues it as a sign of his sincerity: *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked...O gather not my soul with sinner.*

Lord, I have not loved the wicked so well as to sit with them for a little time, and shall I live with them forever? I have not lain amongst them rotting on the earth; and wilt thou gather my soul with those sticks for the unquenchable fire of hell? Lord, I have been so far from liking, that thou knowest I have loathed the congregation of evil doers. Do not I hate them that hate thee? Yea, I hate them with perfect hatred; and shall thy friends fare as thy foes? I appeal to thy Majesty, that my great comfort is in thy chosen. I rejoice only to be amongst thy children here, and shall I be excluded their company hereafter? *O do not gather my soul with sinners,* "for the wine press of thine eternal anger!" Marcion, the heretic, seeing Polycarp, wondered that he would not own him. Do you not know me, Polycarp? Yes, saith Polycarp, "Scio te esse primogenitum diaboli; " "I know thee to be the firstborn of the devil," and so despised him. George Swinnock.

Verse 5. *I have hated the congregation of evil doers,* etc. The hatred of God's enemies, *qua* his enemies—"yea, I hate them right sore" so entirely opposed to the indifferentism of the present day, has always been one distinguishing mark of his ancient servants. Witness Phinehas Ps 106:41; "And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore; " Samuel with Agag; Elias with the priests of Baal. And notice the commendation of the angel of Ephesus, "Thou canst not bear them that are evil." Re 2:2. J. M. Neale.

Verse 5. *I have hated the congregation of evil doers.* We consider them as God's enemies, so we hate them; not their persons, but their vices; for that, as Augustine defines it, is *odium perfectum,* a perfect hatred. And indeed it is the hatred that God beareth to his enemies; for "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" Ro 1:18; not against their persons—they are his workmanship, and carry his image in some sort, though much disfigured; but against the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, by which their persons do stand obnoxious to his displeasure. And thus I find the saints of God have triumphed over the wicked, as Israel over Pharaoh, and the Gileadites over the children of Ammon; not rejoicing in the destruction
of God's creatures, but of God's enemies; and wishing with Deborah and Barak, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord." This is no more but an applauding of the judgment of God, and a celebration of his justice. Edward Marbury.

Verse 5. I have hated, etc. Consider that there can be no true friendship betwixt a godly and a wicked person; therefore it concerneth thee to be the more wary in thy choice. He that in factions hath an eye to power, in friendship will have an eye to virtue. Friendship, according to the philosopher, is one soul in two bodies. But how can they ever be of one soul that are as different as air and earth, and as contrary as fire and water? All true love is, motus animi ad fruendum Deo propter ipsum; se et proximo propter Deum—a motion of the soul towards the enjoyment of God for himself, and his neighbours for God's sake; so that he can never truly love man who doth not love his Maker. God is the only foundation upon which we can build friendship; therefore such as live without him, cannot love us in him. That building which is loose, without this foundation can never stand long. A wicked man may call that profession he maketh to his brother by the name of love, but heathens can tell us that virtue alone is the hand which can twist the cords of love; that other combinations are but a confederacy, and all other but conjunctions in hypocrisy. George Swinnock.

Verse 5. Wheresoever we perceive any people to worship God truly after his word, there we may be certain the church of Christ to be, unto the which we ought to associate ourselves, and to desire, with the prophet David, to praise God in the midst of this church. But if we behold, through the iniquity of time, congregations to be made with counterfeit religion, otherwise than the word of God doth teach, we ought then, if we be required to be companions thereof, to say again with David, "I have hated the synagogue of the malignant, and will not sit with the wicked." In the Apocalypse, the church of Ephesus is highly commended, because she tried such as said they were apostles and were not in deed, and therefore would not abide the company of them. Further, God commanded his people that they should not seek Bethel, neither enter into Galgala, where idolatry was used, by the mouth of his prophet Amos. John Philpot (Martyr). Burnt at Smithfield, 1555.

Verse 5. How few consider how they harden wicked men by an intimacy with them, whereas withdrawal from them might be a means to make them ashamed! Whilst we are merry and jovial with them, we make them believe their condition is not deplorable, their danger is not great; whereas if we shunned them, as we would a bowed wall, whilst they remain enemies to the Lord, this might do them good, for the startling of them, and rousing of them
out of their unhappy security and strong delusions wherein they are held. Lewis Stuckley.

Verse 6. I will wash mine hands in innocency. There are two eminent lavers in the gospel; the first, Christ's bath, a hot bath, lavacrum sanguinis, the laver of Christ's blood; the second, our bath, a cold bath, lavacrum lachrimarum, the laver of repentance. These two mixed together will prove a sovereign composition, wrought first by Christ himself when he sweat water and blood. The first is as that pool of Bethesda into which whoever enters with faith, is healed; the blood of Christ is the true laver of regeneration, a fountain set open for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in. "The blood of Christ purgeth us from all sins." 1Jo 1:7. We account it charity in mothers to feed their children with their own milk: how dear is the love of Christ, that both washes and feeds us with his own blood! No sooner are we born in Christ, but just as our mother's, so Christ's blood is turned into milk, nourishing us to everlasting salvation. What is calamus benjamini, or storax, or a thousand rivers of oil, to make us clean, except the Lord purge and cleanse us? No; it is his blood "that speaks better things than the blood of Abel." "Unto him, therefore, that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever." Re 1:5-6. But yet it is the second bath, the laver of repentance, that must apply and make the first operative. This bath of Mary Magdalene's repentance, it is a kind of rebaptism, giving strength and effect to the first washing. And it implies a three fold act: first, to bruise our hearts by contrition; secondly, to lay our wounds open by confession to God; thirdly, to wash our hands in innocency, by satisfaction to men...Wash now and wash all; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is nothing in us but wounds and sores; yet above all there is something here in it that David washes his "hands." Indeed it is not enough to come with wet eyes, if we come with foul hands to offer with unwashen hands; the Gentiles would not do it. Contrition and confession to God make not up complete repentance without satisfaction to men. Non remittitur peccatum nisi restitutatur ablatum: (Augustine), it is as true as old, and in old father Latimer's English it is "Either there must be restitution, open or secret, or else hell." Whoever repairs not the wrong, rejoiceth in the sin. Pr 2:14. Where there is no satisfaction, Non agitur sed fingitur paenitentia, saith St. Augustine; and those who restore not all, wash not their whole hands, they dip only the tips of their fingers. Extortion, rapine, bribery, these are the sins of the hands (sins so proper to the Jews, that they may well conceive as they do that the devil lies all night on their hands, and that is it makes them so diligent in washing); but as for us Christians, unless these vipers be shaken off our hands, though ye cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, yet if you
continue in your pollutions, God regards not your offering any more, nor will he receive it with good will at your hands. Mt 2:13. Isaac Bargrave's Sermon before the House of Commons, 1623.

Verse 6. I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord. If greatness might have privileged this person from impurity, David was a king; if the grace of his soul might have freed him from the soil of sin, he was "a man after God's own heart." But let not great men put too much trust in their greatness; the longer the robe is the more soil in contracts: great power may prove the mother of great damnation. And as for purity, there is a generation that say there's no sin in them, but they deceive themselves; there is no truth in them. Whatever Rome's rusiology pretend for the power of nature, and of free will, we wretched sinners are taught to conceive more truly of our own infirmity. Christ's own apostle, stout Thomas, failed in the faith of his resurrection; Peter (whose chair is now the pretended seat of infallibility) denied his Master; David, "a man after God's own heart, "hath need of washing; and who can say, I am pure in the sight of the Lord? Certainly, O Lord, no flesh is righteous in thy sight. No; this is the best ground of Christian felicity, if with David we fall to a sight of our own sins; if with the Publican we strike our own breasts, and not with the Pharisee, cast our eye so much upon other men's faults. Why should we, like tailors, measure all men but ourselves? as if the best of us had not sin enough of his own to think on. See how David calls himself to account for his own sins; "O Lord, I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me." Oh, the powerful effect of Christian devotion, when by the reflective act of the understanding, science is turned into conscience, and our knowledge is but the glass of our imperfection, the glass wherein the sight of our sins sends us presently to God, as it did David here, who makes this account only betwixt God and his own soul, "I, O Lord." First, he takes his rise from humility and the sight of his own sins, and he soars up by the wings of faith to the throne of God's mercy: "I, O Lord." He sees with his own eyes, and not only with the church, or the priest's spectacles; he is his own penitentiary and confessor; here's no intercession by saints, no masses, merits, indulgences, trentals, dirges: all's done betwixt God and him: "I, O Lord." With the eye of humility he looks to himself and his own misery; then with the eye of faith to God and his mercy, and from both these results a third virtue of repentance in the act of preparation, washing the soil of sin in the bath of sorrow: "I will wash mine hands, "etc. Isaac Bargrave.

Verse 6. I will wash mine hands in purity. Referring in these words, to the ordinary use of the sacrifices, he makes a distinction between himself and those who professed to offer the same divine worship, and thrust themselves forward
in the services of the sanctuary, as if they alone had the sole right to perform
them. As David, therefore, and these hypocrites were one in this respect, that
they entered the sanctuary, and surrounded the sacred altar together, he
proceeds to show that he was a true worshipper, declaring that he not only
diligently attended to the external rites, but came to worship God with
unfeigned devotion. It is obvious that he alludes to the solemn rite of washing
which was practised under the law. He, accordingly, reproves the gross
superstition of hypocrites, who, in seeking only the purification of water,
neglected true purification; whereas it was God's design, in the appointment of
the outward sign, to put men in mind of their inward pollution, and thus to
encourage them to repentance. The outward washing alone, instead of profiting
hypocrites, kept them at a greater distance from God. When the psalmist,
therefore, says, "I will wash my hands in innocence," he intimates that they
only gather more pollution and filth by their washings. The Hebrew word
(Nwyqn) nikkayon, signifies the cleanness of anything, and is figuratively used
for innocence. We thus see, that as hypocrites derive no moral purity whatever
from their washings, David mocks at the labour with which they vainly toil and
torment themselves in such rites. John Calvin.

Verse 6. "I will wash mine hands, "etc. David willing to express his coming
with a pure heart to pray to God, doth it by this similitude of a priest: that as a
priest washes his hands, and then offers oblation, so had he constantly joined
purity and devotion together. Henry Hammond.

Verse 6. In innocence. The very akmt and crown of all our preparation, the
purest water we can wash in, is innocence; and innocence is a virtue of the
heart as well as of the hand. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your
hearts, ye double minded." Jas 4:8. I could wish our washing might be like
Cyprian's baptising, ad tincturam, even till we were dyed in repentance and the
blood of Christ. Let the quantity of thy sins be the measure of thy repentance.
First offer thine innocence, then thy sacrifice. It is not enough that you come
this day by order, you must come with innocence. God requires the duty of the
second table, as well as of the first; he abhors the outward act of piety where he
finds no conscience and practice of innocence. Isaac Bargrave.

Verse 6. (first clause). One morning, as Gotthold was pouring water into a
basin, he recollected the words of Scripture: I will wash my hands in innocence,
a text which shows how diligently the royal prophet had endeavoured to lead a
blameless life, and walk habitually in the fear of God. Upon this he mused, and
said, Henceforth, my God, every time I pour out water to wash with, I will call
to mind that it is my duty to cleanse my hands from wicked actions, my mouth
from wicked words, and my heart from wicked lusts and desires, that so I may
be enabled to lift holy hands unto thee, and with unspotted lips and heart
worship thee, to the best of my ability. What will it profit me to strive after
outward purity, if my heart is filthy and abominable in thy sight? Can the food
nourish me which I have earned with polluted hands, or seized with violence
and injustice, or eaten with insensibility and ingratitude? Ah! no, my God; far
from me be food like this. My first care shall be to maintain a blameless walk;
my next, when I have thoughtlessly defiled myself, to cleanse and wash away
the stain, and remove mine iniquity from thine eyes. "Purge me, O my God,
and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Ps 51:7.
Christian Scrver (1629-1693), in "Gotthold's Emblems."

Verse 6. I will compass thine altar, O Lord. On the next day after this feast (the
Feast of Tabernacles), the people compassed the altar seven times, with palm
boughs in their hands, in the remembrance of the overthrow of Jericho...Not
only the boughs, but the days of this whole Feast of Tabernacles, were termed
Hosannoth, from the usual acclamation of the people whilst they carried the
boughs up and down. Thomas Godwyn, B.D. (1587-1643), in "Moses and
Aaron."

Verse 6. By the phrase compassing the altar, either he alludes to some
Levitical custom of going about the altar, as the priests did in the oblation of
their sacrifices; and the people, especially those of them who were more devout
and zealous, who possibly moved from place to place, but still within their own
court, that they might discern what was done on the several sides of the altar,
and so be more affected with it; or rather he implies that he would offer many
sacrifices together, which would employ the priests round about the altar.
Matthew Poole.

Verse 8. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, etc. "I have in my
congregation," said a venerable minister of the gospel, "a worthy, aged woman,
who has for many years been so deaf as not to distinguish the loudest sound,
and yet she is always one of the first in the meeting. On asking the reason of
her constant attendance (as it was impossible for her to hear my voice), she
answered, `Though I cannot hear you, I come to God's house because I love it,
and would be found in his ways; and he gives me many a sweet thought upon
the text when it is pointed out to me: another reason is, because there I am in
the best company, in the more immediate presence of God, and among his
saints, the honourable of the earth. I am not satisfied with serving God in
private; it is my duty and privilege to honour him regularly in public.'" What a
reproof this is to those who have their hearing, and yet always come to a place
of worship late, or not at all! K. Arvine.
Verse 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.* Now is the time that people should be in care and concern, that their souls be not gathered with sinners in the other world. In discoursing from this doctrine we shall—

1. Consider some things implied in it.
2. Show who are the sinners, that we are to have a horror of our souls being gathered with in the other world.
3. What it is for one's soul to be gathered with sinners in the other world.
4. Consider this care and concern, or show what is implied in this earnest request, "Gather not my soul with sinners".
5. Give the reasons why we should be in such care and concern.
6. Make application. Death is the gathering time, which the psalmist has in view in the text. Ye have a time here that ye call the gathering time, about the term when the servants are going away, wherein ye gather your strayed sheep, that every one may get their own again. Death is God's gathering time wherein he gets the souls belonging to him, and the devil those belonging to him. They did go long together, but then they are parted, and the saints are taken home to the congregation of saints, and sinners to the congregation of sinners. And it concerns us to say, "Gather not my soul with sinners." Whoever be our people here, God's people or the devil's, death will gather our souls to them. It is a horrible thing to be gathered with sinners in the other world. To think of our souls being gathered with them there, may make the hair of one's head stand up. Many now like no gathering like the gathering with sinners; it is the very delight of their hearts, it makes a brave jovial life in their eyes. And it is a pain to them to be gathered with saints, to be detained before the Lord on a Sabbath day. But to be gathered with them in the other world, is a horror to all sorts. 1. The saints have a horror of it, as in the text. To think to be staked down in their company in the other world would be a hell of itself to the godly. David never had such a horror of the society of the diseased, the persecuted, etc., as of sinners. He is content to be gathered with saints of whatever condition; but, "Lord, say he, "Gather not my soul with sinners." 2. The wicked themselves have a horror of it. Nu 23:10. "Let me die the death of the righteous, "said the wicked Balaam, "and let my last end be like his." Though they would be content to live with them, or be with them in life, their consciences bear witness that they have a horror of being with them in death. They would live with sinners, but they would die with saints. A poor, unreasonable, self condemning thought. *Thomas Boston.*

Verse 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.* Bind me not up in the same bundle with them, like the tares for the fire. Mt 13:30. The contrast to this is seen in the following Ps 27:10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up;" literally, will *gather* me to his fold. *Christopher Wordsworth.*
Verse 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.* The Lord hath a harvest and a gleaning time also, set for cutting down and binding together, in the fellowship of judgments, God's enemies, who have followed the same course of sinning: for here we are given to understand that God will "gather their souls, "and so will let none escape. *David Dickson.*

Verse 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.* After all, it may be objected that this concern seems to be common with saints and sinners. Even a wicked Balaam said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Nu 23:10. Take a few differences between them in this matter. 1. It is separation from Christ that makes the saints to have a horror at being gathered with sinners hereafter. Separation from Christ is the main ground of the believer's horror: but if other things were to be right with the sinner in the other world, he would be easy under separation from Christ. 2. The believer has a horror at being gathered with sinners on account of their filthiness; but the thing that makes the sinner concerned is the prospect of punishment. No doubt, a principle of self preservation must make punishment frightful to all; but abstracted from that, the saints have a concern not to be gathered with sinners in the other world, upon account of their unholiness and filthiness. "He who is filthy, let him be filthy still, "is enough to make a saint abhor the lot of sinners in the life to come. 3. The concern of the saints has a mighty influence upon them, to make them study holiness here; but sinners live unholy for all their concern. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1Jo 3:3. What hope? The hope of seeing Christ as he is, and of being perfectly like him, of being separated from sinners. 4. Lastly, the concern of the saints is such, that they do with purpose of heart come out from among sinners more and more in this world; but sinners are not concerned to be separated from sinners here. Balaam wished to die the death of the righteous; but he had no concern to live the life of the righteous, and to be separated from sinners here. *James Scot, 1773.*

Verses 9-12. David prays that God would not "gather his soul with sinners, whose right hand is full of bribes; "such as, for advantage, would be bribed to sin, to which wicked gang he opposeth himself, Ps 26:11; "*But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity;* "where he tells us what kept him from being corrupted and enticed, as they were; from God—it was his integrity. A soul walking in its integrity will take bribes neither from men, nor sin itself: and therefore he saith Ps 26:12, "His foot stood in an even place; "or, as some read it, "My foot standeth in righteousness." *William Gurnall.*

Verse 10. *Their right hand is full of bribes.* If the great men in Turkey should use their religion of Mahomet to sell, as our patrons commonly sell benefices
here (the office of preaching, the office of salvation), it should be taken as an intolerable thing; the Turk would not suffer it in his commonwealth. Patrons be charged to see the office done, and not to seek a lucre and a gain by their patronage. There was a patron in England that had a benefice fallen into his hand, and a good brother of mine came unto him, and brought him up thirty apples in a dish, and gave them to his man to carry them to his master. It is like he gave one to his man for his labour, to make up the gain, and so there was thirty-one. This man cometh to his master, and presented him with the dish of apples, saying, "Sir, such a man hath sent you a dish of fruit, and desireth you to be good unto him for such a benefice." "Tush, tush," said he, "this is no apple matter, I will none of his apples, I have as good as these (or any he hath) in mine own orchard." The man came to the priest again, and told him what his master said. "Then," said the priest, "desire him yet to prove one of them for my sake, he shall find them much better than they look for." He cut one of them, and found ten pieces of gold in it. "Marry," said he, "this is a good apple." The priest standing not far off, hearing what the gentleman said, cried out and answered, "they are all one apples, I warrant you, sir; they grew all on one tree, and have all one taste." "Well, he is a good fellow, let him have it," said the patron, etc. Get you a graft of this same tree, and I warrant you it shall stand you in better stead than all St. Paul's learning. *Hugh Latimer.*

**Verse 10.** *Bribes.* They that see furthest into the law, and most clearly discern the cause of justice, if they suffer the dust of bribes to be thrown into their sight, their eyes will water and twinkle, and fall at last to blind connivance. It is a wretched thing when justice is made a hackney that may be backed for money, and put on with golden spurs, even to the desired journey's end of injury and iniquity. Far be from our souls this wickedness, that the ear which should be open to complaints should be stopped with the earwax of partiality. Alas! poor truth, that she must now be put to charges of a golden ear pick, or she cannot be heard! *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 10.**

What makes all doctrines plain and clear?
About two hundred pounds a year,
And that which was proved true before
Proved false again? Two hundred more.

**Verses 12** (*first clause*). The upright man's *foot*, is said to *stand in an even place*: he walks not haltingly and uncomely, as those who go in unequal ways, which are hobbling, and up and down, or those whose feet and legs are not
even (as Solomon saith), "The legs of the lame are not equal, "and so cannot stand in an even place, because one is long and the other short; the sincere man's feet are even, and the legs of a length, as I may say; his care alike conscientious to the whole will of God. The hypocrite, like the badger, hath one foot shorter than another; or, like a foundered horse, he doth not stand, as we say, right of all four; one foot at least you shall perceive he favours, loath to put it down. William Gurnall.

**Verse 12. On an even place.** As a man whose feet are firmly fixed upon even ground is apprehensive of no fall, so the pious worshippers of Jehovah feel no dread lest their adversaries should finally triumph over them. William Walford.

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

**Verse 1.**

1. Two inseparable companions—faith and holiness.

2. The blessedness of the man who possesses them. He needs not fear the judgment, nor the danger of the way.

3. The only means of procuring them.

**Verse 1.** (last sentence). The upholding power of trust in God.

**Verse 2.** Divine examinations. Their variety, severity, searching nature, accuracy, certainty: when to be desired, and when to be dreaded.

**Verse 3.** Delight for the eyes and safety for the feet; or the good man's sweet contemplation and holy practice; or the heavenly compound of godliness—motive, and motion, enjoying and acting, love and truth, free grace and good works.

**Verse 3.** Thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes. It might be well to follow David and to keep the lovingkindness of God before our eyes. This should be done in four ways:—1. As a subject of contemplation.

2. As the source of encouragement.

3. As an incitement to praise.

4. As an example for imitation.

—William Jay.
Verse 4. *Vain persons.* Who they are. Why they are to be avoided. What will become of them. *Dissemblers.* Describe this numerous family. Show what their objects are. The mischief done to believers by their craftiness. The need of shunning them, and their fearful end.

Verse 5. *Bad company.* Cases of its evil results, excuses for it answered, warnings given, motives urged for relinquishing.

Verse 6. The necessity of personal holiness in order to acceptable worship.

Verse 7. 1. The believer's calling—a publisher.

2. The author selected, and the quality of his works. "Thy wondrous works."

3. The mode of advertising—"voice of thanksgiving", "tell", etc.

Verse 8. God's house. Why we love it. What we love in it. How we show our love. How our love will be rewarded.


Verse 11. The best men needing redemption and mercy; or the outward walk before men, and the secret walk with God.

Verse 12. Secure standing, honoured position, grateful praise.

Verse 12 (*last clause*). Congregational Psalmody, and our personal share in it.
Psalm 27

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

TITLE AND SUBJECT. Nothing whatever can be drawn from the title as to the time when this Psalm was written, for the heading, "A Psalm of David," is common to so many of the Psalms; but if one may judge from the matter of the song, the writer was pursued by enemies, Ps 27:2-3, was shut out from the house of the Lord, Ps 27:4, was just parting from father and mother, Ps 27:10, and was subject to slander, Ps 27:12; do not all these meet in the time when Doeg, the Edomite, spake against him to Saul? It is a song of cheerful hope, well fitted for those in trial who have learned to lean upon the Almighty arm. The Psalm may with profit be read in a threefold way, as the language of David, of the Church, and of the Lord Jesus. The plenitude of Scripture will thus appear the more wonderful.

DIVISION. The poet first sounds forth his sure confidence in his God, Ps 27:1-3, and his love of communion with him, Ps 27:4-6. He then betakes himself to prayer, Ps 27:7-12, and concludes with an acknowledgment of the sustaining power of faith in his own case, and an exhortation to others to follow his example.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Here is personal interest, "my light, "my salvation; "the soul is assured of it, and therefore, declaring it boldly. "My light; "—into the soul at the new birth divine light is poured as the precursor of salvation; where there is not enough light to see our own darkness and to long for the Lord Jesus, there is no evidence of salvation. Salvation finds us in the dark, but it does not leave us there; it gives light to those who sit in the valley of the shadow of death. After conversion our God is our joy, comfort, guide, teacher, and in every sense our light; he is light within, light around, light reflected from us, and light to be revealed to us. Note, it is not said merely that the Lord gives light, but that he "is" light; nor that he gives salvation, but that he is salvation; he, then, who by faith has laid hold upon God has all covenant blessings in his possession. Every light is not the sun, but the sun is the father of all lights. This being made sure as a fact, the argument drawn from it is put in the form of a question, Whom shall I fear? A question which is its own answer. The powers of darkness are not to be feared, for the Lord, our light, destroys them; and the damnation of hell is not to be dreaded by us, for the Lord is our salvation. This is a very different challenge from that of boastful Goliath, for it is based upon a very different foundation; it rests not upon the conceited vigour of an arm of flesh, but upon the real power of the omnipotent I AM. The Lord is the strength of my life. Here is a third glowing epithet, to
show that the writer's hope was fastened with a threefold cord which could not be broken. We may well accumulate terms of praise where the Lord lavishes deeds of grace. Our life derives all its strength from him who is the author if it; and if he deigns to make us strong we cannot be weakened by all the machinations of the adversary. Of whom shall I be afraid? The bold question looks into the future as well as the present. "If God be for us, "who can be against us, either now or in time to come?

**Verse 2.** This verse records a past deliverance, and is an instance of the way in which experience should be employed to reassure our faith in times of trial. Each word is instructive. *When the wicked.* It is a hopeful sign for us when the wicked hate us; if our foes were godly men it would be a sore sorrow, but as for the wicked their hatred is better than their love. *Even mine enemies and my foes.* There were many of them, they were of different sorts, but they were unanimous in mischief and hearty in hatred. *Came upon me*—advanced to the attack, leaping upon the victim like a lion upon its prey. *To eat up my flesh,* like cannibals they would make a full end of the man, tear him limb from limb, and make a feast for their malice. The enemies of our souls are not deficient in ferocity, they yield no quarter, and ought to have none in return. See in what danger David was; in the grip and grasp of numerous, powerful, and cruel enemies, and yet observe his perfect safety and their utter discomfiture! *They stumbled and fell.* God's breath blew them off their legs. There were stones in the way which they never reckoned upon, and over these they made an ignominious tumble. This was literally true in the case of our Lord in Gethsemane, when those who came to take him went backward and fell to the ground; and herein he was a prophetic representative of all wrestling believers who, rising from their knees shall, by the power of faith, throw their foes upon their faces.

**Verse 3.** Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall *not fear.* Before the actual conflict, while as yet the battle is untried, the warrior's heart, being held in suspense, is very liable to become fluttered. The encamping host often inspires greater dread than the same host in actual affray. Young tells us of some—"Who feel a thousand deaths in fearing one." Doubtless the shadow of anticipated trouble is, to timorous minds, a more prolific source of sorrow than the trouble itself, but faith puts a strengthening plaister to the back of courage, and throws out of the window the dregs of the cup of trembling. *Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.* When it actually comes to push of pike, faith's shield will ward off the blow; and if the first brush should be but the beginning of a war, yet faith's banners will wave in spite of the foe. Though battle should succeed battle, and one campaign should
be followed by another, the believer will not be dismayed at the length of the conflict. Reader, this third verse is the comfortable and logical inference from the second, confidence is the child of experience. Have you been delivered out of great perils? then set up your ensign, wait at your watch fire, and let the enemy do his worst.

**Verse 4. One thing.** Divided aims tend to distraction, weakness, disappointment. The man of one book is eminent, the man of one pursuit is successful. Let all our affections be bound up in one affection, and that affection set upon heavenly things. *Have I desired*—what we cannot at once attain, it is well to desire. God judges us very much by the desire of our hearts. He who rides a lame horse is not blamed by his master for want of speed, if he makes all the haste he can, and would make more if he could; God takes the will for the deed with his children. *Of the Lord.* This is the right target for desires, this is the well into which to dip our buckets, this is the door to knock at, the bank to draw upon; desire of men, and lie upon the dunghill with Lazarus: desire of the Lord, and to be carried of angels into Abraham's bosom. Our desires of the Lord should be sanctified, humble, constant, submissive, fervent, and it is well if, as with the psalmist, they are all molten into one mass. Under David's painful circumstances we might have expected him to desire repose, safety, and a thousand other good things, but no, he has set his heart on the pearl, and leaves the rest. *That will I seek after.* Holy desires must lead to resolute action. The old proverb says, "Wishers and woulders are never good housekeepers," and "wishing never fills a sack." Desires are seed which must be sown in the good soil of activity, or they will yield no harvest. We shall find our desires to be like clouds without rain, unless followed up by practical endeavours. *That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* For the sake of communion with the King, David longed to dwell always in the palace; so far from being wearied with the services of the Tabernacle, he longed to be constantly engaged in them, as his life long pleasure. He desired above all things to be one of the household of God, a home born child, living at home with his Father. This is our dearest wish, only we extend it to those days of our immortal life which have not yet dawned. We pine for our Father's house above, the home of our souls; if we may but dwell there for ever, we care but little for the goods or ills of this poor life. "Jerusalem the golden" is the one and only goal of our heart's longings. *To behold the beauty of the Lord.* An exercise both for earthly and heavenly worshippers. We must not enter the assemblies of the saints in order to see and be seen, or merely to hear the minister; we must repair to the gatherings of the righteous, intent upon the gracious object of learning more of the loving Father, more of the glorified Jesus, more of the mysterious Spirit, in order that we may the more lovingly admire, and the more
reverently adore our glorious God. What a word is that, "the beauty of the Lord!" Think of it, dear reader! Better far—behold it by faith! What a sight will that be when every faithful follower of Jesus shall behold "the King in his beauty!" Oh, for that infinitely blessed vision! And to enquire in his temple. We should make our visits to the Lord's house enquirers' meetings. Not seeking sinners alone, but assured saints should be enquirers. We must enquire as to the will of God and how we may do it; as to our interest in the heavenly city, and how we may be more assured of it. We shall not need to make enquiries in heaven, for there we shall know even as we are known; but meanwhile we should sit at Jesus' feet, and awaken all our faculties to learn of him.

Verse 5. This verse gives an excellent reason for the psalmist's desire after communion with God, namely, that he was thus secured in the hour of peril. For in the time of trouble, that needy time, that time when others forsake me, he shall hide me in his pavilion: he shall give me the best of shelter in the worst of danger. The royal pavilion was erected in the centre of the army, and around it all the mighty men kept guard at all hours; thus in that divine sovereignty which almighty power is sworn to maintain, the believer peacefully is hidden, hidden not by himself furtively, but by the king, who hospitably entertains him. In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me. Sacrifice aids sovereignty in screening the elect from harm. No one of old dared to enter the most holy place on pain of death; and if the Lord has hidden his people there, what foe shall venture to molest them? He shall set me up upon a rock. Immutability, eternity, and infinite power here come to the aid of sovereignty and sacrifice. How blessed is the standing of the man whom God himself sets on high above his foes, upon an impregnable rock which never can be stormed! Well may we desire to dwell with the Lord who so effectually protects his people.

Verse 6. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me. He is quite sure of it. Godly men of old prayed in faith, nothing wavering, and spoke of their answer to their prayers as a certainty. David was by faith so sure of a glorious victory over all those who beset him, that he arranged in his own heart what he would do when his foes lay all prostrate before him; that arrangement was such as gratitude suggested. Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy. That place for which he longed in his conflict, should see his thankful joy in his triumphant return. He does not speak of jubilations to be offered in his palace, and feasting in his banqueting halls, but holy mirth he selects as most fitting for so divine a deliverance. I will sing. This is the most natural mode of expressing thankfulness. Yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord. The vow is confirmed by repetition, and explained by addition, which addition vows all the praise unto Jehovah. Let who will be
silent, the believer when his prayer is heard, must and will make his praise to be heard also; and let who will sing unto the vanities of the world, the believer reserves his music for the Lord alone.

Verse 7. Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice. The pendulum of spirituality swings from prayer to praise. The voice which in the last verse was tuned to music is here turned to crying. As a good soldier, David knew how to handle his weapons, and found himself much at home with the weapon of "all prayer." Note his anxiety to be heard. Pharisees care not a fig for the Lord's hearing them, so long as they are heard of men, or charm their own pride with their sounding devotions; but with a genuine man, the Lord's ear is everything. The voice may be profitably used even in private prayer; for though it is unnecessary, it is often helpful, and aids in preventing distractions. Have mercy also upon me. Mercy is the hope of sinners and the refuge of saints. All acceptable petitioners dwell much upon this attribute. And answer me. We may expect answers to prayer, and should not be easy without them any more than we should be if we had written a letter to a friend upon important business, and had received no reply.

Verse 8. In this verse we are taught that if we would have the Lord hear our voice, we must be careful to respond to his voice. The true heart should echo the will of God as the rocks among the Alps repeat in sweetest music the notes of the peasant's horn. Observe, that the command was in the plural, to all the saints, Seek ye; but the man of God turned it into the singular by a personal application, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. The voice of the Lord is very effectual where all other voices fail. When thou saidst, then my heart, my inmost nature was moved to an obedient reply. Note the promptness of the response—no sooner said than done; as soon as God said "seek, "the heart said, "I will seek." Oh, for more of this holy readiness! Would to God that we were more plastic to the divine hand, more sensitive of the touch of God's Spirit.

Verse 9. Hide not thy face far from me. The word "far" is not in the original, and is a very superfluous addition of the translators, since even the least hiding of the Lord's face is a great affliction to a believer. The command to seek the Lord's face would be a painful one if the Lord, by withdrawing himself, rendered it impossible for the seeker to meet with him. A smile from the Lord is the greatest of comforts, his frown the worst of ills. Put not thy servant away in anger. Other servants had been put away when they proved unfaithful, as for instance, his predecessor Saul; and this made David, while conscious of many faults, most anxious that divine long suffering should continue him in favour. This is a most appropriate prayer for us under a similar sense of unworthiness. Thou hast been my help. How truly can we join in this declaration; for many
years, in circumstances of varied trial, we have been upheld by our God, and
must and will confess our obligation. "Ingratitude, "it is said, "is natural to
fallen man, "but to spiritual men it is unnatural and detestable. Leave me not,
neither forsake me. A prayer for the future, and an inference from the past. If
the Lord had meant to leave us, why did he begin with us? Past help is but a
waste of effort if the soul now be deserted. The first petition, "leave me not,
"may refer to temporary desertions, and the second word to the final
withdrawal of grace, both are to be prayed against; and concerning the second,
we have immutable promises to urge. O God of my salvation. A sweet title
worthy of much meditation.

Verse 10. When my father and my mother forsake me. These dear relations will
be the last to desert me, but if the milk of human kindness should dry up even
from their breasts, there is a Father who never forgets. Some of the greatest of
the saints have been cast out by their families, and persecuted for righteousness'
sake. Then the Lord will take me up. Will espouse my cause, will uplift me
from my woes, will carry me in his arms, will elevate me above my enemies,
will at last receive me to his eternal dwelling place.

Verse 11. Teach me thy way, O Lord. He does not pray to be indulged with his
own way, but to be informed as to the path in which the righteous Jehovah
would have him walk. This prayer evinces an humble sense of personal
ignorance, great teachableness of spirit, and cheerful obedience of heart. Lead
me in a plain path. Help is here sought as well as direction; we not only need a
map of the way, but a guide to assist us in the journey. A path is here desired
which shall be open, honest, straightforward, in opposition to the way of
cunning, which is intricate, tortuous, dangerous. Good men seldom succeed in
fine speculations and doubtful courses; plain simplicity is the best spirit for an
heir of heaven: let us leave shifty tricks and political expediencies to the
citizens of the world—the New Jerusalem owns plain men for its citizens. Esau
was a cunning hunter, Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. Because of
mine enemies. These will catch us if they can, but the way of manifest, simple
honesty is safe from their rage. It is wonderful to observe how honest simplicity
baffles and outwits the craftiness of wickedness. Truth is wisdom. "Honesty is
the best policy."

Verse 12. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies; or I should be like
a victim cast to the lions, to be rent in pieces and utterly devoured. God be
thanked that our foes cannot have their way with us, or Smithfield would soon
be on a blaze again. For false witnesses are risen up against me. Slander is an
old fashioned weapon out of the armoury of hell, and is still in plentiful use;
and no matter how holy a man may be, there will be some who will defame
him. "Give a dog an ill name, and hang him; "but glory be to God, the Lord's people are not dogs, and their ill names do not injure them. And such as breathe out cruelty. It is their vital breath to hate the good; they cannot speak without cursing them; such was Paul before conversion. They who breathe out cruelty may well expect to be sent to breathe their native air in hell; let persecutors beware!

Verse 13. Faintness of heart is a common infirmity; even he who slew Goliath was subject to its attacks. Faith puts its bottle of cordial to the lip of the soul, and so prevents fainting. Hope is heaven's balm for present sorrow. In this land of the dying, it is our blessedness to be looking and longing for our fair portion in the land of the living, whence the goodness of God has banished the wickedness of man, and where holy spirits charm with their society those persecuted saints who were vilified and despised among men. We must believe to see, not see to believe; we must wait the appointed time, and stay our soul's hunger with foretastes of the Lord's eternal goodness which shall soon be our feast and our song.

Verse 14. Wait on the Lord. Wait at his door with prayer; wait at his foot with humility; wait at his table with service; wait at his window with expectancy. Suitors often win nothing but the cold shoulder from earthly patrons after long and obsequious waiting; he speeds best whose patron is in the skies. Be of good courage. A soldier's motto. Be it mine. Courage we shall need, and for the exercise of it we have as much reason as necessity, if we are soldiers of King Jesus. And he shall strengthen thine heart. He can lay the plaister right upon the weak place. Let the heart be strengthened, and the whole machine of humanity is filled with power; a strong heart makes a strong arm. What strength is this which God himself gives to the heart? Read the "Book of Martyrs," and see its glorious deeds of prowess; go to God rather, and get such power thyself. Wait, I say, on the Lord. David, in the words "I say," sets his own private seal to the word which, as an inspired man, he had been moved to write. It is his testimony as well as the command of God, and indeed he who writes these scanty notes has himself found it so sweet, so reviving, so profitable to draw near to God, that on his own account he also feels bound to write, "Wait, I SAY, on the Lord."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Verse 1. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Alice Driver, martyr, at her examination, put all the doctors to silence, so that they had not a word to say, but one looked upon another; then she said, "Have you
no more to say? God be honoured, you be not able to resist the Spirit of God, in me, a poor woman. I was an honest poor man's daughter, never brought up at the University as you have seen; but I have driven the plough many a time before my father, I thank God; yet, notwithstanding, in the defence of God's truth, and in the cause of my Master, Christ, by his grace I will set my foot against the foot of any of you all, in the maintenance and defence of the same; and if I had a thousand lives they should go for the payment thereof." So the Chancellor condemned her, and she returned to the prison joyful. Charles Bradbury.

Verse 1. The Lord is my light, etc. St. John tells us, that "in Christ was life; and the life was the light of men; "but he adds that, "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Joh 1:4-5. There is a great difference between the light, and the eye that sees it. A blind man may know a great deal about the shining of the sun, but it does not shine for him—it gives him no light. So, to know that "God is light, "is one thing 1Jo 1:5, and to be able to say, "The Lord is my light, "is quite another thing. The Lord must be the light by which the way of life is made plain to us—the light by which we may see to walk in that way—the light that exposes the darkness of sin—the light by which we can discover the hidden sins of our own hearts. When he is thus our light, then he is our salvation also. He is pledged to guide us right; not only to show us sin, but to save us from it. Not only to make us see God's hatred of sin, and his curse upon it, but also to draw us unto God's love, and to take away the curse. With the Lord lighting us along the road of salvation, who, or what need we fear? Our life is hid with Christ in God. Col 3:3. We are weak, very weak, but his "strength is made perfect in weakness." 2Co 12:2. With the Lord himself pledged to be the strength of our life, of whom need we be afraid? From Sacramental Meditations on the Twenty-seventh Psalm, 1843.

Verse 1. The Lord is my light. "Light" which makes all things visible, was the first made of all visible things; and whether God did it for our example, or no, I know not; but ever since, in imitation of this manner of God's proceeding, the first thing we do when we intend to do anything, is to get us "light." Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 1. The Lord is my light. Adorable Sun, cried St. Bernard, I cannot walk without thee: enlighten my steps, and furnish this barren and ignorant mind with thoughts worthy of thee. Adorable fulness of light and heat, be thou the true noonday of my soul; exterminate its darkness, disperse its clouds; burn, dry up, and consume all its filth and impurities. Divine Sun, rise upon my mind, and never set. Jean Baptiste Elias Avrillon, 1652-1729.
Verse 1. *Whom shall I fear?* Neither spiritual nor military heroes do exploits through cowardice, Courage is a necessary virtue. In Jehovah is the best possible foundation for unflinching intrepidity. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1. *Of whom shall I be afraid?* I have no notion of a timid, disingenuous profession of Christ. Such preachers and professors are like a rat playing hide-and-seek behind a wainscot, who puts his head through a hole to see if the coast is clear, and ventures out if nobody is in the way; but slinks back again if danger appears. We cannot be honest to Christ except we are bold for him. He is either worth all we can lose for him, or he is worth nothing. *H. G. Salter, A.M., in "The Book of Illustrations, "1840.*

Verse 2. *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.* There is no such dainty dish to a malicious stomach, as the flesh of an enemy; it goes down without chewing, and they swallow it up whole like cormorants. But though malice have a ravenous stomach, yet she hath but slow digestion; though her teeth be sharp, yet her feet are lame, at least apt to stumble; and this made well for David, for when his enemies came upon him to eat up his flesh, because they came upon the feet of malice, they stumbled and fell. A man may stumble and yet not fall; but to stumble and fall withal, is the proper stumbling of the wicked, and especially of the maliciously wicked; and such, it seems, was the stumbling of David's enemies, because the enemies were such; and such I doubt not shall be the stumbling of mine enemies, because mine are such; and of what then, of whom now, should I be afraid? *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 2. *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.* He describes his enemies by their malice and by their ruin. 1. His enemies were cruel enemies, blood suckers, eaters of flesh. We call them cannibals. As indeed men that have not grace, if they have greatness, and be opposed, their greatness is inaccessible, one man is a devil to another. The Scripture calls them "wolves, that leave nothing till morning." *Zep 3:3.* As the great fishes eat up the little ones, so great men they make no more conscience of eating up other men, than of eating bread; they make no more bones of overthrowing men and undoing them, than of eating bread. "They eat up my people as they eat bread." *Ps 14:4.* 2. But notwithstanding their cruelty, they were overthrown. Saith David, *When my foes came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.* For, indeed, God's children, when they are delivered, it is usually with the confusion of their enemies. God doth two things at once, because the special grievance of God's children it is from inward and outward enemies. He seldom or never delivers them but with the confusion of their enemies. This will be most apparent at the
day of judgment when Satan, and all that are led by his spirit, all the malignant church, shall be sent to their own place, and the church shall be for ever free from all kind of enemies. When the church is most free, then the enemies of the church are nearest to destruction; like a pair of balances, when they are up at the one end, they are down at the other. So when it is up with the church, down go the enemies. *Richard Sibbes.*

**Verse 2.** *The wicked, mine enemies.* The wicked hate the godly; there is enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent. Ge 3:15. As in nature there is an antipathy between the vine and the bay tree, the elephant and the dragon. Vultures have an antipathy against sweet smells: so in the wicked there is an antipathy against the people of God; they hate the sweet perfumes of their graces. It is true the saints have their infirmities; but the wicked do not hate them for these, but for their holiness; and from this hatred ariseth open violence: the thief hates the light, therefore would blow it out. *Thomas Watson.*

**Verse 2.** There was great wisdom in the prayer of John Wesley: "Lord, if I must contend, let it not be with thy people." When we have for foes and enemies those who hate good men, we have at least this consolation, that God is not on their side, and therefore it is essentially weak. *William S. Plumer.*

**Verse 3.** Though an host should encamp against me, etc. He puts the case of the greatest danger that can be. *Though an host should encompass me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.* Here is great courage for the time to come. "Experience breeds hope and confidence." David was not so courageous a man of himself; but upon experience of God's former comfort and assistance, his faith brake as fire out of the smoke, or as the sun out of a cloud. Though I was in such and such perplexities, yet for the time to come, I have such confidence and experience of God's goodness, that I will not fear. He that seeth God by a spirit of faith in his greatness and power, he sees all other things below as nothing. Therefore, he saith here, he cares not for the time to come for any opposition; no, not of an army. "If God be with us, who can be against us?" Ro 8:31. He saw God in his power; and then, looking from God to the creature, alas! who was he? As Micah, when he had seen God sitting upon his throne; what was Ahab to him, when he had seen God once? So when the prophet David had seen God once, then "though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear," *etc. Richard Sibbes.*

**Verse 3.** Though an host should encamp against me, etc. If I love my God, and I love him with a noble spirited love, all my enemies will fight against me in vain; I shall never fear them, and the whole world cannot harm me. Charity
cannot be offended, because she takes offence at nothing. Enemies, enviers, slanderers, persecutors, I defy you; if I love, I shall triumph over your attacks. Ye can take away my goods; but if my love has a generous spirit, I shall be always rich enough, and ye cannot take away my love, which alone makes all my riches and treasures. Ye may blacken my reputation; but as I hold you cheaply quit of all homage of praise and applause, I, with all my heart, give you a free leave to blame and to defame. Happily for me, ye cannot blacken me before my God, and his esteem alone makes amends to me, and rewards me, for all your contempt. Ye can persecute my body, but there I even will help you on by my penances; the sooner it shall perish, the sooner shall I be delivered from this domestic enemy, which is a burden to me. What harm, then, can ye do me? If I am resolved to suffer all, and if I think I deserve all the outrages ye can do me, ye will only give more loftiness of spirit to my love, more brilliancy to my crown. Jean Baptiste Elias Avrillon.

Verse 3. Those who are willing to be combatants for God, shall also be more than conquerors through God. None are so truly courageous as those who are truly religious. If a Christian live, he knows by whose might he stands; and if he die, he knows for whose sake he falls. Where there is no confidence in God, there will be no continuance with God. When the wind of faith ceases to fill the sails, the ship of obedience cease to plough the seas. The taunts of Ishmael shall never make an Isaac disesteem his inheritance, William Secker.

Verses 3-4. The favourite grows great by the many favours, gifts, jewels, offices, the prince bestows upon him. The Christian grows rich in experiences, which he wears as bracelets, and keeps as his richest jewels. He calls one Ebenezer—"hitherto God hath helped; "and other Naphtali—"I have wrestled with God and prevailed; "another Gershom—"I was a stranger; "another Joseph—"God will yet add more; "and another, Peniel—"I have seen the face of God." 1Sa 7:12 Ge 30:8 Ex 2:22 Ge 30:24 Ge 32:30. I have been delivered from the lion, therefore shall be from the bear; from lion and bear, therefore from the Philistine; from the Philistine, therefore from Saul; from Saul, therefore God will deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me blameless to his heavenly kingdom. John Sheffield.

Verse 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. Some interpreters vary concerning what the psalmist aims at; I understand thus much in a generality, which is clear that he means a communion and fellowship with God, which is that one thing, which if a Christian had, he needs desire no more: that we should all desire and desire again and be in love with, and that is enough even to satisfy us, the fruition of
Psalm 27

God, and the beholding of him in his ordinances, in his temple, to have correspondence and fellowship and communion with him there. O God, vouchsafe us that! Now this is so infinitely sweet, that it was the psalmist's only desire, and the sum of all his desires here, and therefore much more in the tabernacle of heaven, which doth make up the consummation and completeness of all our happiness. *John Stoughton.*

**Verse 4.** *One thing have I desired of the Lord,* etc. Seeing David would make but *one* request to God, why would he not make a greater? for, alas! what a poor request is this—to *dwell in God's house,* and what to do? but only to *see,* and to see what? but only a *beauty,* a fading thing, at most but to *enquire,* and what is enquiring? but only to hear news; a vain fancy. And what cause in any of these why David should make it his request to God? But mark, O my soul, what goes with it! Take altogether—to *behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple.* And now tell me, if there be, if there can be, any greater request to be made? any greater cause to be earnest about it? For though worldly beauty be a fading thing, yet "the beauty of the Lord," shall continue when the world shall fade away; and though enquiring after news be a vain fancy, yet to *enquire in God's Temple* is the way to learn there is no new thing under the sun, and there it was that Solomon learned that "all is vanity." Indeed, this "*one thing,*" that David desires, is in effect that *unum necessarium* that Christ speaks of in the gospel; which Mary makes choice of there, as David doth here. *Sir Richard Baker.*

**Verse 4.** *One thing,* etc. A heavenly mind gathers itself up into one wish and no more. "*One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require.*" Grant me thyself, O Lord, and I will ask no more. The new creature asks nothing of God, but to enjoy God: give me this, O Lord, and for the rest, let Ziba take all. I will part with all to buy that one pearl, the riches of heavenly grace. *Jeremy Taylor.*

**Verse 4.** *One thing.* The first thing, then, is David's choice, summarily described in the word, "*one thing.*" So Christ confirmeth the prophet's word, while he called Mary's choice, "*one thing.*" Lu 10:42. And that for these three reasons: First, because it is not a common but a *chief* good. If there be any good above it, it is not the chief good; and if there be any good equal unto it, it is not alone. Next, because it is the *last end* which we mind eternally to enjoy; if there be any end beyond it, it is not the last, but amidst, and a degree to it. All mids and ends are used for it, but it is sought for itself; and, therefore, must be but one. Thirdly, it is a *centre* whereunto all reasonable spirits draw. As all lines from a circle meet in the centre, so every one that seeketh happiness aright meeteth in the chief good, as the only thing which they intend, and, therefore,
must be one. William Struther, in "True Happiness, or King David's Choice," 1633.

Verse 4. One thing. Changes, great changes, and many bereavements there have been in my life. I have been emptied from vessel to vessel. But one thing has never failed—one thing makes me feel that my life has been one; it has calmed my joys, it has soothed my sorrows, it has guided me in difficulty, it has strengthened me in weakness. It is the presence of God—a faithful and loving God. Yes, brethren, the presence of God is not only light, it is unity. It gives unity to the heart that believes it—unity to the life that is conformed to it. It was the presence of God in David's soul that enabled him to say, "One thing have I desired of the Lord; "and in St, Paul's that enabled him to say, "This one thing I do." George Wagner, in the "Wanderings of the Children of Israel," 1862.

Verse 4. One thing.—

One master passion in the breast,
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.
—Alexander Pope.

Verse 4. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. To approach continually unto the temple, and thither continually to repair was the dwelling, no doubt, here meant; to dwell, to reside continually there, not to come for a spurt or a fit...And thus dwelt Hannah, the daughter of Phanuel, who is said, in the second of Luke, for the space of four score and four years not to have gone out of the temple. Not that she was there always, but often, saith Lyra; and venerable Bede to the same purpose. Not that she was never absent, no, not an hour; but for that she was often in the temple. And the same St. Luke, speaking of our Saviour's disciples, after they had seen him ascended into heaven—"They returned, "saith he, "to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God, " Lu 24:52-53. Thus, St. Austin's mother, in her time too, might be said to dwell in God's house, whereunto she came so duly and truly twice a day, "That she, in thy Scriptures, "saith St. Austin, "might hear, O God, what thou saidst to her, and thou, in her prayers, what she said to thee." In a word, such were the Christians the same St. Austin speaks of in another place, whom he calleth the emmets of God. "Behold the emmet of God, "saith he, "it rises early every day, it runs to God's church, it there prays, it hears the lesson read, it sings a psalm, it ruminates what it hears, it mediates thereupon, and hoards up within itself the precious corn gathered from that barn floor." John Day's "David's Desire to go to Church," 1609.
Verse 4. *That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* In the beginning of the Psalm, David keeps an audit of his soul's accounts, reckoning up the large incomes and lasting treasures of God's bounty, grace, and mercy; the sum whereof is this: The Lord is my light and my life, my strength and my salvation. And now, where shall David design his presence, but where is his light? Where shall he desire his person, but where is his strength? Where shall he wish his soul, but where is his life? and where shall he fix his habitation, but where is his salvation? even in communion with his God; and this, especially, in the holy worship of his sanctuary. No wonder, then, if above all things he desires and seeks after this "one thing," "to dwell in the house of the Lord," etc. Robert Mossom.

Verse 4. *The house of the Lord.* It (the tabernacle, the sanctuary), is called the house of God because he is present there, as a man delights to be present in his house. It is the place where God will be met withal. As a man will be found in his house, and there he will have suitors come to him, where he reveals his secrets. A man rests, he lies, and lodgeth in his house. Where is a man so familiar as in his house? and what other place hath he such care to protect and provide for as his house? and he lays up his treasures and his jewels in his house. So God lays up all the treasures of grace and comfort in the visible church. In the church he is to be spoken with as a man in his house. There he gives us sweet meetings; there are mutual, spiritual kisses. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." So 1:2. A man's house is his castle, as we say, that he will protect and provide for. God will be sure to protect and provide for his church. Therefore he calls the church of God, that is, the tabernacle (that was the church at that time), *the house of God.* If we apply it to our times, that answers the tabernacle now is particular visible churches under particular pastors, where the means of salvation are set up. Particular visible churches now are God's tabernacle. The church of the Jews was a national church. There was but one church, but one place, and one tabernacle; but now God hath erected particular tabernacles. Every particular church and congregation under one pastor, their meeting is the church of God, a several church independent. Richard Sibbes.

Verse 4. *To behold the beauty of the Lord.* That was one end of his desire, to dwell in the house of God; not to feed his eyes with speculations and goodly sights (as indeed there were in the tabernacle goodly things to be seen). No; he had a more spiritual sight than that. He saw the inward spiritual beauty of those spiritual things. The other were but outward things, as the apostle calls them. I desire to dwell in the house of the Lord, to *behold the beauty of the Lord,* the inward beauty of the Lord especially. Richard Sibbes.
Verse 4. *The beauty of the Lord.* In connection with these words, we would try to show that the character of God is attractive, and fitted to inspire us with love for him, and to make us, as it were, run after him. The discussion of our subject may be arranged under three heads. I. Some of the elements of the beauty of the Lord. II. Where the beauty of the Lord may be seen. III. Peculiar traits of the beauty of the Lord. I. Some of the elements of the beauty of the Lord. God is a Spirit. Hence his beauty is spiritual, and its elements must be sought for in spiritual perfection. 1. One of the elements of this beauty is holiness. 2. But the elements of the divine beauty on which we intend at this time to dwell, are those which are included under the general description of God's mercy and grace. The attractiveness of these is more easily perceived, and their influence is sooner felt by persons in our fallen condition. It is mainly through the instrumentality of these that sinners are won over from their enmity against God, and that the Holy Ghost sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. 3. Another thing, which we may call an element of beauty in God, is the combination of his various attributes in one harmonious whole. The colours of the rainbow are beautiful, when taken one by one: but there is a beauty in the rainbow, which arises not from any single tint; there is a beauty in it which would not exist if the several hues were assumed in succession—a beauty which is a result of their assemblage and collocation, and consists in their blended radiance. In like manner so the several perfections, which coexist and unite in the nature of God, produce a glorious beauty. Holiness is beautiful; mercy is beautiful; truth is beautiful. But, over and above, there is a beauty which belongs to such combinations and harmonies as the psalmist describes, when he tells us, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep," etc. II. We are next to inquire where the beauty of the Lord may be seen It may so far be seen in the natural world. The throne of nature, although in some respects clouds and darkness are round about it, is not without its rainbow of beauty, any more than the throne of grace. The beauty of the Lord may be seen in the moral law. In the law! Even so. In the unbending law, with its terrible anathema, his beauty and amiableness shine forth. The law is full of love. The duties of the law are duties of love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. The curse of the law is designed and employed for the maintenance of love. Obedience to the law, and the reign of love, are but different aspects of the same state of things. And one of the most sublime lessons of the law is the fact, that God is love. Again, the beauty of the Lord may be seen in the gospel. We see it, as it were, by reflection, in the law; in the gospel, we see it directly. The law shows us the hearts of men, as God would have them to be; the gospel shows us God's own heart. Again the beauty of the
Lord is seen in Christ. It is seen in Christ, for he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father. The beauty of the Lord is seen in Christ, when we consider him as the Father's gift, and when we look to his offices and to his character. The character of Christ was the finest spectacle of moral beauty which men or angels ever set their eyes on. III. We conclude by noticing some traits of the beauty of the Lord. 1. It never deceives. 2. It never fades. 3. It never loses its power. 4. It never disappoints. Condensed from Andrew Gray (1805-1861), in "Gospel Contrasts and Parallels."

Verse 4. The beauty of the Lord. The Lord's beauty, to be seen in his house, is not the beauty of his essence, for so no man can see God and live Ex 23:18,20; before this glorious beauty the angels cover their faces with their wings Isa 6:1-2; but it is the beauty of his ordinances, wherein God doth reveal to the eyes of men's minds, enlightened by his Spirit, the pleasant beauty of his goodness, justice, love, and mercy in Jesus Christ. Thomas Pierson, M.A., 1570-1633.

Verse 4. The beauty of the Lord. "Beauty" is too particular a word to express the fulness of the Holy Ghost, the pleasantness or the delight of God. Take the word in a general sense, in your apprehensions. It may be the object of all senses, inward and outward. Delight is most transcendental for pleasantness; for indeed God in his ordinances, is not only "beauty" to the eye of the soul, but is ointment to the smell, and sweetness to the taste, and all in all to all the powers of the soul. God in Christ, therefore, he is delightful and sweet...The beauty of the Lord is especially the amiable things of God, which is his mercy and love, that makes all other things beautiful that is in the church. Richard Sibbes.

Verse 4. To enquire in his temple. The more grace the more business ye will find ye have to do with God in his ordinances; little grace hath little to do, and much grace hath much to do; he hath always business with God, special earnest business. To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. Oh, I have somewhat to enquire after; I am to do something by this duty, and therefore cannot trifle. He that comes to visit his friend in a compliment, he talks, he walks, he trifles, and goes home again; but he that comes upon business, he is full of it: he is like Abraham's honest and faithful servant. Ge 24:33. "And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told my errand." I have great business with the Lord, about the church and about my soul, and I will not eat, nor talk, nor think, nor dally about anything, till I have told mine errand, or heard my Maker's errand unto me. And for this end it's a rare thing to carry somewhat always on the spirit, to spread before God, a heart pregnant with some needful request or matter whereof to treat with God. Ps 45:1. Richard Steele's "Antidote against Distractions, "1673.
Verse 4. It was David's earnest prayer, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.* There are many that pray David's words, but not with David's heart. *Unum petii,* one thing have I desired, *de praeterito,* for the time past; *et hoc requiram,* this I will seek after, *de futuro,* for the time to come: I have required it long, and this suit I will urge till I have obtained it. What? To dwell in some of the houses of God all the days of my life, and to leave them to my children after me; not to serve him there with devotion, but to make the place mine own possession? These love the house of God too well; they love it to have and to hold; but because the conveyance is made by the lawyer, and not by the minister, their title will be found naught in the end; and if there be not a *nisi prius* to prevent them, yet at that great day of universal audit, the Judge of all the world shall condemn them. By this way, the nearer to the church, the further from God. The Lord's temple is ordained to gain us to him, not for us to gain it from him. If we love the Lord, we "will love the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwelleth;" that so by being humble frequenters of his temple below, we may be made noble saints of his house above, the glorious kingdom of Jesus Christ. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 4. David being in this safe condition, what doth he now think upon or look at, as his main scope? Not as Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, to sit still and be merry, when he had overcome the Romans and all his enemies, as he sometime said to Cyneas, the philosopher, but to improve his rest to perpetual piety, in going from day to day to God's house, as Hannah is said afterwards to have done. Luke 2. And this, first, for the solace of his soul, in seeing the beauty of his sanctuary. Secondly, that he might still be directed aright and be safe. Thirdly, that he might yet be more highly exalted in kingly glory. Fourthly, for all this, as he should have abundant cause, sacrificing and singing psalms to God without ceasing: see Ps 27:5-6. *John Mayer.*

Verse 4. O my soul, what sights have I seen in the house of God! what provisions have I tasted! what entertainments have I had! what enlargements in prayer, and answers thereto! what impression under his word, what entertainment at his table, as he has sometimes brought me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me has been love! And though I cannot, it may be, say so much of this as some others; yet what I have found, I cannot but remember with thankfulness, and desire more; and as this was *in the house of God, here* would I still desire to dwell. *Daniel Wilcox,* 1676-1733.

Verse 5. The time of trouble. Though God does not always deliver his people out of trouble, yet he delivers them from the evil of trouble, the despair of
trouble, by supporting the spirit; nay, he delivers by trouble, for he sanctifies
the trouble to cure the souls, and by less troubles delivers them from greater.
*From a Broad Sheet in the British Museum, dated, London: printed for D. M.,
1678.*

**Verse 5.** *He shall hide me.* The word here used means to hide, to secrete, and
then, to defend or protect. It would properly be applied to one who had fled
from oppression, or from any impending evil, and who should be secreted in a
house or cavern, and thus rendered safe from pursuers, or from the threatening
evil. *Albert Barnes.*

**Verse 5.** *Pavilion* comes from *papilio,* a butterfly. It signifies a tent made of
cloth stretched out on poles, which in form resembles in some measure the
insect above named. *Adam Clarke.*

**Verse 5.** *In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.* He alludes to the
ancient custom of offenders, who used to flee to the tabernacle or altar, where
they esteemed themselves safe. 1Ki 2:28. *Matthew Poole.*

**Verse 5.** *In the secret of his tabernacle.* Were there no other place, he would
put me in the holy of holies, so that an enemy would not dare to approach me.
*Adam Clarke.*

**Verse 6.** *Now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me.*
A man cannot drown so long as his head is above water. Now, it is the proper
"When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads:
for your redemption draweth nigh." A strange time, one would think, for Christ
then to bid his disciples *lift up their heads* in, when they see other men's hearts
failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on
the earth Lu 21:26; yet now is the time of the rising of their sun, when others' is
setting, and the blackness of darkness is overtaking others; because now the
Christian's feast is coming, for which hope hath saved its stomach so long.
"Your redemption draweth nigh." Two things make the head hang down—fear
and shame; hope eases the Christian's heart of both these, and so forbids him to
give any sign of a desponding mind by a dejected countenance. *William
Gurnall.*

**Verse 6.** *Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy.* "Surely,
"some may say, "he could have called on God beyond the precincts of the
temple. Wherever he wandered as an exile, he carried with him the precious
promise of God, so that he needed not to put so great a value upon the sight of
the external edifice. He appears, by some gross imagination or other, to suppose that God could be enclosed by wood and stones. But if we examine the words more carefully, it will be easy to see, that his object was altogether different from a mere sight of the noble building and its ornaments, however costly. He speaks, indeed, of the temple, but he places that beauty not so much in the goodliness that was to be seen by the eye, as in its being the celestial pattern which was shown to Moses, as it is written in Ex 25:40: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." As the fashion of the temple was not framed according to the wisdom of man, but was an image of spiritual things, the prophet directed his eyes and all his affections to this object. Their madness is, therefore, truly detestable who wrest this place in favour of pictures and images, which, instead of deserving to be numbered among temple ornaments, are rather like the dung and filth, defiling all the purity of holy things. John Calvin.

Verse 8. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. In the former verse, David begins a prayer to God, "Hear, O Lord; have mercy upon me, and answer me." This verse is a ground of that prayer, Seek ye my face, saith God. The heart answers again, Thy face, Lord, will I seek; therefore I am encouraged to pray to thee. In the words are contained God's command and David's obedience. God's warrant and David's work answerable, the voice and the echo: the voice, "Seek my face;" the rebound back again of a gracious heart, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

"When thou saidst." It is not in the original. It only makes way to the sense. Passionate speeches are usually abrupt: "Seek my face:" "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." ...

God is willing to be known. He is willing to open and discover himself; God delights not to hide himself. God stands not upon state, as some emperors do that think their presence diminishes respect. God is no such God, but he may be searched into. Man, if any weakness be discovered, we can soon search into the depth of his excellency; but with God it is clean otherwise. The more we know of him, the more we shall admire him. None admire him more than the blessed angels, that see most of him, and the blessed spirits that have communion with him. Therefore he hides not himself, nay, he desires to be known; and all those that have his Spirit desire to make him known. Those that suppress the knowledge of God in his will, what he performs for men, and what he requires of them, they are enemies to God and of God's people. They suppress the opening of God, clean contrary to God's meaning; "Seek my face;" "I desire to be made known, and lay open myself to you. Therefore we may observe by the way, that when we are in any dark condition, that a Christian finds not the beams of God shining on him, let him not lay the blame upon God, as if God
were a God that delighted to hide himself. Oh, no! it is not his delight. He loves not strangeness to his poor creatures. It is not a point of his policy. He is too great to affect (Choose=love) such poor things. No; the fault is altogether in us. We walk not worthy of such a presence; we want humility and preparation. If there be any darkness in the creature, that he finds God doth not so shine on him as in former times, undoubtedly the cause is in himself; for God saith, "Seek my face." He desires to reveal himself. Richard Sibbes.

Verse 8. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, etc. All the Spirit's motions are seasonable, and therefore not to be put off; for delay is a kind of denial, and savours of such ungrateful contempt, as must needs be very displeasing to him. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. God does not only expect such an answer, but expects it immediately upon his call. Whenever he blows with his wind, he looks that we should spread our sails. If we refuse his offered help, we may deservedly want it when desired. As Christ withdrew himself from the spouse because she let him stand knocking so long at the door of her heart, and she still deferred to open, and tired out his loving forbearance with vain and frivolous excuses. So 5:2, etc. But as we must not omit the present performance of any duty which he excites unto, we must not check his influences by being weary of the duties which he assists us in: if we do not improve extraordinary aids by holding out the longer, we provoke him to depart. Timothy Cruso.

Verse 8. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, etc. We see here thus much, that God must begin with us, before we can close with him; God must seek us, before we can seek him; God must first desire that we draw near to him, before we for our particulars are able to draw near unto God. Thou saidst, Seek my face; and then and not till then my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Thomas Horton.

Verse 8. When thou saidst, etc. Now God then speaks to the heart to pray when not only he puts upon the duty by saying to the conscience, This thou oughtest to do; but God's speaking to pray is such as his speech at first was, when he made the world, when he said, "Let there be light, and there was light:" so he says, let there be a prayer, and there is a prayer; that is, he pours upon a man a spirit of grace and supplication, a praying disposition; he puts in motives, suggests arguments and pleas to God; all which you shall find come in readily, and of themselves, and that likewise with a quickening heat and enlargement of affection, and with a lingering and longing, and restlessness of spirit to be alone, to pour out the soul to God, and to vent and form those motions and suggestions into a prayer, till you have laid them together, and made a prayer of them. And this is a speaking to the heart. Observe such times when God doth
thus, and neglect them not, then to strike whilst the iron is hot; thou hast then his ear; it is a special opportunity for that business, such a one as thou mayest never have the like. Suitors at court observe *molissima fandi tempora*, their times of begging when they have kings in a good mood, which they will be sure to take the advantage of; but especially if they should find that the king himself should begin of himself to speak of the business which they would have of him: and thus that phrase of Ps 10:17, that God prepares the heart, is understood by some, that God prepares the heart, and causeth the ear to hear; that is, he fashions it and composes it into a praying frame. And sure it is a great sign that God means to hear us when himself shall thus indite the petition. *Thomas Goodwin.*

**Verse 8.** *When thou saidst,* etc. And well may this be pleaded, in that God useth not so to stir up and strengthen us to seek him, but when he intends to be found of us. Ps 10:17. "Thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." Jer 29:13. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." And God maketh it an argument to himself, that if he say to any inwardly as well as outwardly, *Seek my face,* he that speaketh righteousness cannot speak thus to them, and frustrate their prayers, and so bid them seek his face in vain. Isa 45:19, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain; I the Lord speak right things." If Ahasuerus bid his spouse to ask, surely he will not fail to grant her petition Es 7:2; so here. And as when Christ called the blind man to come to him to tell him his grievance, it was truly said to him by them, "Be of good comfort, rise, for he calleth thee." Mr 10:49. So it is in this case. *Thomas Cobbett.*

**Verse 8.** *My heart said unto thee.* The heart is between God and our obedience, as it were, an ambassador. It understands from God what God would have done, and then it lays a command upon the whole man. The heart and conscience of man is partly divine, partly human. It hath some divinity in it, especially if the man be a holy man. God speaks, and the heart speaks. God speaks to the heart, and the heart speaks to us. And oftimes when we hear conscience speaking to us, we neglect it; and as St. Augustine said of himself, "God spake often to me, and I was ignorant of it." When there is no command in the word that the heart directly thinks of (as indeed many profane careless men scarce have a Bible in their houses), God speaks to them thus; conscience speaks to them some broken command, that they learn against their wills. They heed it not, but David did not so. God said, *Seek ye my face:* his heart answers, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." The heart looks upward to God, and then to itself, *My heart said.* It said to thee and then to itself. First, his heart said to God,
"Lord, I have encouragement from thee. Thou hast commanded that I should seek thy face." So his heart looked to God, and then it speaks to itself. *Thy face, Lord, will I seek.* It looks first to God, and then to all things that come from itself. *Richard Sibbes.*

**Verse 8.** There are diverse things considerable of us in this answer and compliance of David's with God's command or invitation to him. First, it was seasonable, and in due time; presently does David make this return: "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." This is the property and disposition of every wise and prudent Christian, to close with the very first opportunities of God's invitation. Secondly, this answer, as it was seasonable and present, so it was also full and complete; the performance was proportionable to the injunction. Ye shall have some kind of people in the world that God bids them do one thing and they will be sure to do the quite contrary; or, at least, not do as much as the should do, but do it by halves. But, now, here David makes return to God in the full extent and proportion of obedience. God said, *Seek my face,* and he answered *Thy face, Lord, will I seek.* Thirdly, it was real, and entire, and sincere; "My heart said." It is one thing to say it with the mouth, and it is another thing to say it with the heart. With the mouth it is quite easy and ordinary, and nothing more usual. Lord, thy face will we seek, especially in any trouble or calamity, which is incident unto us; but for the heart to say it, that is not so frequent. Fourthly, it was settled and peremptory. "Thy face will I seek; "there is nothing shall hinder me of it, or keep me from it, but I will do it against all opposition. Lastly, this protestation of David was absolute and indefinite and unlimited; "I will seek thy face; "without prescription of time, or place, or condition; not only now, but hereafter: not only for a time, but for ever, in all seasons, in all estates, in all circumstances, still I shall keep me to this—to hold my communion with thee. Then are we Christians, indeed, when we are so immutably and irreversibly and independently upon the opinions or practices of any other person. Condensed from Thomas Horton.

**Verse 8.** God hath promised his favour, and, therefore, his people may seek his favour. Nay, he hath commanded his people to seek his favour, and therefore they should seek it. It is an unadvised folly, during the suspension of God's favour, to unson ourselves, and unpeople ourselves, i.e., by denying the grace and spiritual relation which exist between us and God. That is not the way to gain favour; for when we have undone our relation of children we exclude ourselves from the expectation of favour. No, the wisest and surest way is to seek the renewing of God's loving countenance, and not to be driven away from God by our unbelief. *Obadiah Sedgwick, in "The Doubting Believer, "1653.*
Verse 9. Hide not thy face far from me. When I seek thy face, vouchsafe, O God, not to hide thy face from me: for to what purpose should I seek it if I cannot find it? and what hope of finding it if thou be bent to hide it? Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 9. Put not thy servant away in anger. God puts away many in anger for their supposed goodness, but not any at all for their confessed badness. John Trapp.

Verse 9. Thy servant. It is a blessed and happy thing to be God's true "servant." Consider what the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon's servants 1Ki 10:8: "Happy are these thy servants, ",&c. Now Christ Jesus is greater than Solomon, Mt 12:42, and so a better Master. Good earthly masters will honour good servants, as Pr 27:18, "He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured; " Pr 17:2, "A wise servant shall have a portion, or inheritance, among the brethren." But however some earthly masters may be Nabals and Labans, yet God will not be so: Joh 12:26: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." "If any man serve me, him will my father honour, "see Lu 12:37. The watchful servants are blessed; their master will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them, as Mt 25:21,23: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Thomas Pierson.

Verse 9. Thou hast been my help; leave me not, etc. One act of mercy engages God to another. Men argue thus: I have showed you kindness already, therefore trouble me no more; but because God has shown mercy he is more ready still to show mercy; his mercy in election makes him justify, adopt, glorify. Thomas Watson.

Verse 9. Leave me not; rather, "dismiss me not; ""let not go thy hold of me." This is the proper sense of the Hebrew verb (vjn), to set a thing loose, to let it go, to abandon it. Samuel Horsley.

Verse 10. When my father and my mother forsake me. As there seems to be some difficulty in supposing the psalmist's parents to have "deserted" him, they might perhaps be said to have "forsaken" him (as Muis conjectures), that is, to have left him behind them, as being dead. James Merrick, M.A., 1720-1769.

Verse 10. When my father and my mother forsake me. It is indeed the nature of all living creatures, though never so tender of their young ones, yet when they are grown to a ripeness of age and strength, to turn them off to shift for themselves; and even a father and a mother, as tender as they are, have yet
somewhat of this common nature in them; for while their children are young they lead them by the hand, but when they are grown up they leave them to their own legs, and if they chance to fall let them rise as they can. But God even then takes his children up, for he knows of what they are made; he knows their strength must be as well supported as their weakness be assisted; he knows they must as well be taken up when they fall, as be held up when they stand. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 10. Father and mother. First, who are they? Properly and chiefly our natural parents, of whom we were begotten and born; to whom (under God) we owe our being and breeding. Yet here, not they only; but by synecdoche all other kinsfolks, neighbours, friends, acquaintances, or, indeed, more generally yet, all worldly comforts, stays, and helps whatsoever. 2. But, then, why these named the rathest, and the rest to be included in these? Because we promise to ourselves more help from them than from any of the other. We have a nearer relation to, and a greater interest in them than in any other; and they of all other are the least likely to forsake us. The very brute creatures forsake not their young ones. A hen will not desert her chickens, nor a bear endure to be robbed of her whelps. 3. But, then, thirdly, why both named—father and mother too? Partly because it can hardly be imagined that both of them should forsake their child, though one should hap to be unkind. Partly, because the father's love being commonly with more providence, the mother's with more tenderness; both together do better express than alone either would do, the abundant love of God towards us, who is infinitely dear over us, beyond the care of the most provident father, beyond the affection of the most tender mother. 4. But, then, fourthly, when may they be said to forsake us? When at any time they leave us destitute of such help as we stand in need of; whether it be out of choice, when they list not to help us, though they might if they would; or out of necessity, when they cannot help us, though they would if they could. Robert Sanderson.

Verse 10. Then the Lord will take me up. But dictum factum: these are but words: Are there producible and deeds to make it good? Verily, there are, and that to the very letter. When Ishmael's mother, despairing of his life, had forsaken him, and laid him down gasping (his last, for ought she knew or could do to help it), in the wilderness, the Lord took him up; he opened a new spring of water, and opened her eyes to see it, and so the child was preserved. Genesis 21. When Moses' parents had also forsaken him (for they durst not stand by him any longer), and laid him down among the rushy flags, the Lord took him up too. He provided him of a saviour, the king's own daughter, and of a nurse the child's own mother—and so he was preserved too. Ex 2:6-9. Take but two examples more, out of either Testament one. David and St. Paul, both forsaken
of men, both taken up of God. How was David forsaken, in Ps 142:4, when he had looked upon his right hand, and saw no man that would know him; he had no place to fly unto, and no man cared for his soul. But all the while Dominus ad dextris, there was one at his right hand (though at first he was not aware of him), ready to take him up; as it there followeth, Ps 142:5, "I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." And how St. Paul was forsaken; take it from himself, 2Ti 4:16, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me:" a heavy case, and had been heavier had there not been one ready to take his part, at the next verse, "Nevertheless the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, " etc. What need we any more witnesses? In ore duorum—in the mouth of two such witnesses the point is sufficiently established. But you will yet say, these two might testify what they had already found post factum. But David, in the text, pronounces it de futuro, beforehand, and that somewhat confidently: "The Lord will take me up." As he doth also elsewhere: "Sure I am that the Lord will avenge the poor, and maintain the cause of the helpless," Psalm 109. But is there any ground for that? Doubtless there is; a double ground; one in the nature, another in the promise of God. In his nature four qualities there are (we take leave so to speak, suitably to our own low apprehensions, for in the Godhead there are properly no qualities); but call them qualities or attributes or what else you will; there are four perfections in God, opposite to those defects which in our earthly parents we have found to be the chief causes why they do so oft forsake us; which give us full assurance that he will take us up when all other succors fail us. Those are his love, his wisdom, his power, his eternity, and all in his nature. To which four, add his promise, and you have the fulness of all the assurance that can be desired. Robert Sanderson.

**Verse 10.** The Lord will take me up: Hebrew, will gather me, that is, take me into his care and keeping. In the civil law, we find provision made for outcasts and friendless persons; some hospitals to entertain them, some liberties to comfort and compensate their trouble. It is sure, that in God the forlorn and fatherless find mercy. John Trapp.

**Verse 11.** Teach me thy way, O Lord. Having compared himself to an exposed, deserted infant, adopted by God, he anon fairly asks to be shown how to walk. He asks the grace of being able to observe all his holy commandments, which he never loses sight of through the whole one hundred and fifty Psalms. What else could he do? when it was the only path to that heavenly house of God, which he had just declared to be the only wish and desire of his heart. Robert Bellarmine (Cardinal), 1542-1621.
Verse 11. *Lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.* If a man travelling in the King's highway, be robbed between sun and sun, satisfaction is recoverable upon the county where the robbery was made; but if he takes his journey in the night, being an unseasonable time, then it is at his own peril, he must take what falls. So, if a man keep in *God's ways*, he shall be sure of God's protection; but if he stray out of them, he exposes himself to danger. *Robert Skinner (Bishop), 1636.*

Verse 11. *Because of mine enemies.* If once a man commence a professor, the eyes of all are upon him; and well they may, for his profession in the world is a separation from the world. Believers condemn those by their lives who condemn them by their lips. Righteous David saw many who were waiting to triumph in his mistakes. Hence the more they watched, the more he prayed: "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies." It may be rendered, *because of mine observers.* Christian, if you dwell in the open tent of licentiousness, the wicked will not walk backward, like modest Shem and Japheth, to cover your shame: but they will walk forward, like cursed Ham, to publish it. Thus they make use of your weakness as a plea for their wickedness. Men are merciless in their censures of Christians; they have no sympathy for their infirmity: while God weighs them in more equal scales, and says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." While a saint is a *dove* in the eyes of God, he is only a *raven* in the estimation of sinners. *William Secker.*

Verse 13. *I had fainted,* etc. Study much the all sufficiency, the power, the goodness, the unchangeableness of God. 1. The all sufficiency of God. What fulness there is in him to make up all you can lose for him; what refreshments there are in him to sweeten all you can suffer for him. What fulness! You may as well doubt that all the waters of the ocean cannot fill a spoon, as that the divine fulness cannot be enough to you, if you should have nothing left in this world; for all the waters that cover the sea are not so much as a spoonful, compared with the boundless and infinite fulness of all sufficiency. What refreshments in him! One drop of divine sweetness is enough to make one in the very agony of the cruellest death to cry out with joy, "The bitterness of death is past." Now in him there are not only drops, but rivers; not a scanty sprinkling, but an infinite fulness. 2. Eye much the power of God, how it can support under the cross, what it can bring to pass for you by the cross. No cross so sharp and grievous, but he can make it sweet and comfortable. No cross so heavy and intolerable, but he can make light and easy. No cross so ignominious and reproachful, but he can turn it to your honour. No cross so fastened to you, but he can easily remove it. 3. His *goodness.* His all sufficiency and power
make him able, his goodness makes him willing to do for his people under the cross what his all sufficiency and almighty power can afford. His goodness sets his mighty power to work for his suffering saints. His goodness sets his all sufficiency, his fulness, abroach for them, so that it runs freely upon them; and never more freely than when they are under the cross. I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord, &c. What is it that makes you ready to faint under the cross, or thoughts and foresight of it? Look to the goodness of God, there is support. Condensed from David Clarkson.

Verse 13. I had fainted. The words in italics are supplied by our translators; but, far from being necessary, they injure the sense. Throw out the words, I had fainted, and leave a break after the verse, and the elegant figure of the psalmist will be preserved: "Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"—what! what, alas! should have become of me! Adam Clarke.

Verse 13. Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. In the Hebrew this verse is elliptical, as Calvin here translates it. In the French version he supplies the ellipsis, by adding to the end of the verse the words, "C'estoit fait de moy, "I had perished." In our English version the words, "I had fainted," are introduced as a supplement in the beginning of the verse. Both the supplement of Calvin, and that of our English version, which are substantially the same, doubtless explain the meaning of the passage; but they destroy the elegant abrupt form of the expression employed by the psalmist, who breaks off in the middle of his discourse without completing the sentence, although what he meant to say is very evident. Editorial note to Calvin, in loc.

Verse 13. Under sore trouble and distress, labour to exercise a strong and lively faith. It was a noble and heroic resolution in that holy man Job, under his singular trials Job 13:15: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; "as if he had said, Let my strokes be never so sore and heavy, yet I will not let go my grips of his word and promises, I will not raze these foundations of my hope. It was the way the psalmist kept himself from sinking under his heavy burdens: I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. ...Faith brings new strength and auxiliary supplies of grace from heaven, when the former supply is exhausted and spent; whereof David had the sweet experience here. As God doth plant and actuate grace in the soul, so he is pleased to come in with seasonable supplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, answerable to their present exigencies and pressures; and thus he doth from time to time feed the believer's lamp with fresh oil, give in more faith, more love, more hope, and more desires; and
Psalm 27

hereby he gives power to the faint, and strengthens the things which remain when ready to die. *John Willison.*

**Verse 13.** Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living: a cordial made up of three sovereign ingredients—a hope to see; and to see the goodness of God; and the goodness of God in the land of the living. *Sir Richard Baker.*

**Verse 13.** The land of the living. Alas! what a land of the living is this, in which there are more dead than living, more under ground than above it; where the earth is fuller of graves than houses; where life lies trembling under the hand of death; and where death hath power to tyrannize over life! No, my soul, there only is the land of the living where there are none but the living; where there is a church, not militant, but triumphant; a church indeed, but no churchyard, because none dead, nor none that can die; where life is not passive, nor death active; where life sits crowned, and where death is swallowed up in victory. *Sir Richard Baker.*

**Verse 14.** Wait on the Lord, be of good courage. Be comfortable, hold fast (as the Greek hath), be manly, or quit thee as a man; which word the apostle useth. 1Co 16:13. These are the words of encouragement against remissness, fear, faintness of heart, or other infirmities. *Henry Ainsworth.*

**Verse 14.** Wait on the Lord, be of good courage.

Stand but your ground, your ghostly foes will fly—
Hell trembles at a heaven directed eye;
Choose rather to defend than to assail—
Self confidence will in the conflict fail:
When you are challenged you may dangers meet—
True courage is a fixed, not sudden heat;
Is always humble, lives in self distrust,
And will itself into no danger thrust.
Devote yourself to God, and you will find
God fights the battles of a will resigned.
Love Jesus! love will no base fear endure—
Love Jesus! and of conquest rest secure.
—*Thomas Ken (Bishop),* 1637-1710-11.

**Verse 14.** Think not the government is out of Christ's hand, when men are doing many sad things, and giving many heavy blows to the work of God. No, no; men are but his hand; and it is the hand of God that justly and righteously is
lying heavy upon his people. Look above men, then; you have not to do with them: there is a turn of matters, just as he is pleased to turn his hand. Ralph Erskine, 1685-1752.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. (first clause). The relation of illumination to salvation, or the need of light if men would be saved.

Verse 1. The Christian hero, and the secret springs of his courage.

Verse 1. The believer's fearless challenge.

Verse 2. The character, number, power, and cruelty of the enemies of the church, and the mysterious way in which they have been defeated.


2. Displayed in the confident endurance of affliction.


4. Producing the richest results, glory to God, etc.


1. Unity of desire.
2. Earnestness of action.
4. Heavenliness of contemplation.
5. Progress in divine education.


Verse 4. A breathing after God. R. Sibbes's Sermon.

Verse 4. (last clause). Sabbath occupations and heavenly delights.

Verse 6. The saint's present triumph over his spiritual foes, his practical gratitude, and his vocal praises.


Verse 8. The heart in tune with its God. Note, the promptness, heartiness, personality, unreservedness, accuracy, and resolution of the response to the precept.

Verse 8. The successful seeker. R. Sibbe's Sermon.


Verse 9. 1. Desertion deprecated in all its forms.
   2. Experience pleaded.


Verse 10. The portion of the orphan, the comfort of the persecuted, the paradise of the departing.

Verse 11. The plain man's pathway desired, described, divinely approved, "thy way", "a plain way", and divinely taught, "teach me, O Lord, ""lead me."

Verse 13. Faith, its precedence of sight, its objects, its sustaining power.


Verse 14. The believer's position," wait;" his condition, "good courage;" his support," he shall," etc.; his perseverance, "wait" repeated a second time; his reward.

WORKS UPON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PSALM

Excellent Encouragements against Afflictions, containing David's Triumph over Distress; or an Exposition of Psalm 27. By THOMAS PIERSON, M.A. (Reprinted in Nichol's Series of Puritan Commentaries.)

Meditations upon the 27th Psalm of David. By SIR RICHARD BAKER.
Psalm 28

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

TITLE AND SUBJECT. Again, the title "A Psalm of David," is too general to give us any clue to the occasion on which it was written. Its position, as following the twenty-seventh, seems to have been designed, for it is a most suitable pendant and sequel to it. It is another of those "songs in the night" of which the pen of David was so prolific. The thorn at the breast of the nightingale was said by the old naturalists to make it sing: David's griefs made him eloquent in holy psalmody. The main pleading of this Psalm is that the suppliant may not be confounded with the workers of iniquity for whom he expresses the utmost abhorrence; it may suit any slandered saint, who being misunderstood by men, and treated by them as an unworthy character, is anxious to stand aright before the bar of God. The Lord Jesus may be seen here pleading as the representative of his people.

DIVISION. The first and second verses earnestly entreat audience of the Lord in a time of dire emergency. From Ps 28:2-5, the portion of the wicked is described and deprecated. In Ps 28:6-8, praise is given for the Lord's mercy in hearing prayer, and the Psalm concludes with a general petition for the whole host of militant believers.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. Unto thee will I cry, O Lord, my rock. A cry is the natural expression of sorrow, and is a suitable utterance when all other modes of appeal fail us; but the cry must be alone directed to the Lord, for to cry to man is to waste our entreaties upon the air. When we consider the readiness of the Lord to hear, and his ability to aid, we shall see good reason for directing all our appeals at once to the God of our salvation, and shall use language of firm resolve like that in the text, "I will cry." The immutable Jehovah is our rock, the immovable foundation of all our hopes and our refuge in time of trouble: we are fixed in our determination to flee to him as our stronghold in every hour of danger. It will be in vain to call to the rocks in the day of judgment, but our rock attends to our cries. Be not silent to me. Mere formalists may be content without answers to their prayers, but genuine suppliants cannot; they are not satisfied with the results of prayer itself in calming the mind and subduing the will—they must go further and obtain actual replies from heaven, or they cannot rest; and those replies they long to receive at once, if possible; they dread even a little of God's silence. God's voice is often so terrible that it shakes the wilderness; but his silence is equally full of awe to an eager suppliant. When God seems to close his ear, we must not therefore close our mouths, but rather cry with more earnestness; for when our note grows shrill with eagerness and
grief, he will not long deny us a hearing. What a dreadful case should we be in if the Lord should become for ever silent to our prayers! This thought suggested itself to David, and he turned it into a plea, thus teaching us to argue and reason with God in our prayers. Lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. Deprived of the God who answers prayer, we should be in a more pitiable plight than the dead in the grave, and should soon sink to the same level as the lost in hell. We must have answers to prayer: ours is an urgent case of dire necessity; surely the Lord will speak peace to our agitated minds, for he never can find it in his heart to permit his own elect to perish.

Verse 2. This is much to the same effect as the first verse, only that it refers to future as well as present pleadings. Hear me! Hear me! Hear the voice of my supplications! This is the burden of both verses. We cannot be put off with a refusal when we are in the spirit of prayer; we labour, use importunity, and agonize in supplications until a hearing is granted us. The word "supplications, "in the plural, shows the number, continuance, and variety of a good man's prayers, while the expression "hear the voice, "seems to hint that there is an inner meaning, or heart voice, about which spiritual men are far more concerned than for their outward and audible utterances. A silent prayer may have a louder voice than the cries of those priests who sought to awaken Baal with their shouts. When I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle: which holy place was the type of our Lord Jesus; and if we would gain acceptance, we must turn ourselves evermore to the blood besprinkled mercy seat of his atonement. Uplifted hands have ever been a form of devout posture, and are intended to signify a reaching upward towards God, a readiness, an eagerness to receive the blessing sought after. We stretch out empty hands, for we are beggars; we lift them up, for we seek heavenly supplies; we lift them towards the mercy seat of Jesus, for there our expectation dwells. O that whenever we use devout gestures, we may possess contrite hearts, and so speed well with God.

Verse 3. Draw me not away with the wicked. They shall be dragged off to hell like felons of old drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn, like logs drawn to the fire, like fagots to the oven. David fears lest he should be bound up in their bundle, drawn to their doom; and the fear is an appropriate one for every godly man. The best of the wicked are dangerous company in time, and would make terrible companions for eternity; we must avoid them in their pleasures, if we would not be confounded with them in their miseries. And with the workers of iniquity. These are overtly sinful, and their judgment will be sure; Lord, do not make us to drink of their cup. Activity is found with the wicked even if it be
lacking to the righteous. Oh! to be "workers" for the Lord. *Which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.* They have learned the manners of the place to which they are going: the doom of liars is their portion for ever, and lying is their conversation on the road. Soft words, oily with pretended love, are the deceitful meshes of the infernal net in which Satan catches the precious life; many of his children are learned in his abominable craft, and fish with their father's nets, almost as cunningly as he himself could do it. It is a sure sign of baseness when the tongue and the heart do not ring to the same note. Deceitful men are more to be dreaded than wild beasts: it were better to be shut up in a pit with serpents than to be compelled to live with liars. He who cries "peace" too loudly, means to sell it if he can get his price. "Good wine need no bush:" if he were so very peaceful he would not need to say so; he means mischief, make sure of that.

**Verse 4.** When we view the wicked simply as such, and not as our fellow men, our indignation against sin leads us entirely to coincide with the acts of divine justice which punish evil, and to wish that justice might use her power to restrain by her terrors the cruel and unjust; but still the desires of the present verse, as our version renders it, are not readily made consistent with the spirit of the Christian dispensation, which seeks rather the reformation than the punishment of sinners. If we view the words before us as prophetic, or as in the future tense, declaring a fact, we are probably nearer to the true meaning than that given in our version. Ungodly reader, what will be your lot when the Lord deals with you according to your desert, and weighs out to you his wrath, not only in proportion to what you have actually done, but according to what you would have done if you could. Our endeavours are taken as facts; God takes the will for the deed, and punishes or rewards accordingly. Not in this life, but certainly in the next, God will repay his enemies to their faces, and give them the wages of their sins. Not according to their fawning words, but after the measure of their mischievous deeds, will the Lord mete out vengeance to them that know him not.

**Verse 5.** Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands. God works in creation—nature teems with proofs of his wisdom and goodness, yet purblind atheists refuse to see him: he works in providence, ruling and overruling, and his hand is very manifest in human history, yet the infidel will not discern him: he works in grace—remarkable conversions are still met with on all hands, yet the ungodly refuse to see the operations of the Lord. Where angels wonder, carnal men despise. God condescends to teach, and man refuses to learn. *He shall destroy them:* he will make them "behold, and wonder, and perish." If they would not see the hand of judgment upon
others, they shall feel it upon themselves. Both soul and body shall be overwhelmed with utter destruction for ever and ever. And not build them up. God's cure is positive and negative; his sword has two edges, and cuts right and left. Their heritage of evil shall prevent the ungodly receiving any good; the ephah shall be too full of wrath to contain a grain of hope. They have become like old, rotten, decayed houses of timber, useless to the owner, and harbouring all manner of evil, and, therefore, the Great Builder will demolish them utterly. Incorrigible offenders may expect speedy destruction: they who will not mend, shall be thrown away as worthless. Let us be very attentive to all the lessons of God's word and work, lest being found disobedient to the divine will, we be made to suffer the divine wrath.

Verse 6. Blessed be the Lord. Saints are full of benedictions; they are a blessed people, and a blessing people; but they give their best blessings, the fat of their sacrifices, to their glorious Lord. Our Psalm was prayer up to this point, and now it turns to praise. They who pray well, will soon praise well: prayer and praise are the two lips of the soul; two bells to ring out sweet and acceptable music in the ears of God; two angels to climb Jacob's ladder: two altars smoking with incense; two of Solomon's lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh; they are two young roes that are twins, feeding upon the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. Because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. Real praise is established upon sufficient and constraining reasons; it is not irrational emotion, but rises, like a pure spring, from the deeps of experience. Answered prayers should be acknowledged. Do we not often fail in this duty? Would it not greatly encourage others, and strengthen ourselves, if we faithfully recorded divine goodness, and made a point of extolling it with our tongue? God's mercy is not such an inconsiderable thing that we may safely venture to receive it without so much as thanks. We should shun ingratitude, and live daily in the heavenly atmosphere of thankful love.

Verse 7. Here is David's declaration and confession of faith, coupled with a testimony from his experience. The Lord is my strength. The Lord employs his power on our behalf, and moreover, infuses strength into us in our weakness. The psalmist, by an act of appropriating faith, takes the omnipotence of Jehovah to be his own. Dependence upon the invisible God gives great independence of spirit, inspiring us with confidence more than human. And my shield. Thus David found both sword and shield in his God. The Lord preserves his people from unnumbered ills; and the Christian warrior, sheltered behind his God, is far more safe than the hero when covered with his shield of brass or triple steel. My heart trusted in him, and I am helped. Heart work is sure work; heart trust is never disappointed. Faith must come before help, but help will
never be long behindhand. Every day the believer may say, "I am helped, "for
the divine assistance is vouchsafed us every moment, or we should go back
unto perdition; when more manifest help is needed, we have but to put faith
into exercise, and it will be given us. Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and
with my song will I praise him. The heart is mentioned twice to show the truth
of his faith and his joy. Observe the adverb "greatly, "we need not be afraid of
being too full of rejoicing at the remembrance of grace received. We serve a
great God, let us greatly rejoice in him. A song is the soul's fittest method of
giving vent to its happiness, it were well if we were more like the singing lark,
and less like the croaking raven. When the heart is glowing, the lips should not
be silent. When God blesses us, we should bless him with all our heart.

Verse 8. The Lord is their strength. The heavenly experience of one believer is
a pattern of the life of all. To all the militant church, without exception,
Jehovah is the same as he was to his servant David, "the least of them shall be
as David." They need the same aid and they shall have it, for they are loved
with the same love, written in the same book of life, and one with the same
anointed Head. And he is the saving strength of his anointed. Here behold king
David as the type of our Lord Jesus, our covenant Head, our anointed Prince,
through whom all blessings come to us. He has achieved full salvation for us,
and we desire saving strength from him, and as we share in the unction which is
so largely shed upon him, we expect to partake of his salvation. Glory be unto
the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has magnified the power of
his grace in his only begotten Son, whom he has anointed to be a Prince and a
Saviour unto his people.

Verse 9. This is a prayer for the church militant, written in short words, but full
of weighty meaning. We must pray for the whole church, and not for ourselves
alone. Save thy people. Deliver them from their enemies, preserve them from
their sins, succour them under their troubles, rescue them from their
temptations, and ward off from them every ill. There is a plea hidden in the
expression, "thy people:" for it may be safely concluded that God's interest in
the church, as his own portion, will lead him to guard it from destruction. Bless
thine inheritance. Grant positive blessings, peace, plenty, prosperity, happiness;
make all thy dearly purchased and precious heritage to be comforted by thy
Spirit. Revive, refresh, enlarge, and sanctify thy church. Feed them also. Be a
shepherd to thy flock, let their bodily and spiritual wants be plentifully
supplied. By thy word, and ordinances, direct, rule, sustain, and satisfy those
who are the sheep of thy hand. And lift them up for ever. Carry them in thine
arms on earth, and then lift them into thy bosom in heaven. Elevate their minds
and thoughts, spiritualise their affections, make them heavenly, Christlike, and full of God. O Lord, answer this our petition, for Jesus' sake.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Verse 1. Unto thee do I cry. It is of the utmost importance that we should have a definite object on which to fix our thoughts. Man, at the best of times, has but little power for realising abstractions; but least of all in his time of sorrow. Then he is helpless; then he needs every possible aid; and if his mind wander in vacancy, it will soon weary, and sink down exhausted. God has graciously taken care that this need not be done. He has so manifested himself to man in his word, that the afflicted one can fix his mind's eye on him, as the definite object of his faith, and hope, and prayer. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jer 33:3. This was what the psalmist did; and the definiteness of God, as the object of his trust in prayer, is very clearly marked. And specially great is the privilege of the Christian in this matter. He can fix his eye on Jesus; he, without any very great stretch of the imagination, can picture that Holy One looking down upon him; listening to him; feeling for him; preparing to answer him. Dear reader, in the time of your trouble, do not roam; do not send out your sighs into vacancy; do not let your thoughts wander, as though they were looking for some one on whom to fix; for some one to whom you could tell the story of your heart's need and desolation. Fix your heart as the psalmist did, and say, "Unto thee will I cry." ... Oh! happy is that man, who feels and knows that when trouble comes, he cannot be bewildered and confused by the stroke, no matter how heavy it may be. Sorrow stricken he will be, but he has his resource, and he knows it, and will avail himself of it. His is no vague theory of the general sympathy of God for man; his is a knowledge of God, as a personal and feeling God; he says with the psalmist, "Unto thee will I cry." Philip Bennett Power.

Verse 1. My rock. One day a female friend called on the Rev. William Evans, a pious minister in England, and asked how he felt himself. "I am weakness itself," he replied; "but I am on the Rock. I do not experience those transports which some have expressed in the view of death; but my dependence is on the mercy of God in Christ. Here my religion began, and here it must end."

Verse 1. My rock. The Rev. John Rees, of Crownstreet, Soho, London, was visited on his deathbed by the Rev. John Leifchild, who very seriously asked him to describe the state of his mind. This appeal to the honour of his religion roused him, and so freshened his dying lamp, that raising himself up in his bed, he looked his friend in the face, and with great deliberation, energy, and
dignity, uttered the following words:—"Christ in his person, Christ in the love of his heart, and Christ in the power of his arm, is the Rock on which I rest; and now (reclining his head gently on the pillow), Death, strike!" K. Arvine.

**Verse 1.** *Be not silent to me.* Let us next observe what the heart desires from God. It is that he would speak. *Be not silent to me.* Under these circumstances, when we make our prayer, we desire that God would let us know that he hears us, and that he would appear for us, and that he would say, he is our Father. And what do we desire God to say? We want him to let us know that he hears us; we want to hear him speak as distinctly to us, as we feel that we have spoken to him. We want to know, *not only by faith* that we have been heard, but by God's having spoken to us on the very subject whereupon we have spoken to him. When we feel thus assured that God has heard us, we can with the deepest confidence leave the whole matter about which we have been praying, in his hands. Perhaps an answer cannot come for a long time; perhaps things, meanwhile, seem working in a contrary way; it may be, that there is no direct appearance at all of God upon the scene; still faith will hold up and be strong; and there will be comfort in the heart, from the felt consciousness that God has heard our cry about the matter, and that he has told us so. We shall say to ourselves, "God knows all about it; God has in point of fact told me so; therefore I am in peace." And let it be enough for us that God tells us this, when he will perhaps tell us no more; let us not want to try and induce him to speak much, when it is his will to speak but little: the best answer we can have at certain times is simply the statement that "he hears;" by this answer to our prayer he at once encourages and exercises our faith. "It is said, "saith Rutherford, speaking of the Saviour's delay in responding to the request of the Syrophenician woman, "he answered not a word, "but it is not said, he heard not a word. These two differ much. Christ often heareth when he doth not answer—his not answering is an answer, and speaks thus—"pray on, go on and cry, for the Lord holdeth his door fast bolted, not to keep you out, but that you may knock, and knock, and it shall be opened." Philip Bennett Power.

**Verse 1.** Lest...I become like them that go down into the pit. Thou seest, great God, my sad situation. Nothing to me is great or desirable upon this earth but the felicity of serving thee, and yet the misery of my destiny, and the duties of my state, bring me into connection with men who regard all godliness as a thing to be censured and derided. With secret horror I daily hear them blaspheming the ineffable gifts of thy grace, and ridiculing the faith and fervour of the godly as mere imbecility of mind. Exposed to such impiety, all my consolation, O my God, is to make my cries of distress ascend to the foot of thy throne. Although for the present, these sacrilegious blasphemies only awaken in
my soul emotions of horror and pity, yet I fear that at last they may enfeeble me and seduce me into a crooked course of policy, unworthy of thy glory, and of the gratitude which I owe to thee. I fear that insensibly I may become such a coward as to blush at thy name, such a sinner as to resist the impulses of thy grace, such a traitor as to withhold my testimony against sin, such a self deceiver as to disguise my criminal timidity by the name of prudence. Already I feel that this poison is insinuating itself into my heart, for while I would not have my conduct resemble that of the wicked who surround me, yet I am too much biased by the fear of giving them offence. I dare not imitate them, but I am almost as much afraid of irritating them. I know that it is impossible both to please a corrupt world and a holy God, and yet I so far lose sight of this truth, that instead of sustaining me in decision, it only serves to render my vacillation the more inexcusable. What remains for me but to implore thy help! Strengthen me, O Lord, against these declensions so injurious to thy glory, so fatal to the fidelity which is due to thee. Cause me to hear thy strengthening and encouraging voice. If the voice of thy grace be not lifted up in my spirit, reanimating my feeble faith, I feel that there is but a step between me and despair. I am on the brink of the precipice, I am ready to fall into a criminal complicity with those who would fain drag me down with them into the pit. Jean Baptiste Massillon, 1663-1742, freely translated by C.H.S.

Verse 2. I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle. Called (rybd), debhir, because there hence God spake and gave answer. Toward this (a type of Christ, the Word essential), David lifteth up his hands, that it might be as a ladder, whereby his prayer might get up to heaven. John Trapp.

Verse 3. Draw me not away with the wicked...which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts. The godly man abhors dissimulation towards men; his heart goes along with his tongue, he cannot flatter and hate, commend and censure. "Let love be without dissimulation." Ro 12:9. Dissembled love is worse than hatred; counterfeiting of friendship is no better than a lie Ps 78:36, for there is a pretence of that which is not. Many are like Joab: "He took Amasa by the beard to kiss him, and smote him with his sword in the fifth rib, that he died." There is a river in Spain, where the fish seem to be of a golden colour, but take them out of the water, and they are like other fish. All is not gold that glitters; there are some pretend much kindness, but they are like great veins which have little blood; if you lean upon them they are as a leg out of joint. For my part, I much question his truth towards God, that will flatter and lie to his friend. "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander is a fool." Pr 10:18. Thomas Watson.
Verse 3. *Draw me not out with.* An allusion, I conceive, to a shepherd selecting out a certain portion of his flock. "*Reckon me not among.*" Professor Lee.

Verse 3. *Draw me not away.* (ynkvmt-la) from (Kvm); that signifies, both to draw and apprehend, will be best rendered here, *seize not on me*, as he that *seizes* on any to carry or drag him to execution. Henry Hammond.

Verse 4. *Give them according to their deeds,* etc. Here, again, occurs the difficult question about praying for vengeance, which, however, I shall despatch in a few words. In the first place, then, it is unquestionable, that if the flesh move us to seek revenge, the desire is wicked in the sight of God. He not only forbids us to imprecate evil upon our enemies in revenge for private injuries, but it cannot be otherwise than that all those desires which spring from hatred must be disordered. David's example, therefore, must not be alleged by those who are driven by their own intemperate passion to seek vengeance. The holy prophet is not inflamed here by his own private sorrow to devote his enemies to destruction; but laying aside the desire of the flesh, he give judgment concerning the matter itself. Before a man can, therefore, denounce vengeance against the wicked, he must first shake himself free from all improper feelings in his own mind. In the second place, prudence must be exercised, that the heinousness of the evils which offend us drive us not to intemperate zeal, which happened even to Christ's disciples, when they desired that fire might be brought from heaven to consume those who refused to entertain their Master. Lu 9:54. They pretended, it is true, to act according to the example of Elias, but Christ severely rebuked them, and told them that they knew not by what spirit they were actuated. In particular, we must observe this general rule, that we cordially desire and labour for the welfare of the whole human race. Thus it will come to pass, that we shall not only give way to the exercise of God's mercy, but shall also wish the conversion of those who seem obstinately to rush upon their own destruction. In short, David, being free from every evil passion, and likewise endued with the spirit of discretion and judgment, pleads here not so much his own cause as the cause of God. And by this prayer, he further reminds both himself and the faithful, that although the wicked may give themselves loose reins in the commission of every species of vice with impunity for a time, they must at length stand before the judgment seat of God. John Calvin.

Verse 4. *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours.* Yes, great God, since thou hast from the beginning been only occupied in saving men, thou wilt surely strike with an eternal malediction these children of iniquity who appear to have been born only to be lost themselves, and to destroy others. The very benevolence towards mankind
solicits thy thunders against these corrupters of society. The more thou hast done for our race, the more surely will the severity of thy justice reveal itself in destroying the wretches whose only study is to counteract thy goodness towards mankind. They labour incessantly to put men far away from thee, O my God, and in return thou wilt put them far away from thee for ever. They count it great gain to make their fellows thine enemies, and they shall have the desperate consolation of being such themselves to all eternity. What more fitting punishment for the wretches who desire to make all hearts rebel against thine adorable Majesty, than to lie through the baseness of their nature, under the eternal and frightful necessity of hating thee for ever. Jean Baptiste Massillon, rendered very freely by C. H. S.

Verse 4. Give them according to their deeds. The Egyptians killed the Hebrew male children, and God smote the firstborn of Egypt. Sisera, who thought to destroy Israel with his iron chariots, was himself killed with an iron nail, stuck through his temples. Adonibezek, Jud 1:5-7. Gideon slew forty elders of Succoth, and his sons were murdered by Abimelech. Abimelech slew seventy sons of Gideon upon one stone, and his own head was broken by a piece of millstone thrown by a woman. Samson fell by the "lust of the eye," and before death the Philistines put out his eyes. Agag, 1Sa 20:33. Saul slew the Gibeonites, and seven of his sons were hung up before the Lord. 2Sa 21:1-9. Ahab, after coveting Naboth's vineyard, 1Ki 21:19, fulfilled 2Ki 9:24-26. Jeroboam, the same hand that was stretched forth against the altar was withered, 1Ki 13:1-6. Joab having killed Abner, Amasa, and Absalom, was put to death by Solomon. Daniel's accusers thrown into the lion's den meant for Daniel. Haman hung upon the gallows designed for Mordecai. Judas purchased the field of blood, and then went and hanged himself. So in the history of later days, Bajazet was carried about by Tamerlane in an iron cage, as he intended to have carried Tamerlane. Mazentius built a bridge to entrap Constantine, and was overthrown himself of that very spot. Alexander VI. was poisoned by the wine he had prepared for another. Charles IX. made the streets of Paris to stream with Protestant blood, and soon after blood streamed from all parts of his body in a bloody sweat. Cardinal Beaton condemned George Wishart to death, and presently died a violent death himself. He was murdered in bed, and his body was laid out in the same window from which he had looked upon Wishart's execution. G. S. Bowes, in "Illustrative Gatherings."

Verse 4. Render to them their desert. Meditate on God's righteousness, that it is not only his will, but his nature to punish sin; sin must damn thee without Christ, there is not only a possibility or probability that sin may ruin, but without an interest in Christ it must do so; whet much upon thy heart that must;
God cannot but hate sin, because he is holy; and he cannot but punish sin, because he is righteous. God must not forego his own nature to gratify our humours. *Christopher Fowler, in "Morning Exercises,"* 1676.

**Verse 4.** He prayeth against his enemies, not out of any private revenge, but being led by the infallible spirit of prophecy, looking through these men to the enemies of Christ, and of his people in all ages. *David Dickson.*

**Verses 4-5.** In these verses, as indeed in most of the imprecatory passages, the imperative and the future are used promiscuously: *Give them—render them—he shall destroy them.* If therefore, the verbs, in all such passages, were uniformly rendered in the "future,"every objection against the Scripture imprecations would vanish at once, and they would appear clearly to be what they are, namely, prophecies of the divine judgments, which have been since executed against the Jews, and which will be executed against all the enemies of Jehovah, and his Christ; whom neither the "works" of creation, nor those of redemption, can lead to repentance. *George Horne.*

**Verses 4-5.** *See Psalms on "Ps 28:4"* for further information. In these verses, as indeed in most of the imprecatory passages, the imperative and the future are used promiscuously: *Give them—render them—he shall destroy them.* If therefore, the verbs, in all such passages, were uniformly rendered in the "future,"every objection against the Scripture imprecations would vanish at once, and they would appear clearly to be what they are, namely, prophecies of the divine judgments, which have been since executed against the Jews, and which will be executed against all the enemies of Jehovah, and his Christ; whom neither the "works" of creation, nor those of redemption, can lead to repentance. *George Horne.*

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

**Verse 7.** *The Lord is my strength.* Oh, sweet consolation! If a man have a burden upon him, yet if he have *strength* added to him, if the burden be doubled, yet if his *strength* be trebled, the burden will not be heavier, but lighter than it was before to his natural strength; so if our afflictions be heavy, and we cry out, Oh, we cannot bear them! yet if we cannot bear them with our
own strength, why may we not bear them with the strength of Jesus Christ? Do we think that Christ could not bear them? or if we dare not think but that Christ could bear them, why may not we come to bear them? Some may question, can we have the strength of Christ? Yes; that very strength is made over to us by faith, for so the Scripture saith frequently, The Lord is our strength; God is our strength; The Lord Jehovah is our strength; Christ is our strength Ps 28:7 43:2 Ps 118:14 Isa 12:2 Hab 3:19 Col 1:11; and, therefore, is Christ's strength ours, made over unto us, that we may be able to bear whatsoever lies upon us. Isaac Ambrose.

Verse 7. The Lord is my strength inwardly, and my shield outwardly. Faith finds both these in Jehovah, and the one not without the other, for what is a shield without strength, or strength without a shield? My heart trusted in him, and I am helped: the idea of the former sentence is here carried out, that outward help was granted to inward confidence. W. Wilson, D.D.

Verse 7. My heart trusted in him, and I am helped. Faith substantiates things not yet seen; it altereth the tense, saith one, and putteth the future into the present tense as here. John Trapp.

Verse 8. The Lord is their strength: not mine only, but the strength of every believer. Note—the saints rejoice in their friends' comforts as well as their own; for as we have not the less benefit by the light of the sun, so neither by the light of God's countenance, for others sharing therein; for we are sure there is enough for all, and enough for each. This is our communion with all saints, that God is their strength and ours; Christ their Lord and ours. 1Co 1:2. He is their strength, the strength of all Israel, because he is the saving strength of his anointed, i.e., 1. Of David in the type: God in strengthening him that was their king and fought their battles, strengthened the whole kingdom. He calls himself God's anointed, because it was the unction he had received that exposed him to the envy of his enemies, and therefore entitled him to the divine protection. 2. Of Christ, his Anointed, his Messiah, in the antitype. God was his saving strength, qualified him for his undertaking, and carried him through it. Matthew Henry.

Verse 9. Lift them up. The word here used may mean sustain them, or support them; but it more properly means bear, and would be best expressed by a reference to the fact, that the shepherd carries the feeble, the young, and the sickly of his flock in his arms, or that he lifts them up when unable themselves to rise. Albert Barnes.
HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. (first clause). A sinner's wise resolution in the hour of despondency.

Verse 1. The saint's fear of becoming like the ungodly.

Verse 1. God's silence—what terror may lie in it.

Verse 1. (last clause). How low a soul may sink when God hides his face.

Verses 1-2. Prayer. 1. Its nature—a "cry": (a) The utterance of life, (b) The expression of pain, (c) The pleading of need, (d) The voice of deep earnestness.

2. Its object—"O Lord, my rock." God as our Foundation, Refuge, and immutable Friend.

3. Its aim—"Hear, "'Be not silent." We expect an answer, a clear and manifest answer, a speedy answer, a suitable answer, an effectual answer.

4. Its medium—"Towards thy holy oracle." Our Lord Jesus, the true mercy seat, etc.

Verse 3. The characters to be avoided, the doom to be dreaded, the grace to keep us from both.

Verse 4. Measure for measure, or punishment proportioned to desert.

Verse 4. Endeavour the measure of sin rather than mere result. Hence some are guilty of sins which they were unable to commit.

Verse 5. Culpable negligence constantly persisted in, losing much blessing, and involving terrible condemnation.

Verse 6. Answered prayers, a retrospect and song.

Verse 7. The heart's possessions, confidence, experience, joy, and music.

Verse 7. Adoring God for his mercies. 1. What God is to the believer.

2. What should be the disposition of our hearts towards him. —C. Simeon.

Verse 8. All power given to believers because of their union with Jesus.
Psalm 29

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. A Psalm of David. The title affords us no information beyond the fact that David is the author of this sublime song.

SUBJECT. It seems to be the general opinion of modern annotators, that this Psalm is meant to express the glory of God as heard in the pealing thunder, and seen in the equinoctial tornado. Just as the eighth Psalm is to be read by moonlight, when the stars are bright, as the nineteenth needs the rays of the rising sun to bring out its beauty, so this can be best rehearsed beneath the black wing of tempest, by the glare of the lightning, or amid that dubious dusk which heralds the war of elements. The verses march to the tune of thunderbolts. God is everywhere conspicuous, and all the earth is hushed by the majesty of his presence. The word of God in the law and gospel is here also depicted in its majesty of power. True ministers are sons of thunder, and the voice of God in Christ Jesus is full of majesty. Thus we have God's works and God's word joined together: let no man put them asunder by a false idea that theology and science can by any possibility oppose each other. We may, perhaps, by a prophetical glance, behold in this Psalm the dread tempests of the latter days, and the security of the elect people.

DIVISION. The first two verses are a call to adoration. From Ps 29:3-10 the path of the tempest is traced, the attributes of God's word are rehearsed, and God magnified in all the terrible grandeur of his power; and the last verse sweetly closes the scene with the assurance that the omnipotent Jehovah will give both strength and peace to his people. Let heaven and earth pass away, the Lord will surely bless his people.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. Give, i.e., ascribe. Neither men nor angels can confer anything upon Jehovah, but they should recognise his glory and might, and ascribe it to him in their songs and in their hearts. Unto the Lord, and unto him alone, must honour be given. Natural causes, as men call them, are God in action, and we must not ascribe power to them, but to the infinite Invisible who is the true source of all. O ye mighty. Ye great ones of earth and of heaven, kings and angels, join in rendering worship to the blessed and only Potentate; ye lords among men need thus to be reminded, for ye often fail where humbler men are ardent; but fail no longer, bow your heads at once, and loyally do homage to the King of kings. How frequently do grandees and potentates think it beneath them to fear the Lord; but, when they have been led to extol Jehovah, their piety has been the greatest jewel in their crowns. Give unto the Lord glory and strength, both of which men are too apt to claim for themselves, although they are the exclusive prerogatives of the self existent God. Let crowns and swords acknowledge their dependence upon God. Not to your arms, O kings, give ye the glory, nor look
for strength to your hosts of warriors, for all your pomp is but as a fading flower, and your might is as a shadow which declineth. When shall the day arrive when kings and princes shall count it their delight to glorify their God? "All worship be to God only, "let this be emblazoned on every coat of arms.

Verse 2. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* A third time the admonition is given, for men are backward in glorifying God, and especially great men, who are often too much swollen with their own glory to spare time to give God his rightful praise, although nothing more is asked of them than is most just and right. Surely men should not need so much pressing to give what is due, especially when the payment is so pleasant. Unbelief and distrust, complaining and murmuring, rob God of his honour; in this respect, even the saints fail to give due glory to their King. *Worship the Lord,* bow before him with devout homage and sacred awe, and let your worship be such as he appoints. Of old, worship was cumbered with ceremonial, and men gathered around one dedicated building, whose solemn pomp was emblematic of the beauty of holiness; but now our worship is spiritual, and the architecture of the house and the garments of the worshippers are matters of no importance; the spiritual beauty of inward purity and outward holiness being far more precious in the eyes of our thrice holy God. O for grace ever to worship with holy motives and in a holy manner, as becometh saints! The call to worship in these two verses chimes in with the loud pealing thunder, which is the church bell of the universe ringing kings and angels, and all the sons of earth to their devotions.

Verse 3. *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.* The thunder is not only poetically but instructively called "the voice of God, "since it peals from on high; it surpasses all other sounds, it inspires awe, it is entirely independent of man, and has been used on some occasions as the grand accompaniment of God's speech to Adam's sons. There is a peculiar terror in a tempest at sea, when deep calleth unto deep, and the raging sea echoes to the angry sky. No sight more alarming than the flash of lightning around the mast of the ship; and no sound more calculated to inspire reverent awe than the roar of the storm. The children of heaven have often enjoyed the tumult with humble joy peculiar to the saints, and even those who know not God have been forced into unwilling reverence while the storm has lasted. *The glory of God thundereth.* Thunder is in truth no mere electric phenomenon, but is caused by the interposition of God himself. Even the old heathen spake of Jupiter Tonans; but our modern wise men will have us believe in laws and forces, and anything or nothing so they may be rid of God. Electricity of itself can do nothing, it must be called and sent upon its errand; and until the almighty Lord commissions it,
its bolt of fire is inert and powerless. As well might a rock of granite, or a bar of iron fly in the midst of heaven, as the lightning go without being sent by the great First Cause. The Lord is upon many waters. Still the Psalmist's ear hears no voice but that of Jehovah, resounding from the multitudinous and dark waters of the upper ocean of clouds, and echoing from the innumerable billows of the storm tossed sea below. The waters above and beneath the firmament are astonished at the eternal voice. When the Holy Spirit makes the divine promise to be heard above the many waters of our soul's trouble, then is God as glorious in the spiritual world as in the universe of matter. Above us and beneath us all is the peace of God when he gives us quiet.

Verse 4. The voice of the Lord is powerful. An irresistible power attends the lightning of which the thunder is the report. In an instant, when the Lord wills it, the force of electricity produces amazing results. A writer upon this subject, speaks of these results as including a light of the intensity of the sun in his strength, a heat capable of fusing the most compact metals, a force in a moment paralysing the muscles of the most powerful animals; a power suspending the all pervading gravity of the earth, and an energy capable of decomposing and recomposing the closest affinities of the most intimate combinations. Well does Thompson speak of "the unconquerable lightning," for it is the chief of the ways of God in physical forces, and none can measure its power. As the voice of God in nature is so powerful, so is it in grace; the reader will do well to draw a parallel, and he will find much in the gospel which may be illustrated by the thunder of the Lord in the tempest. His voice, whether in nature or revelation, shakes both earth and heaven; see that ye refuse not him that speaketh. If his voice be thus mighty, what must his hand be! beware lest ye provoke a blow. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The King of kings speaks like a king. As when a lion roareth, all the beasts of the forest are still, so is the earth hushed and mute while Jehovah thundereth marvellously.

"It is listening fear and dumb amazement all."

As for the written word of God, its majesty is apparent both in its style, its matter, and its power over the human mind; blessed be God, it is the majesty of mercy wielding a silver sceptre; of such majesty the word of our salvation is full to overflowing.

Verse 5. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars.

"Black from the stroke above, the smouldering pine
Stands a sad shattered trunk."
Noble trees fall prostrate beneath the mysterious bolt, or stand in desolation as mementoes of its power. Lebanon itself is not secure, high as it stands, and ancient as are its venerable woods: *Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.* The greatest and most venerable of trees or men, may not reckon upon immunity when the Lord is abroad in his wrath. The gospel of Jesus has a like dominion over the most inaccessible of mortals; and when the Lord sends the word, it breaks hearts far stouter than the cedars.

**Verse 6.** *He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.* Not only the trees, but the mountains themselves move as though they frisked and leaped like young bulls or antelopes. As our own poets would mention hills and valleys known to them, so the Psalmist hears the crash and roar among the ranges of Libanus, and depicts the tumult in graphic terms. Thus sings one of our own countrymen:—"Amid Carnavon's mountains rages loud
The repercussive roar: with mighty crash
Into the flashing deep, from the rude rocks
Of Penmaen Mawr, heaped hideous to the sky,
Tumble the smitten cliffs; and Snowdon's peak,
Dissolving, instant yields his wintry load.
Far seen, the heights of heathy Cheviot blaze,
And Thule bellows through her utmost isles."

The glorious gospel of the blessed God has more than equal power over the rocky obduracy and mountainous pride of man. The voice of our dying Lord rent the rocks and opened the graves: his living voice still works the like wonders. Glory be to his name, the hills of our sins leap into his grave, and are buried in the red sea of his blood, when the voice of his intercession is heard.

**Verse 7.** *The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.* As when sparks fly from the anvil by blows of a ponderous hammer, so the lightning attends the thundering strokes of Jehovah. "At first heard solemn over the verge of heaven,
The tempest growls; but as it nearer comes,
And rolls its awful burden on the wind,
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more
The noise astounds: till overhead a sheet
Of livid flame discloses wide; then shuts
And opens wider; shuts and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze."

The thunder seems to divide one flash from another, interposing its deepening roar between the flash which precedes it and the next. That the flashes are truly
flames of fire is witnessed by their frequently falling upon houses, churches, etc., and wrapping them in a blaze. How easily could the Lord destroy his rebellious creatures with his hot thunderbolts! how gracious is the hand which spares such great offenders, when to crush them would be so easy! Flames of fire attend the voice of God in the gospel, illuminating and melting the hearts of men: by those he consumes our lusts and kindles in us a holy flame of ever aspiring love and holiness. Pentecost is a suggestive commentary upon this verse.

Verse 8. As the storm travelled, it burst over the desert. *The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.* God courts not the applause of men—his grandest deeds are wrought where man's inquisitive glance is all unknown. Where no sound of man was heard, the voice of God was terribly distinct. The vast and silent plains trembled with affright. Silence did homage to the Almighty voice. Low lying plains must hear the voice of God as well as lofty mountains; the poor as well as the mighty must acknowledge the glory of the Lord. Solitary and barren places are to be gladdened by the gospel's heavenly sound. What a shaking and overturning power there is in the word of God! even the conservative desert quivers into progress when God decrees it.

Verse 9. *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve,* those timid creatures, in deadly fear of the tempest, drop their burdens in an untimely manner. Perhaps a better reading is, "the oaks to tremble, "especially as this agrees with the next sentence, *and discovereth the forests.* The dense shades of the forest are lit up with the lurid glare of the lightning, and even the darkest recesses are for a moment laid bare.

"The gloomy woods
Start at the flash, and from their deep recesses
Wide flaming out, their trembling inmates shake."

Our first parents sought a refuge among the trees, but the voice of the Lord soon found them out, and made their hearts to tremble. There is no concealment from the fire glance of the Almighty—one flash of his angry eye turns midnight into noon. The gospel has a like revealing power in dark hearts, in a moment it lights up every dark recess of the heart's ungodliness, and bids the soul tremble before the Lord. In his temple doth everyone speak of his glory. Those who were worshipping in the temple, were led to speak of the greatness of Jehovah as they heard the repeated thunder claps. The whole world is also a temple for God, and when he rides abroad upon the wings of the wind, all things are vocal in his praise. We too, the redeemed of the Lord, who are living temples for his
Spirit, as we see the wonders of his power in creation, and feel them in grace, unite to magnify his name. No tongue may be dumb in God's temple when his glory is the theme. The original appears to have the force of "every one crieth Glory, "as though all things were moved by a sense of God's majesty to shout in ecstasy, "Glory, glory." Here is a good precedent for our Methodist friends and for the Gogoniants of the zealous Welsh.

**Verse 10. The Lord sitteth upon the flood.** Flood follows tempest, but Jehovah is ready for the emergency. No deluge can undermine the foundation of his throne. He is calm and unmoved, however much the deep may roar and be troubled: his government rules the most unstable and boisterous of created things. Far out on the wild waste of waters, Jehovah "plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm," *Yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.* Jesus has the government upon his shoulders eternally: our interests in the most stormy times are safe in his hands. Satan is not a king, but Jehovah Jesus is; therefore let us worship him, and rejoice evermore.

**Verse 11.** Power was displayed in the hurricane whose course this Psalm so grandly pictures; and now, in the cool calm after the storm, that power is promised to be the strength of the chosen. He who wings the unerring bolt, will give to his redeemed the wings of eagles; he who shakes the earth with his voice, will terrify the enemies of his saints, and give his children peace. Why are we weak when we have divine strength to flee to? Why are we troubled when the Lord's own peace is ours? Jesus the mighty God is our peace—what a blessing is this today! What a blessing it will be to us in that day of the Lord which will be in darkness and not light to the ungodly! Dear reader, is not this a noble Psalm to be sung in stormy weather? Can you sing amid the thunder? Will you be able to sing when the last thunders are let loose, and Jesus judges quick and dead? If you are a believer, the last verse is your heritage, and surely that will set you singing.

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**EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS**

**Whole Psalm.** In this Psalm, the strength of Jehovah is celebrated; and the exemplification of it is evidently taken from a thunderstorm in Lebanon. The Psalm seems to be addressed to the angels. See Ps 89:7. It thus begins:—

"Render unto Jehovah, ye sons of the mighty,  
Render unto Jehovah glory and strength;  
Render to Jehovah the glory of his name;  
Bow down to Jehovah in the majesty of holiness!"
Immediately follows the description of the thunderstorm, in which it does not seem fanciful to observe the historical progression which is usual on such occasions. The first lines seem to describe only the noise of the thunder, the description growing more intense as the rumbling draws nearer.

"The voice of Jehovah is above the waters;  
The God of glory thundereth,  
Jehovah is louder than many waters,  
The voice of Jehovah in strength,  
The voice of Jehovah in majesty!"

But now the effects become visible; the storm has descended on the mountains and forests:—

"The voice of Jehovah shivers the cedars,  
Even shivers Jehovah the cedars of Lebanon;  
And makes them to skip, like a calf;  
Lebanon and Sirion, like a young buffalo,  
The voice of Jehovah forks the lightning's flash!"

From the mountains the storm sweeps down into the plains, where, however, its effects are not so fearful as on the mountains—

"The voice of Jehovah causeth the desert to tremble—  
The voice of Jehovah causeth to tremble the desert of Kadesh—  
The voice of Jehovah causeth the oaks to tremble,  
And lays bare the forests!  
Therefore, in his temple every one speaks of his glory."

The description of the swollen torrents closes the scene—

"Jehovah upon the rain torrent sitteth.  
Yea, sitteth Jehovah a king for ever."

And the moral of application of the whole is—

"Jehovah to his people will give strength,  
Jehovah will bless his people with peace."

—Robert Murray Macheyne, 1813-1843.

**Whole Psalm.** There is no phenomenon in nature so awful as a thunderstorm, and almost every poet from Homer and Virgil down to Dante and Milton, or rather down to Grahame and Pollok, has described it. In the Bible, too, we have a thunderstorm, the twenty-ninth Psalm—the description of a tempest, which,
rising from the Mediterranean, and travelling by Lebanon and along the inland
mountains, reaches Jerusalem, and sends the people into the temple porticoes
for refuge; and; besides those touches of terror in which the geographical
progress of the tornado is described, it derives a sacred vitality and power from
the presence of Jehovah in each successive peal. James Hamilton, D.D., in "The
Literary Attractions of the Bible," 1849.

Whole Psalm. A glorious Psalm of praise sung during a tempest, the majesty
of which shakes universal nature, so much so that the greatness of the power of
the Lord is felt by all in heaven and on earth. This Lord is the God of his
people, who blesses them with strength and peace. To rightly appreciate the
feelings of the bard, one ought to realise an Oriental storm, especially in the
mountainous regions of Palestine, which, accompanied by the terrific echoes of
the encircling mountains, by torrents of rain like waterspouts, often scatters
terror on man and beast, destruction on cities and fields. Wilson, the traveller,
describes such a tempest in the neighbourhood of Baalbek: "I was overtaken by
a storm, as if the floodgates of heaven had burst; it came on in a moment, and
raged with a power which suggested the end of the world. Solemn darkness
covered the earth: the rain descended in torrents, and sweeping down the
mountain side, became by the fearful power of the storm transmuted into thick
clouds of fog." Compare also our Lord's parable, taken from life, in Mt 7:27.
Augustus F. Tholuck, in loc.

Verse 1. Give unto the Lord. Give, give, give. This showeth how unwilling such
are usually to give God his right, or to suffer a word of exhortation to this
purpose. John Trapp.

Verse 1. O ye mighty. The Septuagint renders it, O ye sons of rams! These bell
wethers should not cast their noses into the air, and carry their crest the higher,
because the shepherd hath bestowed a bell upon them, more than upon the rest
of the flock. John Trapp.

Verses 1-2. There are three gives in these two verses:—Give unto the Lord,
give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord the glory that is due unto his name.
Glory is God's right, and he stands upon his right; and this the sincere Christian
knows, and therefore he gives him his right, he gives him the honour and the
 glory that is due unto his name. But pray do not mistake me. I do not say that
such as are really sincere do actually eye the glory of Christ in all their actions.
Oh, no! This is a happiness desirable on earth, but shall never be attained till
we come to heaven. Bye and base ends and aims will be still ready to creep into
the best hearts, but all sincere hearts sigh and groan under them. They complain
to God of them, and they cry out for justice, justice upon them; and it is the
earnest desire and daily endeavours of their souls to be rid of them; and therefore they shall not be imputed to them, nor keep good things from them. But now take a sincere Christian in his ordinary, usual, and habitual course, and you shall find that his aims and ends in all his actions and undertakings are to glorify God, to exalt God, and to lift up God in the world. If the hypocrite did in good earnest aim at the glory of God in what he does, then the glory of God would swallow up his bye aims and carnal ends, as Aaron's rod swallowed up the magician's rods. Ex 7:10-12. Look, as the sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God, where it is aimed at, will put out and consume all bye and base ends. This is most certain, that which is a man's great end, that will work out all other ends. He that sets up the glory of God as his chief end, will find that his chief end will by degrees eat out all low and base ends. Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine ate up the fat Ge 31:4, so the glory of God will eat up all those fat and worldly ends that crowd in upon the soul in religious work. Where the glory of God is kept up as a man's greatest end, there all bye and base ends will be kept at an under. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 2. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* Which yet you cannot do, for his name is above all praise! Ps 148:13; but you must aim at it. The Rabbins observe that God's holy name is mentioned eighteen several times in this Psalm; that great men especially may give him the honour of his name, that they may stand in awe and not sin, that they may bring presents to him who ought to be feared, and those also the very best of the best, since he is a great king, and standeth much upon his seniority. Mal 1:14. John Trapp.

Verse 2. *Worship the Lord.* If any should ask, Why is the Lord to be worshipped? Why must he have such high honours from those that are high? What doth he in the world that calls for such adoration? David answereth meteorologically as well as theologically, he answers from the clouds Ps 29:3-4, *"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty;"* as if he had said, Although the Lord Jesus Christ will not set up an outward, pompous, political kingdom, such as that of Cyrus, Alexander, etc., yet by the ministry of the gospel he will erect a spiritual kingdom, and gather to himself a church that shall abide for ever, out of all the nations of the earth; for the gospel shall be carried and preached, to not only the people of Israel, the Jews, but to the Gentiles, all the world over, that the minds of men may be enlightened, awakened, and moved with that unheard of doctrine of salvation by Christ, which had been hid from ages and generations. Joseph Caryl.
Verse 3. *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.* Yes, great God, these torrents of tears which flow down from my eyes announce thy divine presence in my soul. This heart hitherto so dry, so arid, so hard; this rock which thou hast struck a second time, will not resist thee any longer, for out of it there now gushes healthful waters in abundance. The selfsame voice of God which overturns the mountains, thunders, lightens, and divides the heaven above the sinner, now commands the clouds to pour forth showers of blessings, changing the desert of his soul into a field producing a hundredfold; that voice I hear. *J. B. Massillon.*

Verses 3-10. The Lord, etc. All things which we commonly say are the effects of the natural powers of matter and laws of motion, are, indeed (if we will speak strictly and properly), the effects of God's acting upon matter continually and at every moment, either immediately by himself, or mediately by some created intelligent being. Consequently there is no such thing as the cause of nature, or the power of nature. *Samuel Clarke*, 1675-1729. "The friend and disciple of Newton."

Verses 3-10.

The voice of the Lord on the ocean is known,
The God of eternity thundereth abroad;
The voice of the Lord from the depth of his throne
Is terror and power;—all nature is awed.
The voice of the Lord through the calm of the wood
Awakens its echoes, strikes light through its caves;
The Lord sitteth King on the turbulent flood,
The winds are his servants, his servants the waves.
—*James Montgomery*, 1771-1854.

Ver. 3-11—

Messiah's voice is in the cloud,
The God of glory thunders loud.
Messiah rides along the floods,
He treads upon the flying clouds.
Messiah's voice is full of power,
His lightnings play when tempests lower.
Messiah's voice the cedars breaks,
While Lebanon's foundation quakes.
Messiah's voice removes the hills,
And all the plains with rivers fills.
The voice of their expiring God,
Shall make the rocks to start abroad;
Mount Zion and Mount Sirion,
Shall bound along with Lebanon:
The flames of fire shall round him wreathe,
When he shall on the ether breathe.
 Messiah's voice shall shake the earth,
And, lo! the graves shall groan in birth,
Ten thousand thousand living sons
Shall be the issue of their groans.
The peace of God the gospel sounds;
The peace of God, the earth rebounds,
The gospel everlasting shines
A light from God that never declines.
This is the light Jehovah sends,
To bless the world's remotest ends.
—Barclay's Paraphrase.

Verse 4. The voice of the Lord. These vehement repetitions resemble a series of thunderclaps; one seems to hear the dread artillery of heaven firing volley after volley, while peal on peal the echo follows the sound. C. H. S.

Verse 4. The voice of the Lord is powerful. I would render unto God the glory due unto his name, for the admirable change which he has wrought in my heart. There was nothing to be found in me but an impious hardness and inveterate disorder. From this helpless state he changed me into a new man and made resplendent the glory of his name and the power of his grace. He alone can work such prodigies. Unbelievers who refuse to acknowledge the hand of God in creation must surely in this case admit that "this is the finger of God." Yes, great God, chaos knows not how to resist thee, it hears thy voice obediently, but the obdurate heart repels thee, and thy mighty voice too often calls to it in vain. Thou art not so great and wonderful in creating worlds out of nothing as thou art when thou dost command a rebel heart to arise from its abyss of sin, and to run in the ways of thy commandments. To disperse a chaos of crime and ignorance by the majesty of thy word, to shed light on the direst darkness, and by the Holy Ghost to establish harmonious order where all was confusion, manifests in far greater measure thine omnipotence than the calling forth of heavenly laws and celestial suns from the first chaos. J. B. Massillon.

Verse 4. O may the evangelical "Boanerges" so cause the glorious sound of the gospel to be heard under the whole heaven, that the world may again be made
sensible thereof; before that voice of the Son of Man, which hath so often
called sinners to repentance, shall call them to judgment. *George Horne.*

**Verse 4.** Where the word of a king is, there is power, but what imperial voice
shall be likened unto the majestic thunder of the Lord? *C. H. S.*

**Verse 5.** *The voice of Jehovah.* Philosophers think not that they have reasoned
skilfully enough about inferior causes, unless they separate God very far from
his works. It is a diabolical science, however, which fixes our contemplations
on the works of nature, and turns them away from God. If any one who wished
to know a man, should take no notice of his face, but should fix his eyes only
on the points of his nails, his folly might justly be derided. But far greater is the
folly of those philosophers, who, out of mediate and proximate causes, weave
themselves vails lest they should be compelled to acknowledge the hand of
God, which manifestly displays itself in his works. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 5.** *The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars,* etc. Like as tempests when
they arise, and lightnings, quickly and in a trice, hurl down and overturn
mountains and the highest trees; even so doth the Lord bring down with a break
neck fall, the proud, haughty, arrogant, and insolent, who set themselves
against God, and seek the spoil of those that be quiet and godly. *Robert
Cawdray.*

**Verse 5.** *The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars.* The ancient expositors
remind us that the breaking of the cedar trees by the wind, is a figure of the
laying low of the lofty and proud things of this world, by the rushing mighty
wind of the Holy Spirit, given on that day. *Confringit cedros Deus, hoc est
humiliat superbos.* (S. Jerome, and so S. Basil.) *Christopher Wordsworth.*

**Verse 5.** The Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. What a shame is it then that
our hard hearts break not, yield not, though thunder struck with the dreadful
menaces of God's mouth! *John Trapp.*

**Verse 5.** "*Breaketh the cedars of Lebanon:"*—

When high in the air the pine ascends,
To every ruder blast it bends.
The palace falls with heavier weight,
When tumbling from its airy height;
And when from heaven the lightning flies,
It blasts the hills that proudest rise.
—*Horace, translated by Philip Francis, D.D., 1765.*
Verse 5. *The cedars of Lebanon.* These mighty trees of God, which for ages have stood the force of the tempest, rearing their evergreen colossal boughs in the region of everlasting snow, are the first objects of the fury of the lightning, which is well known to visit first the highest objects. *Robert Murray M'Cheyne.*

Verse 6. *He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn;* that is, the Lord by his thundering, powerful voice, first, will make them skip, as frightened with fear; and secondly, as revived with joy. Yet more Ps 29:7, "The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire; "that is, will send and divide to every one as they need 1Co 12:11, the Holy Spirit, who is compared to and called fire Mt 3:11, and who came as with a thunderstorm of a rushing mighty wind, and with the appearance of cloven tongues, like as of fire, and sat upon each one of the apostles. Ac 2:2-3. Nor did this voice of thunder, accompanied with divided flames of fire reach Jerusalem only; for, as it follows Ps 29:8, "The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh; "that is, the Lord by the voice of the gospel shall go forth with power to those Gentiles, who are like a wilderness, barren of goodness, and not fertilized in spirituals, though they dwell in well governed cities, and are well furnished with morals. It shall go forth also to those Gentiles who inhabit waste wildernesses, and are not so much as reduced to civility. These wildernesses, the thundering voice of the Lord hath shaken heretofore, and doth shake at this day, and will yet further shake, that the fulness of the Gentiles may come in. Many of these wildernesses hath the Lord turned into fruitful fields, and pleasant lands, by the voice of the gospel sounding among them. For in these wildernesses (as it followeth, Ps 29:9), "The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve; "that is, they that were as wild, as untaught, and untamed as the hind, or any beast in the forest, he brings to the sorrows of their new birth, to repentance and gospel humiliation, and in doing this, "he (as the psalmist goes on), discovereth the forests; " that is, opens the hearts of men, which are as thick set and full grown with vanity, pride, hypocrisy, self love, and self sufficiency, as also with wantonness and sensuality, as any forest is overgrown with thickets of trees and bushes, which deny all passage through till cleared away with burning down or cutting up. Such an opening, such a discovery, doth the Lord make in the forests of men's hearts, by the sword and fire, that is, by the word and spirit of the gospel; and when this is done, the forest becomes a temple, and as that verse concludes, "In his temple doth every one speak of his glory." And if the floods of ungodliness rise up against the people, whom the thunder and lightning of the gospel have subdued to Christ, and framed into a holy temple, then the psalmist assures us Ps 29:10, "The Lord sitteth upon the flood, "that is, it is under his power, he rules and overrules it; "Yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever; "and Ps 29:11, "The
Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace." Thus the Lord "thundereth marvellously" Job 37:5, and these are glorious marvels which he thundereth; he converts sinners. Thus, though I like not their way who are given to allegorize the Scriptures, yet I doubt not but we may make a profitable use of this and many other Scriptures by way of allegory. This being an undeniable truth, which is the ground of it—that the Lord puts forth, as it were, the power of thunder and lightning in the preaching of his Word; these two things are to be marked. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 6. He maketh them also to skip like a calf. That is to say, he hath made the splinters and broken pieces of trees that have been struck with lightning, to fly up into the air, or when they have been shaken by the wind, storms, or by earthquakes. John Diodati.

Verse 6. The original is—

"And makes them skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion, like a young buffalo."

At first sight it might appear that the cedars were still meant, and that Lebanon and Sirion were used by metonymy for the cedars which grew upon them. But, 1. We never hear of cedars growing upon Sirion, or Shenir, or Hermon, for it has all these names; and, 2. There is a parallel passage where this interpretation will hardly answer in Psalm 114. Describing the exodus of Israel, it says—

"The mountains skipped like rams, And the little hills like lambs."

The same verb occurs here, the verb which means "to skip, to dance," used in Na 3:2, to signify the jolting of chariots, and also in Joe 2:5. In both these instances, rough motion, accompanied with noise, seems intended. Now, though this may very well be understood as a highly figurative description, as it undoubtedly is, of the usual effect of a thunderstorm; yet it is interesting to compare it with the following passage of Volney, which described certain phenomena as frequent in Mount Lebanon, which may give a new meaning to the "skipping of the mountains:"—"When the traveller, "say he, "penetrates the interior of these mountains, the ruggedness of the roads, the steepness of the declivities, the depth of the precipices, have at first a terrific effect; but the sagacity of the mules which bear him soon inspires him with confidence, and enables him to examine at his ease the picturesque scenes which succeed one another, so as almost to bewilder him." There, as in the Alps, he sometimes travels whole days to arrive at a spot which was in sight when he set out. He
turns, he descends, he winds round, he climbs; and under the perpetual change of position, one is ready to think that a magical power is varying at every step the beauties of the landscapes. Sometimes villages are seen, ready as it were to slide down the deep declivities, and so disposed that the roofs of the one row of houses serve as a street to the row above. At another time, you see a convent seated on an isolated cone, like Marshaia in the valley of Tigre. Here a rock is pierced by a torrent, forming a natural cascade, as at Nahr el Leban; there another rock assumes the appearance of a natural wall! Often on the sides, ledges of stones, washed down and left by the waters, resemble ruins disposed by art. In some places, the waters meeting with inclined beds, have undermined the intermediate earth, and have formed caverns, as at Nahr el Kelb, near Antoura. In other places, they have worn for themselves subterranean channels, through which flow little rivulets during part of the year, as at Mar Hama. Sometimes these picturesque circumstances have become tragical ones. Rocks loosened or thrown off their equilibrium by thaw or earthquake, have been known to precipitate themselves on the adjacent dwellings, and crush the inhabitants. An accident of this kind, about twenty years ago, buried a whole village near Mar Djordos, so as to leave no trace of its existence. More recently, and near the same spot, the soil of a hill planted with mulberry trees and vines detached itself by a sudden thaw, and, sliding over the surface of the rock which it had covered, like a vessel launched from the stocks, established itself in the valley below. Robert Murray Macheyne.

Verse 7. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. By the power of God, the "flames of fire" are "divided" and sent abroad from the clouds upon the earth, in the terrible form of lightning, that sharp and glittering sword of the Almighty, which no substance can withstand. The same power of God goeth forth by his word, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword." penetrating, melting, enlightening, and inflaming the hearts of men, Ac 2:3 Heb 4:12. George Horne.

Verse 7. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord is here said to divide the flames; literally, to hew out flames, (latomein flav). The Septuagint has (diakoptei floga puroz). In the words of Gensenius, "The voice of Jehovah cutteth out flames of fire, "i.e., "sendeth out divided flames of fire." This is (as Theodoret has observed) very descriptive of the divine action at Pentecost, sending forth divided flames, like "teia trisulca, "in the tongues of fire which were divided off from one heavenly source or fountain of flame, and sat upon the heads of the apostles, and which filled them with the fire of holy zeal and love. Christopher Wordsworth.
Verse 7. *Divideth the flames of fire.* Margin, *cutteth out.* The Hebrew word (bux) *khatzab* means properly *to cut, to hew, to hew out;* as for example, stones. The allusion here is undoubtedly to lightning; and the image is either that it seems to be cut out, or cut into tongues and streaks—or, more probably, that the *clouds* seem to be cut or hewed, so as to make openings or paths for the lightning. The eye is evidently fixed on the clouds, and on the sudden flash of lightning, as if the clouds has been *cleaved or opened* for the passage of it. The idea of the psalmist is, that the "voice of the Lord, "or the thunder, seems to cleave or open the clouds for the flames of fire to play amidst the tempest.

*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 8. *The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.* That Kadesh Naphtali is meant, the geographical position of Lebanon would make us believe, though this is not necessary. And, although Syria is much exposed to earthquakes—as, for example, that of Aleppo, in 1822, which was sensibly felt at Damascus—yet it does not seem necessary to imagine anything farther than the usual affects of a thunderstorm. The *oaks and forests* of Ps 29:9, suit well with the description given of the lower limbs of Lebanon, which abound in "thickets of myrtle, woods of fir, walnut trees, carob trees, and Turkish oaks." And the *rain torrent* of Ps 29:10 is admirably descriptive of the sudden swell of the thousand streams which flow from Lebanon. According to modern travellers, the number of water courses descending from Lebanon is immense; and the suddenness of the rise of these streams may be gathered from the contradictions in their accounts. The Nahr el Sazib is described by one as "a rivulet, though crossed by a bridge of six arches;" by another it is called "a large river." The Damour (the ancient Tamyras), which flows immediately from Lebanon, is "a river, says Mandrell, "apt to swell much upon sudden rains; in which case, precipitating itself from the mountains with great rapidity, it has been fatal to many a passenger." He mentions a French gentleman, M. Spon, who, a few years before, in attempting to ford it, was hurried down by the stream, and perished in the sea. This is one instance of very many in the mountains of Lebanon, where the brook, which is usually nearly dry, become all at once an impassable torrent. When Volney looked upon the rivers of Syria in summer, he doubted whether they could be called rivers. But had he ventured to cross them after a thunderstorm, his scepticism would no longer have had room or time to exercise itself, and he would have felt the propriety of the psalmist's painting, where he says—

"Jehovah sitteth on the rain torrents,
Jehovah sitteth a King for ever."

*Robert Murray M'Cheyne.*
Verse 8. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness. Great God, I have laboured to escape thee! I sought refuge for my remorse in a retreat where nothing might recall me to my God. Far away from the succours of religion, remote from all the channels which bring to me the waters of grace, apart from all whose reproving witness might restrain me from iniquity; yet even there, Great God, where I believed that I had found an asylum inaccessible to thine eternal mercy, wherein I could sin with impunity, even there, in that wilderness, thy voice arrested me and laid me at thy feet. J. B. Massillon.

Verse 9. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve. With respect to the sense conveyed by the common reading, it may be observed, that hinds bring forth their young with great difficulty and pain, "bowing themselves, bruising their young ones, and casting out their sorrows" Job 39:4,6; and it therefore heightens the description given of the terrific character of the thunderstorm, when the thunder which is here called "the voice of God," is represented as causing, through the terror which it inspires, the hinds in their pregnant state prematurely to drop their young; although, according to our ideas of poetical imagery, this may not accord so well with the other images in the passage, nor appear so beautiful and sublime as the image of the oaks trembling at the voice of Jehovah. John Calvin.

Verse 9. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve. The care and tenderness of God toward beasts turns to his praise, as well as the care which he hath of, and the tenderness which he shows to believers. As it doth exceedingly advance the glory of God, that he takes care of wild beasts, so it may exceedingly strengthen the faith of man that he will take care of him. Doth the Lord take care of hinds? then certainly he takes care of those who particularly belong to him. There is a special providence of God towards these and such like creatures for the production of their young. He—if I may so speak with reverence—shows his midwifery in helping these savage beasts when their pains come upon them. As the Lord takes man, in an eminent manner, "out of the womb" Ps 22:9, so in a manner he takes beasts out of the womb too. "The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh; "so we translate it; but the word which we render "shaketh" is the same with that in Job 39:2, which signifieth to bring forth; and hence, some very learned in the Hebrew tongue do not render as we, "The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; "but "The voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness to bring forth; the Lord maketh the wilderness of Kadesh to bring forth; "which is not to be understood of the vegetative creatures (that's a truth, the Lord makes the trees of the forest to bring forth both leaves and fruit), but it is meant of animals or living creatures there. And then when he saith, "The voice of the
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Lord maketh the wilderness to bring forth, " the meaning is, the Lord makes the wild beast of the wilderness to bring forth; which seems to be the clear sense of the place by that which followeth: for the psalmist having said this in general at the eighth verse, "The voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness to bring forth," he in the ninth verse gives the special instance of the hind: "The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve." Joseph Caryl.

Verse 9. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve. It is with great propriety, says one of the ancients that Jehovah demands, "The birth of the hinds dost thou guard"? Job 39:1, for since this animal is always in flight, and with fear and terror always leaping and skipping about, she could never bring her young to maturity without such a special protection. The providence of God, therefore, is equally conspicuous in the preservation of the mother and the fawn; both are the objects of his compassion and tender care; and, consequently, that afflicted man has no reason to charge his Maker with unkindness, who condescended to watch over the goats and the hinds. It seems to be generally admitted, that the hind brings forth her young with great difficulty; and so much appears to be suggested in the verse, "They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows." But if Pliny and other naturalists are worthy of credit, divine providence has been graciously pleased to provide certain herbs, which greatly facilitate the birth; and by instinct, he directs the hind to feed upon them, when the time of gestation draws towards a close. Whatever truth there may be in this assertion, we know from higher authority, that providence promotes the parturition of the hind, by awakening her fears, and agitating her frame by the rolling thunder:—"The voice of Jehovah (a common Hebrew phrase, denoting thunder) maketh the hinds to calve." Nor ought we to wonder, that so timorous a creature as the hind, should be so much affected by that awful atmospheric convulsion, when some of the proudest men that ever existed, have been known to tremble. Augustus, the Roman emperor, according to Suetonius, was so terrified when it thundered, that he wrapped a seal skin round his body, with the view of defending it from the lightning, and concealed himself in some secret corner till the tempest ceased. The tyrant Caligula, who sometimes affected to threaten Jupiter himself, covered his head, or hid himself under a bed; and Horace confesses he was reclaimed from atheism by the terror of thunder and lightning, the effects of which he describes with his usual felicity. (Odes, b. 1 34.) George Paxton's "Illustrations of Scripture."

Verse 9. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve. "Cervi sunt predicatores, "says S. Jerome, who bring forth souls to Christ by the gospel which is God's voice; and the stripping of the leaves of the forest by the voice
of the Lord, represents their work in humbling the strong oaks and lofty cedars of the world by the power of the gospel, and in stripping the souls of the worldly minded of their manifold disguises (S. Basil). Others apply it to act of the preachers of God's word, disclosing the dark thickets of divine mysteries in the holy Scriptures by evangelical light set forth by the Holy Ghost (S. Jerome). Christopher Wordsworth.


Verse 9. In his temple. Some conceive that this Psalm was appointed by David to be sung in the temple in time of thunder, which is not unlikely. There are writers who make God to be the nominative case to the verb speaketh; and render it thus, in his temple doth he utter all his glory. As much as to say, much of his glory God uttereth in his thunder, but all in his temple, for whatsoever there he speaketh with his mouth he fulfils it with his hand. John Trapp.

Verse 9. (last clause). David speaking in the former part of the Psalm of the effects of natural thunder only, towards the close of the Psalm applies it to the Word of God, while he saith, And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory; that is, the word and ordinances of God, ministered in his church or temple, will put every one to acknowledge and speak of the glorious power of God, even much more than the mighty thunder which sounds in our ears, or the subtle lightning which flashes in our eyes. There is far more royal power in the thunder of the Word, than in the word of thunder. This terrifies only to conviction, but that terrifies to salvation; for after God speaks terror there in his threatenings, he speaks comfort in the promises; and when he hath affrighted us with a sense of our sins and of his wrath due to us for our sins, as with an horrible tempest, he presently refresheth us with the gentle gales of revealed grace, and with the pleasant amiable sunshine of his favour by Jesus Christ. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 11. The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace; i.e., he is in war their strength, and their felicity in peace; in war he is the Author of all that power wherewith they are enabled to oppose and overcome potent enemies; and in peace, he is their truly felicitating good, and makes them, by his own vouchsafed presence, a truly blessed people. John Howe.

Verse 11. The Lord will bless his people with peace. Though some precious souls that have closed with Christ, and embraced the gospel, be not at present brought to rest in their own consciences, but continue for awhile under some
dissatisfaction and trouble in their own spirits, yet even then they have peace of conscience in a threefold respect; in pretio, in promisso, in semine. First, every true believer hath peace of conscience in pretio; the gospel puts that price into his hand, which will assuredly purchase it, and that is the blood of Christ. We say that is gold which is worth gold, which we may anywhere exchange for gold; such is the blood of Christ; it is peace of conscience, because the soul that hath this may exchange it for this. God himself cannot deny the poor creature that prays on these terms: Lord, give me peace of conscience; here is Christ's blood, the price of it. That which could pay the debt, surely can procure the receipt. Peace of conscience is but a discharge under God's hand, that the debt due to divine justice is fully paid. The blood of Christ hath done that the greater for the believer, it shall therefore do this the less. If there were such a rare potion that did infallibly procure health to every one that takes it, we might safely say, as soon as the sick man hath drunk it down, that he hath drunk his health, it is in him, though at present he doth not feel himself to have it: in time it will appear. Secondly, In promisso. Every true believer hath peace of conscience in the promise, and that we count as good as ready money in the purse, which we have sure bond for. The Lord will bless his people with peace. He is resolved on it, and then who shall hinder it? It is worth your reading the whole Psalm, to see what weight the Lord gives to this sweet promise, for the encouragement of our faith in expecting the performance thereof. Nothing more hard to enter into the heart of a poor creature (when all is in an uproar in his bosom, and his conscience threatening nothing but fire and sword, wrath, vengeance, from God for his sins), than thoughts or hopes of peace and comfort. Now the psalm is spent in showing what great things God can do, and that with no more trouble to himself than a word speaking, "The voice of the Lord is full of majesty" Ps 29:4, "It breaks the cedars, it divides the flames, it shakes the wilderness, it makes the hinds to calve." This God that does all this, promises to bless his people with peace, outward and inward; for without this inward peace, though he might give them peace, yet could he never bless them with peace as he there undertakes. A sad peace, were it not, to have quiet streets, but cutting of throats in our houses? yet infinitely more sad to have peace both in our streets and houses, but war and blood in our guilty consciences. What peace can a poor creature taste or relish while the sword of God's wrath lies at the throat of conscience? not peace with God himself. Therefore Christ purchased peace of pardon, to obtain peace of conscience for his pardoned ones, and accordingly hath bequeathed it in the promise to them, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Joh 14:27. Where you see he is both the testator to leave, and the executor of his own will, to give out with his own hands what his love hath left believers; so that there is no fear but his will shall be performed to the full, seeing himself lives to see it done.
Thirdly, *In semine*. Every believer hath this untoward peace in the seed. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Ps 97:11. Where sown, but in the believer's own bosom, when principles of grace and holiness were cast into it by the Spirit of God? Hence it is called "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Heb 12:11. It shoots as naturally from holiness, as any fruit in its kind doth from the seed proper to it. It is, indeed, most true, that the seed runs and ripens into this fruit sooner in some than it doth in others. This spiritual harvest comes not alike soon to all, no more than the other that is outward doth; but here is the comfort—whoever hath a seed time of grace pass over his soul, shall have his harvest time also of joy. *William Gurnall*.

**Verse 11.** Peace. There is a threefold "peace, "*externa, interna, aeterna*; temporal, spiritual, celestial peace. There is outward peace, the *blessing*; inward peace, the *grace*; and everlasting peace, of *glory*. And as in a stately palace there is a lodge or court that leads into the inmost goodly rooms, so external peace is the entrance or introduction to the inward lodgings of the sweet peace of conscience and of that external rest in which our peace in heaven shall be happy, inasmuch as external peace affords us many accommodations and helps to the gaining and obtaining both the one and the other. *Ephraim Udall*, 1642.

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

**Verse 1.** The duty of ascribing our strength and the honour of it to God; the penalty of neglecting to do so; the pleasure of so doing.

**Verse 1.** National glorying should be in the Lord.

**Verse 2.** *(first clause).* Royal dues, the royal treasury, loyal subjects paying their dues, the king receiving them. Smugglers and preventive men.

**Verse 2.** *(second clause).* Inspired ritualism. What to do? *Worship.* Whom? *The Lord.* How? *In the beauty of holiness.* Absence of all allusions to place, time, order, words, form, vestments, etc.

**Verse 3.** God's voice heard in trouble and above trouble, or in great personal and national calamities.

**Verse 4.** Power and majesty of the gospel. Illustrate by succeeding verses.

**Verse 4.** *(last clause).* "The majestic voice." See *Spurgeon's Sermons*, No. 87.
Verse 5. The breaking power of the gospel.

Verse 6. The unsettling power of the gospel.

Verse 7. The fire which goes with the word. This is a wide subject.

Verse 8. The arousing and alarming of godless places by the preaching of the word.


2. Unanimous worship.
3. Forcible motive.
4. General enthusiasm, "glory."

Verse 10. The ever present and undisturbed government of God.

Verse 11. The twin blessings from the same source; their connection, and their consummation.

Verse 11. The two wills, the two blessings, the one people, the one Lord.
Psalm 30

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

TITLE. A Psalm and Song at the Dedication of the House of David; or rather, A Psalm; a Song of Dedication for the House. By David. A song of faith since the house of Jehovah, here intended, David never lived to see. A Psalm of praise, since a sore judgment had been stayed, and a great sin forgiven. From our English version it would appear that this Psalm was intended to be sung at the building of that house of cedar which David erected for himself, when he no longer had to hide himself in the Cave of Adullam, but had become a great king. If this had been the meaning, it would have been well to observe that it is right for the believer when removing, to dedicate his new abode to God. We should call together our Christian friends, and show that where we dwell, God Dwells, and where we have a tent, God has an altar. But as the song refers to the temple, for which it was David's joy to lay by in store, and for the site of which he purchased in his later days the floor of Ornan, we must content ourselves with remarking the holy faith which foresaw the fulfilment of the promise made to him concerning Solomon. Faith can sing—

"Glory to thee for all the grace
I have not tasted yet."

Throughout this Psalm there are indications that David had been greatly afflicted, both personally and relatively, after having, in his presumption, fancied himself secure. When God's children prosper one way, they are generally tried another, for few of us can bear unmingled prosperity. Even the joys of hope need to be mixed with the pains of experience, and the more surely so when comfort breeds carnal security and self confidence. Nevertheless, pardon soon followed repentance, and God's mercy was glorified. The Psalm is a song, and not a complaint. Let it be read in the light of the last days of David, when he had numbered the people, and God had chastened him, and then in mercy had bidden the angel sheathe his sword. On the floor of Ornan, the poet received the inspiration which glows in this delightful ode. It is the Psalm of the numbering of the people, and of the dedication temple which commemorated the staying of the plague.

DIVISION. In Ps 30:1-3, David extols the Lord for delivering him. Ps 30:4-5 he invites the saints to unite with him in celebrating divine compassion. In Ps 30:6-7 he confesses the fault for which he was chastened, Ps 30:8-10 repeats the supplication which he offered, and concludes with commemorating his deliverance and vowing eternal praise.

**EXPOSITION**

**Verse 1. I will extol thee.** I will have high and honourable conceptions of thee, and give them utterance in my best music. Others may forget thee, murmur at thee, despise thee, blaspheme thee, but "I will extol thee, "for I have been favoured above all others. I will extol thy name, thy character, thine attributes, thy mercy to me, thy great forbearance to my people; but, especially will I speak well of thyself; "I will extol thee, "O Jehovah; this shall be my cheerful and constant employ. *For thou hast lifted me up.* Here is an antithesis, "I will exalt thee, for thou hast exalted me." I would render according to the benefits received. The Psalmist's praise was reasonable. He had a reason to give for the praise that was in his heart. He had been drawn up like a prisoner from a
dungeon, like Joseph out of the pit, and therefore he loved his deliverer. Grace has uplifted us from the pit of hell, from the ditch of sin, from the Slough of Despond, from the bed of sickness, from the bondage of doubts and fears: have we no song to offer for all this? How high has our Lord lifted us? Lifted us up into the children's place, to be adopted into the family; lifted us up into union with Christ, "to sit together with him in heavenly places." Lift high the name of our God, for he has lifted us up above the stars. And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

This was the judgment which David most feared out of the three evils; he said, let me fall into the hand of the Lord, and not into the hand of man. Terrible indeed were our lot if we were delivered over to the will of our enemies. Blessed be the Lord, we have been preserved from so dire a fate. The devil and all our spiritual enemies have not been permitted to rejoice over us; for we have been saved from the fowler's snare. Our evil companions, who prophesied that we should go back to our old sins, are disappointed. Those who watched for our halting, and would fain say, "Aha! Aha! So would we have it!" have watched in vain until now. O happy they whom the Lord keeps so consistent in character that the lynx eyes of the world can see no real fault in them. Is this our case? let us ascribe all the glory to him who has sustained us in our integrity.

Verse 2. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. David sent up prayers for himself and for his people when visited with the pestilence. He went at once to head quarters, and not roundabout to fallible means. God is the best physician, even for our bodily infirmities. We do very wickedly and foolishly when we forget God. It was a sin in Asa that he trusted to physicians and not to God. If we must have a physician, let it be so, but still let us go to our God first of all; and, above all, remember that there can be no power to heal in medicine of itself; the healing energy must flow from the divine hand. If our watch is out of order, we take it to the watchmaker; if our body or soul be in an evil plight, let us resort to him who created them, and has unfailing skill to put them in right condition. As for our spiritual diseases, nothing can heal these evils but the touch of the Lord Christ: if we do but touch the hem of his garment, we shall be made whole, while if we embrace all other physicians in our arms, they can do us no service. "O Lord my God." Observe the covenant name which faith uses—"my God." Thrice happy is he who can claim the Lord himself to be his portion. Note how David's faith ascends the scale; he sang "O Lord" in the first verse, but it is "O Lord my God," "in the second. Heavenly heart music is an ascending thing, like the pillars of smoke which rose from the altar of incense. I cried unto thee. I could hardly pray, but I cried; I poured out my soul as a little child pours out its desires. I cried to my God: I knew to whom to cry; I did not cry to my friends, or to any arm of flesh. Hence the sure
and satisfactory result—*Thou hast healed me*. I know it. I am sure of it. I have the evidence of spiritual health within me now: glory be to thy name! Every humble suppliant with God who seeks release from the disease of sin, shall speed as well as the Psalmists did, but those who will not so much as seek a cure, need not wonder if their wounds putrefy and their soul dies.

**Verse 3. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave.** Mark, it is not "I hope so;" but it is, "$\text{Thou hast; thou hast; thou hast}"—three times over. David is quite sure, beyond a doubt, that God has done great things for him, whereof he is exceeding glad. He had descended to the brink of the sepulchre, and yet was restored to tell of the forbearance of God; nor was this all, he owned that nothing but grace had kept him from the lowest hell, and this made him doubly thankful. To be spared from the grave is much; to be delivered from the pit is more; hence there is growing cause for praise, since both deliverances are alone traceable to the glorious right hand of the Lord, who is the only preserver of life, and the only Redeemer of our souls from hell.

**Verse 4. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.** "Join my song; assist me to express my gratitude." He felt that he could not praise God enough himself, and therefore he would enlist the hearts of others. *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his*. David would not fill his choir with reprobates, but with sanctified persons, who could sing from their hearts. He calls to you, ye people of God, because ye are *saints*: and if sinners are wickedly silent, let your holiness constrain ye to sing. You are *his* saints—chosen, blood bought, called, and set apart for God; sanctified on purpose that you should offer the daily sacrifice of praise. Abound ye in this heavenly duty. *Sing unto the Lord*. It is a pleasing exercise; it is a profitable engagement. Do not need to be stirred up so often to so pleasant a service. *And give thanks*. Let your songs be grateful songs, in which the Lord's mercies shall live again in joyful remembrance. The very remembrance of the past should tune our harps, even if present joys be lacking. *At the remembrance of his holiness*. Holiness is an attribute which inspires the deepest awe, and demands a reverent mind; but still give thanks at the remembrance of it. "Holy, holy, holy!" is the song of seraphim and cherubim; let us join it—not dolefully, as though we trembled at the holiness of God, but cheerfully, as humbly rejoicing in it.

**Verse 5. For his anger endureth but a moment.** David here alludes to those dispensations of God's providence which are the chastisement ordered in his paternal government towards his erring children, such as the plague which fell upon Jerusalem for David's sins; these are but short judgments, and they are removed as soon as real penitence sues for pardon and presents the great and acceptable sacrifice. What a mercy is this, for if the Lord's wrath smoked for a
long season, flesh would utterly fail before him. God puts up his rod with great readiness as soon as its work is done; he is slow to anger and swift to end it. If his temporary and fatherly anger be so severe that it has need be short, what must be the terror of eternal wrath exercised by the Judge towards his adversaries? In his favour is life. As soon as the Lord looked favourably upon David, the city lived, and the king's heart lived too. We die like withered flowers when the Lord frowns, but his sweet smile revives us as the dews refresh the field. His favour not only sweetens and cheers life, but it is life itself, the very essence of life. Who would know life, let him seek the favour of the Lord. Weeping may endure for a night; but nights are not for ever. Even in the dreary winter the day star lights his lamp. It seems fit that in our nights the dews of grief should fall. When the Bridegroom's absence makes it dark within, it is meet that the widowed soul should pine for a renewed sight of the Well beloved. But joy cometh in the morning. When the Sun of Righteousness comes, we wipe our eyes, and joy chases out intruding sorrow. Who would not be joyful that knows Jesus? The first beams of the morning brings us comfort when Jesus is the day dawn, and all believers know it to be so. Mourning only lasts to morning: when the night is gone the gloom shall vanish. This is adduced as a reason for saintly singing, and forcible reason it is; short nights and merry days call for the psaltery and harp.

Verse 6. In my prosperity. When all his foes were quiet, and his rebellious son dead and buried, then was the time of peril. Many a vessel founders in a calm. No temptation is so bad as tranquillity. I said, I shall never be moved. Ah! David, you said more than was wise to say, or even to think, for God has founded the world upon the floods, to show us what a poor, mutable, moveable, inconstant world it is. Unhappy he who builds upon it! He builds himself a dungeon for his hopes. Instead of conceiving that we shall never be moved, we ought to remember that we shall very soon be removed altogether. Nothing is abiding beneath the moon. Because I happen to be prosperous today, I must not fancy that I shall be in my high estate tomorrow. As in a wheel, the uppermost spokes descend to the bottom in due course, so it is with mortal conditions. There is a constant revolution: many who are in the dust today shall be highly elevated tomorrow; while those who are now aloft shall soon grind the earth. Prosperity had evidently turned the psalmist's head, or he would not have been so self confident. He stood by grace, and yet forgot himself, and so met with a fall. Reader, is there not much of the same proud stuff in all our hearts? let us beware lest the fumes of intoxicating success get into our brains and make fools of us also.
Verse 7. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong. He ascribed his prosperity to the Lord's favour—so far good, it is well to own the hand of the Lord in all our stability and wealth. But observe that the good in a good man is not unmingled good, for this was alloyed with carnal security. His state he compares to a mountain, a molehill would have been nearer—we never think too little of ourselves. He boasted that his mountain stood strong, and yet he had before, in Psalm 29, spoken of Sirion and Lebanon as moving like young unicorns. Was David's state more firm than Lebanon? Ah, vain conceit, too common to us all! How soon the bubble bursts when God's people get conceit into their heads, and fancy that they are to enjoy immutability beneath the stars, and constancy upon this whirling orb. How touchingly and teachingly God corrected his servant's mistake: Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. There was no need to come to blows, a hidden face was enough. This proves, first, that David was a genuine saint, for no hiding of God's face on earth would trouble a sinner; and, secondly, that the joy of the saint is dependent upon the presence of his Lord. No mountain, however firm, can yield us rest when our communion with God is broken, and his face is concealed. However, in such a case, it is well to be troubled. The next best thing to basking in the light of God's countenance, is to be thoroughly unhappy when that bliss is denied us.

"Lord, let me weep for nought for sin!  
And after none but thee!  
And then I would—O that I might,  
A constant weeper be!"

Verse 8. I cried to thee, O Lord. Prayer is the unfailing resource of God's people. If they are driven to their wit's end, they may still go to the mercyseat. When an earthquake makes our mountain tremble, the throne of grace still stands firm, and we may come to it. Let us never forget to pray, and let us never doubt the success of prayer. The hand which wounds can heal: let us turn to him who smites us, and he will be entreated of us. Prayer is better solace than Cain's building a city, or Saul's seeking for music. Mirth and carnal amusements are a sorry prescription for a mind distracted and despairing: prayer will succeed where all else fails.

Verse 9. In this verse we learn the form and method of David's prayer. It was an argument with God, an urging of reasons, a pleading of his cause. It was not a statement of doctrinal opinions, nor a narration of experience, much less a sly hit at other people under pretence of praying to God, although all these things and worse have been substituted for holy supplication at certain prayer meetings. He wrestled with the angel of the covenant with vehement pleadings,
and therefore he prevailed. Head and heart, judgment and affections, memory and intellect were all at work to spread the case aright before the Lord of love. *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?* Wilt thou not lose a songster from thy choir, and one who loves to magnify thee? *Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?* Will there not be one witness the less to thy faithfulness and veracity? Spare, then, thy poor unworthy one for thine own name sake!

**Verse 10.** *Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me.* A short and comprehensive petition, available at all seasons, let us use it full often. It is the publican's prayer; be it ours. If God hears prayer, it is a great act of mercy; our petitions do not merit a reply. *Lord, be thou my helper.* Another compact, expressive, ever fitting prayer. It is suitable to hundreds of the cases of the Lord's people; it is well becoming in the minister when he is going to preach, to the sufferer upon the bed of pain, to the toiler in the field of service, to the believer under temptation, to the man of God under adversity; when God helps, difficulties vanish. He is the help of his people, a very present help in trouble. The two brief petitions of this verse are commended as ejaculations to believers full of business, denied to those longer seasons of devotion which are the rare privilege of those whose days are spent in retirement.

**Verse 11.** Observe the contrast, God takes away the mourning of his people; and what does he give them instead of it? Quiet and peace? Aye, and a great deal more than that. *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing.* He makes their hearts to dance at the sound of his name. He takes off their sackcloth. That is good. What a delight to be rid of the habiliments of woe! But what then? He clothes us. And how? With some common dress? Nay, but with that royal vestment which is the array of glorified spirits in heaven. *Thou hast girded me with gladness.* This is better than to wear garments of silk or cloth of gold, bedight with embroidery and bespangled with gems. Many a poor man wears this heavenly apparel wrapped around his heart, though fustian and corduroy are his only outward garb; and such a man needs not envy the emperor in all his pomp. Glory be to thee, O God, if, by a sense of full forgiveness and present justification, thou hast enriched my spiritual nature, and filled me with all the fulness of God.

**Verse 12.** *To the end*—namely, with this view and intent—*that my glory*—that is, my tongue or my soul—*may sing praise to thee, and not be silent.* It would be a shameful crime, if, after receiving God's mercies, we should forget to praise him. God would not have our tongues lie idle while so many themes for gratitude are spread on every hand. He would have no dumb children in the
They are all to sing in heaven, and therefore they should all sing on earth. Let us sing with the poet:

"I would begin the music here,
And so my soul should rise:
Oh for some heavenly notes to bear
My passions to the skies."
O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.
"I will praise him in life; I will praise him in death;
I will praise him as long as he lendeth me breath;
And say when the death dew lays cold on my brow,
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, it is now."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Title. "A Psalm and Song, "etc. It is thought that when these two words of Psalm and Song are both put in the title of a Psalm, it is meant that the sound of instruments was to be joined with the voice when they were sung in the Temple, and that the voice went before when it is said Song and Psalm, and did come after when it is said Psalm and Song. John Diodati.

Title. At the dedication of it. (tybh tknx) The original word (Knx) signifies initiari, egkainizein, rei novae primam usurpationem. So Cocceius, to initiate, or the first use that is made of anything. It was common, when any person had finished a house and entered into it, to celebrate it with great rejoicing, and keep a festival, to which his friends are invited, and to perform some religious ceremonies, to secure the protection of heaven. Thus, when the second temple was finished, the Priests and Levites, and the rest of the captivity, kept the dedication of the house of God with joy, and offered numerous sacrifices. Ezr 6:16. We read in the New Testament Joh 10:22, of the feast of the dedication appointed by Judas Maccabaeus, in memory of the purification and restoration of the temple of Jerusalem, after it had been defiled and almost laid in ruins by Antiochus Epiphanes; and celebrated annually, to the time of its destruction by Titus, by solemn sacrifices, music, songs, and hymns, to the praises of God, and feasts, and everything that could give the people pleasure, for eight days successively. Josephus Ant. 1:7. Judas ordained, that "the days of the dedication should be kept in their season, from year to year, with mirth and gladness." 1 Mac 4:59. And that this was customary, even amongst private persons, to keep a kind of religious festival, upon their first entrance into a new house, appears from the order of God De 20:5, that no person who had built a new house should be forced into the army, "if he had not dedicated the house,
"i.e., taken possession of it according to the usual ceremonies practised on such occasions; a custom this that hath more or less prevailed amongst all nations. Thus the Romans dedicated their temples, their theatres, their statues, and their palaces and houses. Suet. Octav. c. 43. p 13; c. 31. p 9. Samuel Chandler.

**Title.** The present Psalm is the only one that is called a *shir*, or song, in the first book of the Psalms, *i.e.*, Psalms 1-41. The word (ryv) *shir* is found in the titles of Psalms 45, 46, 48, 65, 68, 75, 83, 87, 88, 92, 108, 120, 134. Psalm 18 is entitled, "a *shirah* (or *song*) of deliverance from his enemies, "and the present *shir* may be coupled with it. Christopher Wordsworth.

**Title.** As by offering the first fruits to God they acknowledged that they received the increase of the whole year from him, in like manner, by consecrating their houses to God, they declared that they were God's tenants, confessing that they were strangers, and that it was he who lodged and gave them a habitation there. If a levy for war, therefore, took place, this was a just cause of exemption, when any one alleged that he had not yet dedicated his house. Besides, they were at the same time admonished by this ceremony, that every one enjoyed his house aright and regularly, only when he so regulated it that it was as it were a sanctuary of God, and that true piety and the pure worship of God reigned in it. The types of the law have now ceased, but we must still keep to the doctrine of Paul, that whatsoever things God appoints for our use, are still "sanctified by the word of God and prayer." 1Ti 4:4-5. John Calvin.

**Whole Psalm.** Calmet supposes it to have been made by David on the dedication of the place which he built on the threshing floor of the Araunah, after the grievous *plague* which had so nearly desolated the kingdom. 2Sa 24:25 1Ch 21:26. All the parts of the Psalm agree to this: and they agree to this so well, and to no other hypothesis, that I feel myself justified in modelling the comment on this principle alone. Adam Clarke.

**Whole Psalm.** In the following verses I have endeavoured to give the spirit of the Psalm, and to preserve the frequent antitheses.

I will exalt thee, Lord of hosts,
For thou'st exalted me;
Since thou hast silenced Satan's boasts,
I will therefore boast in thee.
My sins had brought me near the grave,
The grave of black despair;
I looked, but there was none to save,
Till I looked up in prayer.
In answer to my piteous cries,
From hell's dark brink I am brought:
My Jesus saw me from the skies,
And swift salvation wrought.
All through the night I wept full sore,
But morning brought relief;
That hand, which broke my bones before,
Then broke my bonds of grief.
My mourning he to dancing turns,
For sackcloth joy he gives,
A moment, Lord, thine anger burns,
But long thy favour lives.
Sing with me then, ye favoured men,
Who long have known his grace;
With thanks recall the seasons when
Ye also sought his face.
—C. H. S.

Verse 1. *I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up.* I will lift thee up, for thou hast lifted me up. Adam Clarke.

Verse 1. *Thou hast lifted me up.* (yntyld) The verb is used, in its original meaning, to denote the reciprocating motion of the buckets of a well, one descending as the other rises, and vice versa; and is here applied with admirable propriety, to point out the various reciprocations and changes of David's fortunes, as described in this Psalm, as to prosperity and adversity; and particularly that gracious reverse of his afflicted condition which he now celebrates, God having raised him up to great honour and prosperity; for having built his palace, he "perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake." 2Sa 5:12. Samuel Chandler.

Verse 2. *Thou hast healed me.* (wnakdt) The verb is used, either for the healing of bodily disorders Ps 103:3, or to denote the happy alteration of any person's affairs, either in private or public life, by the removal of any kind of distress, personal or national. Ps 107:20 Isa 19:22. So in the place before us: "Thou hast healed me, "means, Thou hast brought me out of my distresses, hast restored my health, and rendered me safe and prosperous. Under Saul, he was frequently in the most imminent danger of his life, out of which God wonderfully brought him, which he strongly expresses by saying, "Thou hast brought up my soul from Hades: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." I
thought myself lost, and that nothing could prevent my destruction, and we can scarce help looking on the deliverance thou hast vouchsafed me otherwise than as a kind of restoration from the dead: *Thou hast revived me,* or recovered me to life, *from amongst those who go down to the pit;* according to the literal rendering of the latter clause. *Samuel Chandler.*

**Verse 4.** *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.* If it were to sing of another thing, I should require the whole quire of God's creatures to join in the singing; but now that it is to sing of God's *holiness,* *what should profane voices do in the concert? None but *saints,* *are fit to sing of *holiness,* *and specially of God's holiness; but most specially with songs of holiness.* *Sir Richard Baker.*

**Verse 4.** *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.* As God requires outward and inward worship, so a spiritual frame for inward worship may be forwarded by the outward composure. Gazing drowsiness hinders the activity of the soul, but the contrary temper furthers and helps it. Singing calls up the soul into such a posture, and doth, as it were, awaken it: it is a lively rousing up of the heart. Singing God's praise is a work of the most meditation of any we perform in public. It keeps the heart longest upon the thing spoken. Prayer and hearing pass quick from one sentence to another; this sticks long upon it. Meditation must follow after hearing the word, and praying with the minister—for new sentences, still succeeding, give not liberty, in the instant, well to muse and consider upon what is spoken; but in this you pray and meditate. God hath so ordered this duty, that, while we are employed in it, we feed and chew the cud together. "Higgaion," or "Meditation," *is set upon some passages of the Psalms, as Ps 9:16. The same may be writ up the whole duty, and all parts of it; namely, "Meditation."* Set before you one in the posture to sing to the best advantage: eyes lifted to heaven, denote his desire that his heart may be there too; he hath before him a line or verse of prayer, mourning, praise, mention of God's works; how fairly now may his heart spread itself in meditation on the thing, while he is singing it over! Our singing is measured in deliberate time not more for music than meditation. He that seeks not, finds not, this advantage in singing Psalms—hath not yet learned what it means. *John Lightfoot,* 1675.

**Verse 5.** *His anger.* Seeing God is often angry with his own servants, what cause have those of you who fear him, to bless him that he is not angry with you, and that you do not feel his displeasure! He sets up others as his mark against which he shoots his arrows; you hear others groaning for his departure, and yet your hearts are not saddened as theirs are; your eyes can look up toward heaven with hope, whilst theirs are clouded with a veil of sorrow; he speaks roughly to them, but comfortable words to you; he seems to set himself against them as his enemies, whilst he deals with you as a loving friend; you see a
reviving smile on his face and they can discern nothing there but one continued and dreadful frown. O admire, and for ever wonder at the sovereign, distinguishing grace of God. Are you that are at ease better than many of his people that are now thrown into a fiery furnace? Have you less dross than they? Have they sinned, think you, at a higher rate than you have ever done? He is angry with them for their lukewarmness, for their backsliding; and have your hearts always burned with love? Have your feet always kept his way and not declined? Have you never wandered? Have you never turned aside to the right hand or to the left? Surely you have; and therefore, what a mercy is it, that he is not angry with you as well as with them...Do not presume for all this; for though he is not angry yet with you, he may be so. This was the fault of David: "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved; "but it immediately follows, "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." The sun shines now upon you, the candle of the Lord does refresh your tabernacle; but you may meet with many storms, and clouds, and darkness before you come to your journey's end. The disciples were once greatly pleased with the glory of the transfiguration; and during the delightful interview between Christ, and Moses, and Elias, they thought themselves as in heaven; but a cloud came and obscured the preceding glory, and then the poor men were afraid. It is true the anger of God endured but for a moment; but even that moment is very sad, and terrible beyond expression. Weeping endureth for a night; but it may be a very bitter and doleful night for all this. It is a night like that of the Egyptians: when they arose they saw all their firstborn slain, and there was a hideous universal cry and mourning throughout all the land. So this night of the anger of the Lord may destroy all our comforts, and make the firstborn of our strength, the confidence and pleasure of our hopes to give up the ghost. Timothy Rogers.

**Verse 5.** *In his favour is life.* Let us see wherein the weight of the blessing and cursing of sheep and goats doth lie. Is it not the gift of eternal life that is our happiness in heaven; but as David saith, *"in his favour is life."* If a damned soul should be admitted to the fruition of all the pleasures of eternal life without the favour of God, heaven would be hell to him. It is not the dark and horrid house of woe that maketh a soul miserable in hell, but God's displeasure, *ite maledicti.* If an elect soul should be cast thither, and retain the favour of God, hell would be an heaven to him, and his joy could not all the devils in hell take from him; his night would be turned into day. Edward Marbury.

**Verse 5.** As an apprentice holds out in hard labour and (it may be) bad usage for seven years together or more, and in all that time is serviceable to his master without any murmuring or repining, because he sees that the time wears away, and that his bondage will not last always, but he shall be set at large and made a
freeman in the conclusion: thus should everyone that groaneth under the burden of any cross or affliction whatsoever, bridle his affections, possess his soul in patience, and cease from all murmuring and repining whatsoever, considering well with himself, that the rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the lot of the righteous; that *weeping may abide at evening, but joy cometh in the morning*; and that troubles will have an end, and not continue for ever. *John Spencer.*

**Verse 5.** How often have we experienced the literal truth of that verse, *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning!* How heavily does any trouble weigh on us *at night!* Our wearied nerve and brain seem unable to bear up under the pressure. Our pulse throbs, and the fevered restless body refuses to help in the work of endurance. Miserable and helpless we feel; and passionately weep under the force of the unresisted attack. At last sleep comes. Trouble, temptation, whatever it be that strives to overcome us, takes the one step too far which overleaps its mark, and by sheer force drives our poor humanity beyond the present reach of further trial. After such a night of struggle, and the heavy sleep of exhaustion, we awake with a vague sense of trouble. Our thoughts gather, and we *wonder* over our own violence, as the memory of it returns upon us. What was it that seemed so hopeless—so dark? Why were we so helpless and despairing? Things do not look so *now*—sad indeed still, but endurable—hard, but no longer impossible—bad enough perhaps, but we despair no more. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* And so, when life with its struggles and toils and sins, bringing us perpetual conflict, ends at last in the fierce struggle of *death,* then God "giveth his beloved sleep." They sleep in Jesus, and awake to the joy of a morning which shall know no wane—the morning of joy. The Sun of Righteousness is beaming on them. Light is now on all their ways. And they can only wonder when they recall the despair and darkness, and toil, and violence of their earthly life, and say, as they have often said on earth, "Weeping has endured only for *the night,* and now it is morning, and joy has come!" And our sorrows, our doubts, our difficulties, our long looks forward, with despair of enduring strength for so long a night of trial—Where are they? Shall we not feel as is so beautifully described in the words of one of our hymns—

"*When in our Father's happy land*
We meet our own once more,
Then we shall scarcely understand
Why we have wept before."
—*Mary B. M. Duncan*, 1825-1865.
Verse 5. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* Their mourning shall last but till morning. God will turn their winter's night into a summer's day, their sighing into singing, their grief into gladness, their mourning into music, their bitter into sweet, their wilderness into a paradise. The life of a Christian is filled up with interchanges of sickness and health, weakness and strength, want and wealth, disgrace and honour, crosses, and comforts, miseries and mercies, joys and sorrows, mirth and mourning; all honey would harm us, all wormwood would undo us; a composition of both is the best way in the world to keep our souls in a healthy constitution. It is best and most for the health of the soul that the south wind of mercy, and the north wind of adversity, do both blow upon it; and though every wind that blows shall blow good to the saints, yet certainly their sins die most, and their graces thrive best, when they are under the drying, nipping north wind of calamity, as well as under the warm, cherishing south wind of mercy and prosperity. 

Thomas Brooks.

Verse 5. *Joy cometh in the morning.* The godly man's joy cometh in the morning, when the wicked man's goeth; for to him "the morning is even as the shadow of death." Job 24:17. He is not only afraid of reproof and punishment, but he grieves and suffers sufficiently, though nobody should know of his actions, for the impair and loss, and misspence of his strength and his time and his money. Zachary Bogan.

Verse 5. In the second half of the verse *weeping* is personified, and represented by the figure of a wanderer, who leaves in the morning the lodging, into which he had entered the preceding evening. After him another guest arrives, namely, joy. E. W. Hengstenberg.

Verse 5. The princely prophet says plainly, *heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* As the two angels that came to Lot lodged with him for a night, and when they had dispatched their errand, went away in the morning; so afflictions, which are the angels or the messengers of God. God sendeth afflictions to do an errand unto us; to tell us we forget God, we forget ourselves, we are too proud, too self conceited, and such like; and when they have said as they were bid, then presently they are gone. Thomas Playfere.

Verses 5-10. When a man's heart is set upon the creatures, there being thorns in them all, therefore if he will grasp too much of them, or too hard, he shall find it. God's children are trained up so to it, that God will not let them go away with a sin; if they be too adulterously affected, they shall find a cross in such a thing. You may observe this in the thirtieth Psalm; there you may see the circle God goes in with his children. David has many afflictions, as appeareth by the
fifth verse: I cried, and then God returned to me, and joy came. What did David then? "I said, I shall never be moved:" his heart grew wanton, but God would not let him go away so: "God turned away his face and I was troubled." At the seventh verse he is, you see, in trouble again: well, David cries again, at the eighth and tenth verses, and then God turned his mourning into joy again. And this is to be his dealing you shall find in all the Scriptures; but because we find his dealing set so close together in this Psalm, therefore I name it. John Preston, D.D. (1587-1628), in "The Golden Scepter held forth to the Humble."

Verse 6. In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Our entering upon a special service for God, or receiving a special favour from God, are two solemn seasons, which Satan makes use of for temptation...We are apt to get proud, careless, and confident, after or upon such employments and favours; even as men are apt to sleep or surfeit upon a full meal, or to forget themselves when they are advanced to honour. Job's great peace and plenty made him, as he confesseth, so confident, that he concluded he should "die in his nest." Job 29:18. David enjoying the favour of God in a more than ordinary measure, though he was more acquainted with vicissitudes and changes than most of men, grows secure in his apprehension that he "should never be moved; "but he acknowledgeth his mistake, and leaves it upon record as an experience necessary for others to take warning by, that when he became warm under the beams of God's countenance, then he was apt to fall into security; and this it seems was usual with him in all such cases—when he was most secure he was nearest some trouble or disquiet. "Thou didst hide thy face"—and then to be sure the devil will show him his—"and I was troubled." Enjoyments beget confidence; confidence brings forth carelessness; carelessness makes God withdraw, and gives opportunity to Satan to work unseen. And thus, as armies after victory growing secure, are oft surprised; so are we oft after our spiritual advancements thrown down. Richard Gilpin.

Verse 6. In my prosperity. (ywlvg) The word denotes peace and tranquillity, arising from an affluent prosperous condition. When God had settled him quietly on the throne, he thought all his troubles were over, and that he should enjoy uninterrupted happiness; and that God"had made his mountain so strong, as that it should never be moved; "i.e., placed him as secure from all danger as though he had taken refuge upon an inaccessible mountain; or made his prosperity firm, and subject to no more alteration, than a mountain is liable to be removed out of its place; or, raised him to an eminent degree of honour and prosperity; a mountain, by its height, being a very natural representation of a very superior condition, remarkable for power, affluence, and dignity. He had taken the fortress of Mount Sion, which was properly his mountain, as he had
fixed on it for his dwelling. It was strong by nature, and rendered almost impregnable by the fortifications he had added to it. This he regarded as the effect of God's favour to him, and promised himself that his peace and happiness for the future should be as undisturbed and unshaken as Mount Sion itself. Samuel Chandler.

**Verse 6. In my prosperity.** Prosperity is more pleasant than profitable to us. Though in show it look like a fair summer, yet it is indeed a wasting winter, and spendeth all the fruit we have reaped in the harvest of sanctified affliction. We are never in greater danger than in the sunshine of prosperity. To be always indulged of God, and never to taste of trouble, is rather a token of God's neglect than of his tender love. William Struther.

**Verse 7.** It is rare to receive much of this world, and not as the prodigal to go afar off; it is hard to keep close to God in prosperity, when we have much of this world to live upon and content ourselves with; to live upon God, and make him our content and stay, as if we had no other life nor livelihood but in him; we are very apt in such a case to contract a carnal frame, let go our hold of God, discustom ourselves to the exercise of faith, abate and estrange our affections from God. See how it was with David: "I said, I shall never be moved, thou hast made my mountain so strong." I solaced myself on these outward accommodations, as if I needed no other support, strength, or content, and there were no fear of a change; no care now to make God my constant joy and stay, and reckon upon God only for my portion, and that I must follow him with a cross, and be conformed to my Saviour, in being crucified to the world. What comes of this? Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled; namely, because he had too much indulged a life of sense. Children that are held up by their nurses' hand, and mind not to feel their feet and ground when the nurses let them go, they fall, as if they had no feet or ground to stand upon. Or thus: we are like children, who, playing in the golden sunshine, and following their sport, stray so far from their father's house, that night coming upon them ere they are aware, they are as it were lost, and full of fears, not knowing how to recover home. The world steals away our hearts from God, gives so few opportunities for the exercise of the life of faith, and such advantages to a life of sense, wears off the sense of our dependence on God, and need thereof, so that when we are put to it by affliction, we are ready to miscarry ere we can recover our weapon or hold. Faith is our cordial Ps 27:13; now if it be not at hand (as in health, when we have no need of it, it use to be) we may faint ere we recover the use of it. Elias Pledger's Sermon in "The Morning Exercises," 1677.
Verse 7. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* What soul can be deserted and not be afflicted? Certainly his absence cannot but be lamented with greatest grief, whose presence the soul prizes above all earthly joy; when the evidence of salvation is obscured, the light of God's countenance darkened, the comforts of the Spirit detained, then the heavens appear not so clear, the promises taste not so sweet, the ordinances prove not so lively, yea, the clouds which hang over the soul gather blackness, doubts arise, fears overflow, terrors increase, troubles enlarge, and the soul becomes languishingly afflicted, even with all variety of disquietments. *Robert Mossom.*

Verse 7. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* A believer puts on the sackcloth of contrition, for having put off the garment of perfection. As the sugar loaf is dissolved, and weeps itself way, when dipped in wine; so do our hearts melt under a sense of divine love. *William Secker.*

Verse 7. *(last clause).* No verse can more plainly teach us that glorious and comforting truth on which the medieval writers especially love to dwell, that it is the looking, or not looking, of God upon his creature, that forms the happiness or the misery of that creature; that those secret springs of joy which sometimes seem to rise up of themselves, and with which a stranger intermeddleth not, are nothing but God's direct and immediate looking on us; while the sorrow for which we cannot assign any especial cause—call it melancholy, or low spirits, or by whatever other name—is nothing but his turning away his face from us. *John Mason Neale.*

Verse 7. *(last clause).* Is spiritual desertion and the hiding of God's face matter of affliction, and casting down to believers? Yes, yes; it quails their hearts, nothing can comfort them. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* Outward afflictions do but break the skin, this touches the quick; they like rain fall only upon the tiles, this soaks into the house; but Christ brings to believers substantial matter of consolation against the troubles of desertion; he himself was deserted of God for a time, that they might not be deserted for ever. *John Flavel.*

Verse 7. *(last clause).* If God be thy portion, then there is no loss in all the world that lies so hard and so heavy upon thee as the loss of thy God. There is no loss under heaven that doth so affect and afflict a man that hath God for his portion, as the loss of his God. David met with many a loss, but no loss made so sad and so great a breach upon his spirit as the loss of the face of God, the loss of the favour of God: "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." The Hebrew word (lhn) bahal signifies to be
greatly troubled, to be sorely terrified, as you may see in that 1Sa 28:21. "And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled." Here is the same Hebrew word bahal. Saul was so terrified, affrighted, and disanimated with the dreadful news that the devil in Samuel's likeness told him, that his very vital spirits so failed him, that he fell into a deadly swoon. And it was even so with David upon God's hiding of his face. David was like a withered flower that had lost its sap, life, and vigour, when God had wrapped himself up in a cloud. The life of some creatures lieth in the light and warmth of the sun; and so doth the life of the saints lie in the light and warmth of God's countenance. And, as in an eclipse of the sun, there is a drooping in the whole frame of nature, so when God hides his face, gracious souls cannot but droop and languish, and bow down themselves before him. Many insensible creatures, some by opening and shutting, as marigolds and tulips, others by bowing and inclining the head, as the solsequy (the early name of the sunflower) and mallow flowers, are so sensible of the presence and absence of the sun, that there seems to be such a sympathy between the sun and them, that if the sun be gone or clouded, they wrap up themselves or hang down their heads, as being unwilling to be seen by any eye but his that fills them: and just thus it was with David when God had his face in a cloud. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 8. I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication. Bernard, under a fiction, proposes a fable well worthy of our beholding: therein the kings of Babylon and Jerusalem, signifying the state of the world and the church, always warring together; in which encounter, at length it fell out, that one of the soldiers of Jerusalem was fled to the castle of Justice. Siege laid to the castle, and a multitude of enemies entrenched round about it, Fear gave over all hope, but Prudence ministered her comfort. "Does thou not know, saith she, "that our king is the King of glory; the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle? Let us therefore despatch a messenger that may inform him of our necessities." Fear replies, "But who is able to break through? Darkness is upon the face of the earth, and our walls are begirt with a watchful troop of armed men, and we, utterly inexpert in the way into so far a country." Whereupon Justice is consulted. "Be of good cheer, saith Justice, "I have a messenger of especial trust, well known to the king and his court, Prayer by name, who knoweth to address herself by ways unknown in the stillest silence of the night, till she cometh to the secrets and chamber of the King himself." Forthwith she goeth, and findeth the gates shut, knocketh again, "Open, ye gates of righteousness, and be ye opened, ye everlasting doors, that I may come in and tell the King of Jerusalem how our case standeth." Doubtless the trustiest and most effectual messenger we have to send is Prayer. If we send up merits, the stars in heaven will disdain it, that we which dwell at the footstool of God
dare to presume so far, when the purest creatures in heaven are impure in his sight. If we send up fear and distrustfulness, the length of the way will tire them out. They are as heavy and lumpish as gads of iron; they will sink to the ground before they come half way to the throne of salvation. If we send up blasphemies and curses, all the creatures betwixt heaven and earth will band themselves against us. The sun and the moon will rain down blood; the fire, hot burning coals; the air, thunderbolts upon our heads. Prayer, I say again, is the surest ambassador; which neither the tediousness of the way, nor difficulties of the passage, can hinder from her purpose; quick of speed, faithful for trustiness, happy for success, able to mount above the eagles of the sky, into the heaven of heavens, and as a chariot of fire bearing us aloft into the presence of God to seek his assistance. John King.

**Verse 9.** What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Implying that he would willingly die, if he could thereby do any real service to God, or his country. Php 2:17. But he saw not what good could be done by his dying in the bed of sickness, as might be if he had died in the bed of honour. Lord, saith he, wilt thou sell one of "thine own people for nought, and not increase thy wealth by the price?" Ps 44:12. Matthew Henry.

**Verse 9.** What profit is there in my blood, etc. The little gain that the Lord would have by denying his people in the mercies they request, may also be used as a plea in prayer. David begs his own life of God, using this plea, What profit is there in my blood? So did the captive church plead Ps 44:12; "Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price." So then, poor saints of God when they come and tell the Lord in their prayers that indeed he may condemn, or confound, or cut or cast them off; he may continue to frown upon them; he may deny such and such requests of theirs, for such and such just causes in them; but what will he gain thereby? He may gain many praises, etc., by hearing them, and helping them; but what good will it do him to see them oppressed by the enemies of their souls? or what delight would it be to him to see them sighing and sinking, and fainting under sad pressures, etc.? this is an allowed and a very successful kind of pleading. Thomas Cobbet.

**Verse 9.** Shall the dust praise thee? Can any number be sufficient to praise thee? Can there ever be mouths enough to declare thy truth? And may not I make one—a sinful one I know—but yet one in the number, if thou be pleased to spare me from descending into the pit? Sir Richard Baker.

**Verse 9.** Prayer that is likely to prevail with God must be argumentative. God loves to have us plead with him and overcome him with arguments in prayer. Thomas Watson.
Verse 11. *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.* This might be true of David, delivered from his calamity; it was true of Christ, arising from the tomb, to die no more; it is true of the penitent, exchanging his sackcloth for the garments of salvation; and it will be verified in all us, at the last day, when we shall put off the dishonours of the grave, to shine in glory everlasting. *George Horne.*


Verse 11. *Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.* I say with the apostle, "Overcome evil with good," sorrow with joy. Joy is the true remedy for sorrow. It never had, never could have any other. We must always give the soul that weeps reason to rejoice; all other consolation is utterly useless. *Alexander Rodolph Vinet, D.D., 1797-1847.*

Verse 11. *Thou hast girded me with gladness.* My "sackcloth" was but a loose garment about me, which might easily be put off at pleasure, but my "gladness" is girt about me, to be fast and sure, and cannot leave me though it would; at least none shall be able to take it from me. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 12. Even as the Chaldeans formerly measured their natural day differently from the Israelites; they put the day first and the night after; but the Israelites, on the contrary, according to the order that was observed in the creation; for in the beginning darkness was upon the face of the deep, and of every one of the six days it is said, "The evening and the morning were the first day," etc. So the times of the world and of the church are differently disposed; for the world begins hers by the day of temporal prosperity, and finishes it by a night of darkness and anguish that is eternal; but the church, on the contrary, begins hers by the night of adversity, which she suffers for awhile, and ends them by a day of consolation which she shall have for ever. The prophet in this Psalm begins with the anger of God, but ends with his favour: as of old, when they entered into the tabernacle they did at first see unpleasant things, as the knives of the sacrifices, the blood of victims, the fire that burned upon the altar, which consumed the offerings; but when they passed a little further there was the holy place, the candlestick of gold, the shewbread, and the altar of gold on which they offered perfumes; and in fine, there was the holy of holies, and the ark of the covenant, and the mercyseat and the cherubims which was called the face of God. *Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 12. *I will give thanks.* What is praise? The rent we owe to God; and the larger the farm the greater the rent should be. *G. S. Bowes, 1863.*
HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Title. House dedication, and how to arrange it.

Whole Psalm. In this ode we may see the workings of David's mind before, and under, and after, the affliction. 1. Before the affliction: Ps 30:6. 2. Under the affliction: Ps 30:7-10. 3. After the affliction: Ps 30:11-12. —William Jay.

Verse 1. (first clause). God and his people exalting each other.

Verse 1. (second clause). The happiness of being preserved so as not to be the scorn of our enemies.

Verse 1. The disappointment of the devil.

Verse 2. The sick man, the physician, the night bell, the medicine, and the cure; or, a covenant God, a sick saint, a crying heart, a healing hand.

Verse 3. Upbringing and preservation, two choice mercies; made the more illustrious by two terrible evils, grave, and pit; traced immediately to the Lord, thou hast.

Verse 4. Song, a sacred service; saints especially called to it; divine holiness, a choice subject for it; Memory, an admirable aid in it.

Verse 5. The anger of God in relation to his people.

Verse 5. The night of weeping, and the morning of joy.

Verse 5. Life in God's favour.

Verse 5. The transient nature of the believer's trouble, and the permanence of his joy.

Verse 6. The peculiar dangers of prosperity.

Verses 6-12. David's prosperity had lulled him into a state of undue security; God sent him this affliction to rouse him from it. The successive frames of his mind are here clearly marked; and must successively be considered as they are here presented to our view. 1. His carnal security.
2. His spiritual dereliction.
3. His fervent prayers.
4. His speedy recovery.
5. His grateful acknowledgments.
—Charles Simeon.

Verse 7. (first clause). Carnal security; its causes, dangers, and cures.

Verse 7. (last clause). The gracious bemoanings of a soul in spiritual darkness.

Verse 8. in connection with verse 3 prayer the universal remedy.


Verse 9. (last clause). The resurrection, a time in which the dust shall praise God, and declare his truth.

Verse 10. Two gems of prayer; short, but full and needful.

Verse 10. Lord, be thou my helper. I see many fall; I shall fall too except thou hold me up. I am weak; I am exposed to temptation. My heart is deceitful. My enemies are strong. I cannot trust in man; I dare not trust in myself. The grace I have received will not keep me without thee. Lord, be thou my helper. In every duty; in every conflict; in every trial; in every effort to promote the Lord's cause; in every season of prosperity; in every hour we live, this short and inspired prayer is suitable. May it flow from our hearts, be often on our lips, and be answered in our experience. For if the Lord help us, there is no duty which we cannot perform; there is no foe which we cannot overcome; there is no difficulty which we cannot surmount. James Smith's Daily Remembrancer.

Verse 11. Transformations. Sudden; complete; divine, thou; personal, "for me; "gracious.

Verse 11. Holy dancing: open up the metaphor.

Verse 11. The believer's change of raiment: illustrate by life of Mordecai or Joseph; mention all the garbs the believer is made to wear, as a mourner, a beggar, a criminal, &c.

Verse 12. Our glory, and its relation to God's glory.
Verse 12. The end of gracious dispensations.


Verse 12. (last clause). The believer's vow and the time for making it. See the whole Psalm.

WORKS UPON THE THIRTIETH PSALM

Meditations upon the XXX Psalme of David. By Sir RICHARD BAKER. (See Page 10.)

In Chandler's Life of David (Vol. II., pp. 8-15), there is an Exposition of Psalm 30.
Psalm 31

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

**TITLE.** To the Chief Musician—a Psalm of David. The dedication to the chief musician proves that this song of mingled measures and alternate strains of grief and woe was intended for public singing, and thus a deathblow is given to the notion that nothing but praise should be sung. Perhaps the Psalms, thus marked, might have been set aside as too mournful for temple worship, if special care had not been taken by the Holy Spirit to indicate them as being designed for the public edification of the Lord's people. May there not also be in Psalms thus designated a peculiar distinct reference to the Lord Jesus? He certainly manifests himself very clearly in the twenty-second, which bears this title; and in the one before us we plainly hear his dying voice in the fifth verse. Jesus is chief everywhere, and in all the holy songs of his saints he is the chief musician. The surmises that Jeremiah penned this Psalm need no other answer than the fact that it is "a Psalm of David."

**SUBJECT.** The psalmist in dire affliction appeals to his God for help with much confidence and holy importunity, and ere long finds his mind so strengthened that he magnifies the Lord for his great goodness. Some have thought that the occasion in his troubled life which led to this Psalm, was the treachery of the men of Keilah, and we have felt much inclined to this conjecture; but after reflection it seems to us that its very mournful tone, and its allusion to his iniquity demand a later date, and it may be more satisfactory to illustrate it by the period when Absalom had rebelled, and his courtiers were fled from him, while lying lips spread a thousand malicious rumours against him. It is perhaps quite as well that we have no settled season mentioned, or we might have been so busy in applying it to David's case as to forget its suitability to our own.

**DIVISION.** There are no great lines of demarcation; throughout the strain undulates, falling into valleys of mourning, and rising with hills of confidence. However, we may for convenience arrange it thus: David testifying his confidence in God pleads for help, Ps 31:1-6; expresses gratitude for mercies received, Ps 31:7-8; particularly describes his case, Ps 31:9-13; vehemently pleads for deliverance, Ps 31:14-18; confidently and thankfully expects a blessing, Ps 31:19-22; and closes by showing the bearing of his case upon all the people of God.

**EXPOSITION**

**Verse 1.** *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.* Nowhere else do I fly for shelter, let the tempest howl as it may. The psalmist has one refuge, and that the best one. He casts out the great sheet anchor of his faith in the time of storm. Let other things be doubtful, yet the fact that he relies on Jehovah, David lays down most positively; and he begins with it, lest by stress of trial he should afterwards forget it. This avowal of faith is the fulcrum by means of which he labours to uplift and remove his trouble; he dwells upon it as a comfort to himself and a plea with God. No mention is made of merit, but faith relies upon divine favour and faithfulness, and upon that alone. *Let me never be ashamed.* How can the
Lord permit the man to be ultimately put to shame who depends alone upon him? This would not be dealing like a God of truth and grace. It would bring dishonour upon God himself if faith were not in the end rewarded. It will be an ill day indeed for religion when trust in God brings no consolation and no assistance. *Deliver me in thy righteousness.* Thou are not unjust to desert a trustful soul, or to break thy promises; thou wilt vindicate the righteousness of thy mysterious providence, and give me joyful deliverance. Faith dares to look even to the sword of justice for protection: while God is righteous, faith will not be left to be proved futile and fanatical. How sweetly the declaration of faith in this first verse sounds, if we read it at the foot of the cross, beholding the promise of the Father as yea and amen through the Son; viewing God with faith's eye as he stands revealed in Jesus crucified.

**Verse 2.** *Bow down thine ear to me.* Condescend to my low estate; listen to me attentively as one who would hear every word. Heaven with its transcendent glories of harmony might well engross the divine ear, but yet the Lord has an hourly regard to the weakest moanings of his poorest people. *Deliver me speedily.* We must not set times or seasons, yet in submission we may ask for swift as well as sure mercy. God's mercies are often enhanced in value by the timely haste which he uses in their bestowal; if they came late they might be too late—but he rides upon a cherub, and flies upon the wings of the wind when he intends the good of his beloved. *Be thou my strong rock.* Be my Engedi, my Adullam; my immutable, immovable, impregnable, sublime, resort. *For an house of defence to save me,* wherein I may dwell in safety, not merely running to thee for temporary shelter, but abiding in thee for eternal salvation. How very simply does the good man pray, and yet with what weight of meaning! he uses no ornamental flourishes, he is too deeply in earnest to be otherwise than plain: it were well if all who engage in public prayer would observe the same rule.

**Verse 3.** *For thou art my rock and my fortress.* Here the tried soul avows yet again its full confidence in God. Faith's repetitions are not vain. The avowal of our reliance upon God in times of adversity is a principle method of glorifying him. Active service is good, but the passive confidence of faith is not one jot less esteemed in the sight of God. The words before us appear to embrace and fasten upon the Lord with a fiducial grip which is not to be relaxed. The two personal pronouns, like sure nails, lay hold upon the faithfulness of the Lord. O for grace to have our heart fixed in firm unstaggering belief in God! The figure of a rock and a fortress may be illustrated to us in these times by the vast fortress of Gibraltar, often besieged by our enemies, but never wrested from us: ancient strongholds, though far from impregnable by our modes of warfare,
were equally important in those remoter ages—when in the mountain fastnesses, feeble bands felt themselves to be secure. Note the singular fact that David asked the Lord to be his rock Ps 31:2 because he was his rock; and learn from it that we may pray to enjoy in experience what we grasp by faith. Faith is the foundation of prayer. Therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. The psalmist argues like a logician with his fors and therefore. Since I do sincerely trust thee, saith he, O my God, be my director. To lead and to guide are two things very like each other, but patient thought will detect different shades of meaning, especially as the last may mean provide for me. The double word indicates an urgent need—we require double direction, for we are fools, and the way is rough. Lead me as a soldier, guide me as a traveller! lead me as a babe, guide me as a man; lead me when thou art with me, but guide me even if thou be absent; lead me by thy hand, guide me by thy word. The argument used is one which is fetched from the armoury of free grace: not for my own sake, but for thy name's sake guide me. Our appeal is not to any fancied virtue in our own names, but to the glorious goodness and graciousness which shines resplendent in the character of Israel's God. It is not possible that the Lord should suffer his own honour to be tarnished, but this would certainly be the case if those who trusted him should perish. This was Moses' plea, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?"

Verse 4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me. The enemies of David were cunning as well as mighty; if they could not conquer him by power, they would capture him by craft. Our own spiritual foes are of the same order—they are of the serpent's brood, and seek to ensnare us by their guile. The prayer before us supposes the possibility of the believer being caught like a bird; and, indeed, we are so foolish that this often happens. So deftly does the fowler do his work that simple ones are soon surrounded by it. The text asks that even out of the meshes of the net the captive one may be delivered; and this is a proper petition, and one which can be granted; from between the jaws of the lion and out of the belly of hell can eternal love rescue the saint. It may need a sharp pull to save a soul from the net of temptation, and a mighty pull to extricate a man from the snares of malicious cunning, but the Lord is equal to every emergency, and the most skilfully placed nets of the hunter shall never be able to hold his chosen ones. Woe unto those who are so clever at net laying: they who tempt others shall be destroyed themselves. Villains who lay traps in secret shall be punished in public. For thou art my strength. What an inexpressible sweetness is to be found in these few words! How joyfully may we enter upon labours, and how cheerfully may we endure sufferings when we can lay hold upon celestial power. Divine power will rend asunder all the toils of the foe, confound their politics and frustrate their knavish tricks; he is a
happy man who has such matchless might engaged upon his side. Our own strength would be of little service when embarrassed in the nets of base cunning, but the Lord's strength is ever available; we have but to invoke it, and we shall find it near at hand. If by faith we are depending alone upon the strength of the strong God of Israel, we may use our holy reliance as a plea in supplication.

Verse 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* These living words of David were our Lord's dying words, and have been frequently used by holy men in their hour of departure. Be assured that they are good, choice, wise, and solemn words; we may use them now and in the last tremendous hour. Observe, the object of the good man's solicitude in life and death is not his body or his estate, but his spirit; this is his jewel, his secret treasure; if this be safe, all is well. See what he does with his pearl! He commits it to the hand of his God; it came from him, it is his own, he has aforetime sustained it, he is able to keep it, and it is most fit that he should receive it. All things are safe in Jehovah's hands; what we entrust to the Lord will be secure, both now and in that day of days towards which we are hastening. Without reservation the good man yields himself to his heavenly Father's hand; it is enough for him to be there; it is peaceful living and glorious dying to repose in the care of heaven. At all times we should commit and continue to commit our all to Jesus' sacred care, then, though life may hang on a thread, and adversities may multiply as the sands of the sea, our soul shall dwell at ease, and delight itself in quiet resting places. *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* Redemption is a solid base for confidence. David had not known Calvary as we have done, but temporal redemption cheered him; and shall not eternal redemption yet more sweetly console us? Past deliverances are strong pleas for present assistance. What the Lord has done he will do again, for he changes not. He is a God of veracity, faithful to his promises, and gracious to his saints; he will not turn away from his people.

Verse 6. *I have hated them that regard lying vanities.* Those who will not lean upon the true arm of strength, are sure to make to themselves vain confidences. Man must have a god, and if he will not adore the only living and true God, he makes a fool of himself, and pays superstitious regard to a lie, and waits with anxious hope upon a base delusion. Those who did this were none of David's friends; he had a constant dislike to them: the verb includes the present as well as the past tense. He hated them for hating God; he would not endure the presence of idolaters; his heart was set against them for their stupidity and wickedness. He had no patience with their superstitious observances, and calls their idols vanities of emptiness, nothings of nonentity. Small courtesy is more
than Romanists and Puseyists deserve for their fooleries. Men who make gods of
their riches, their persons, their wits, or anything else, are to be shunned by
those whose faith rests upon God in Christ Jesus; and so far from being envied,
they are to be pitied as depending upon utter vanities. But I trust in the Lord.
This might be very unfashionable, but the psalmist dared to be singular. Bad
example should not make us less decided for the truth, but the rather in the
midst of general defection we should grow the more bold. This adherence to his
trust in Jehovah is the great plea employed all along: the troubled one flies into
the arms of his God, and ventures everything upon the divine faithfulness.

Verse 7. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. For mercy past he is grateful,
and for mercy future, which hebelievingly anticipates, he is joyful. In our most
importunate intercessions, we must find breathing time to bless the Lord: praise
is never a hindrance to prayer, but rather a lively refreshment therein. It is
delightful at intervals to hear the notes of the high sounding cymbals when the
dolorous sackbut rules the hour. Those two words, glad and rejoice, are an
instructive reduplication, we need not stint ourselves in our holy triumph; this
wine we may drink in bowls without fear of excess. For thou hast considered
my trouble. Thou hast seen it, weighed it, directed it, fixed a bound to it, and in
all ways made it a matter of tender consideration. A man's consideration means
the full exercise of his mind; what must God's consideration be? Thou hast
known my soul in adversities. God owns his saints when others are ashamed to
acknowledge them; he never refuses to know his friends. He thinks not the
worse of them for their rags and tatters. He does not misjudge them and cast
them off when their faces are lean with sickness, or their hearts heavy with
despondency. Moreover, the Lord Jesus knows us in our pangs in a peculiar
sense, by having a deep sympathy towards us in them all; when no others can
enter into our griefs, from want of understanding them experimentally, Jesus
dives into the lowest depths with us, comprehending the direst of our woes,
because he has felt the same. Jesus is a physician who knows every case;
nothing is new to him. When we are so bewildered as not to know our own
state, he knows us altogether. He has known us and will know us: O for grace
to know more of him! "Man, know thyself," is a good philosophic precept, but
"Man, thou art known of God," is a superlative consolation. Adversities in the
plural—"Many are the afflictions of the righteous."

Verse 8. And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy. To be shut up in
one's hand is to be delivered over absolutely to his power; now, the believer is
not in the hand of death or the devil, much less is he in the power of man. The
enemy may get a temporary advantage over us, but we are like men in prison
with the door open; God will not let us be shut up, he always provides a way of
escape. *Thou hast set my feet in a large room.* Blessed be God for liberty: civil liberty is valuable, religious liberty is precious, spiritual liberty is priceless. In all troubles we may praise God if these are left. Many saints have had their greatest enlargements of soul when their affairs have been in the greatest straits. Their souls have been in a large room when their bodies have been lying in Bonner's coal hole, or in some other narrow dungeon. Grace has been equal to every emergency; and more than this, it has made the emergency an opportunity for displaying itself.

**Verse 9.** *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble.* Now, the man of God comes to a particular and minute description of his sorrowful case. He unbosoms his heart, lays bare his wounds, and expresses his inward desolation. This first sentence pithily comprehends all that follows, it is the text for his lamenting discourse. Misery moves mercy—no more reasoning is needed. "Have mercy" is the prayer; the argument is as prevalent as it is plain and personal, "I am in trouble." *Mine eye is consumed with grief.* Dim and sunken eyes are plain indicators of failing health. Tears draw their salt from our strength, and floods of them are very apt to consume the source from which they spring. God would have us tell him the symptoms of our disease, not for his information, but to show our sense of need. *Yea, my soul and my belly (or body).* Soul and body are so intimately united, that one cannot decline without the other feeling it. We, in these days, are not strangers to the double sinking which David describes; we have been faint with physical suffering, and distracted with mental distress: when two such seas meet, it is well for us that the Pilot at the helm is at home in the midst of the water floods, and makes storms to become the triumph of his art.

**Verse 10.** *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing.* It had become his daily occupation to mourn; he spent all his days in the dungeon of distress. The sap and essence of his existence was being consumed, as a candle is wasted while it burns. His adversities were shortening his days, and digging for him an early grave. Grief is a sad market to spend all our wealth of life in, but a far more profitable trade may be driven there than in Vanity Fair; it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting. Black is good wear. The salt of tears is a healthy medicine. Better spend our years in sighing than in sinning. The two members of the sentence before us convey the same idea; but there are no idle words in Scripture, the reduplication is the fitting expression of fervency and importunity. *My strength faileth because of mine iniquity.* David sees to the bottom of his sorrow, and detects sin lurking there. It is profitable trouble which leads us to trouble ourselves about our iniquity. Was this the psalmist's foulest crime which now gnawed at his heart, and devoured
his strength? Very probably it was so. Sinful morsels, though sweet in the
mouth, turn out to be poison in the bowels: if we wantonly give a portion of our
strength to sin, it will by and by take the remainder from us. We lose both
physical, mental, moral, and spiritual vigour by iniquity. And my bones are
consumed. Weakness penetrated the innermost parts of his system, the firmest
parts of his frame felt the general decrepitude. A man is in a piteous plight
when he comes to this.

Verse 11. I was a reproach among all mine enemies. They were pleased to
have something to throw at me; my mournful estate was music to them,
because they maliciously interpreted it to be a judgment from heaven upon me.
Reproach is little thought of by those who are not called to endure it, but he
who passes under its lash knows how deep it wounds. The best of men may
have the bitterest foes, and be subject to the most cruel taunts. But especially
among my neighbours. Those who are nearest can stab the sharpest. We feel
most the slights of those who should have shown us sympathy. Perhaps David's
friends feared to be identified with his declining fortunes, and therefore turned
against him in order to win the mercy if not the favour of his opponents. Self
interest rules the most of men: ties the most sacred are soon snapped by its
influence, and actions of the utmost meanness are perpetrated without scruple.
And a fear to mine acquaintance. The more intimate before, the more distant
did they become. Our Lord was denied by Peter, betrayed by Judas, and
forsaken by all in the hour of his utmost need. All the herd turn against a
wounded deer. The milk of human kindness curdles when a despised believer is
the victim of slanderous accusations. They that did see me without fled from
me. Afraid to be seen in the company of a man so thoroughly despised, those
who once courted his society hastened from him as though he had been infected
with the plague. How villainous a thing is slander which can thus make an
eminent saint, once the admiration of his people, to become the general butt,
the universal aversion of mankind! To what extremities of dishonour may
innocence be reduced!

Verse 12. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind. All David's youthful
prowess was now gone from remembrance; he had been the saviour of his
country, but his services were buried in oblivion. Men soon forget the deepest
obligations; popularity is evanescent to the last degree: he who is in every one's
mouth today may be forgotten by all tomorrow. A man had better be dead than
be smothered in slander. Of the dead we say nothing but good, but in the
psalmist's case they said nothing but evil. We must not look for the reward of
philanthropy this side of heaven, for men pay their best servants but sorry
wages, and turn them out of doors when no more is to be got out of them. I am
like a broken vessel, a thing useless, done for, worthless, cast aside, forgotten. Sad condition for a king! Let us see herein the portrait of the King of kings in his humiliation, when he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.

**Verse 13.** *For I have heard the slander of many.* One slanderous viper is death to all comfort—what must be the venom of a whole brood? What the ear does not hear the heart does not rue; but in David's case the accusing voices were loud enough to break in upon his quiet—foul mouths had grown so bold, that they poured forth their falsehoods in the presence of their victim. Shimei was but one of a class, and his cry of "Go up, thou bloody man," was but the common speech of thousands of the sons of Belial. All Beelzebub's pack of hounds may be in full cry against a man, and yet he may be the Lord's anointed. *Fear was on every side.* He was encircled with fearful suggestions, threatenings, remembrances, and forebodings; no quarter was clear from incessant attack. *While they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.* The ungodly act in concert in their onslaughts upon the excellent of the earth: it is to be wondered at that sinners should often be better agreed than saints, and generally set about their wicked work with much more care and foresight than the righteous exhibit in holy enterprises. Observe the cruelty of a good man's foes! they will be content with nothing less than his blood—for this they plot and scheme. Better fall into the power of a lion than under the will of malicious persecutors, for the beast may spare its prey if it be fed to the full, but malice is unrelenting and cruel as a wolf. Of all fiends the most cruel is envy. How sorely was the psalmist bestead when the poisoned arrows of a thousand bows were all aimed at his life! Yet in all this his faith did not fail him, nor did his God forsake him. Here is encouragement for us.

**Verses 14-18.** In this section of the Psalm he renews his prayers, urging the same pleas as at first: earnest wrestlers attempt over and over again the same means of gaining their point.

**Verse 14.** *But I trusted in thee, O Lord.* Notwithstanding all afflicting circumstances, David's faith maintained its hold, and was not turned aside from its object. What a blessed saving clause is this! So long as our faith, which is our shield, is safe, the battle may go hard, but its ultimate result is no matter of question; if that could be torn from us, we should be as surely slain as were Saul and Jonathan upon the high places of the field. *I said, Thou art my God.* He proclaimed aloud his determined allegiance to Jehovah. He was no fair weather believer, he could hold to his faith in a sharp frost, and wrap it about him as a garment fitted to keep out all the ills of time. He who can say what David did need not envy Cicero his eloquence: "Thou art my God, "has more
sweetness in it than any other utterance which human speech can frame. Note that this adhesive faith is here mentioned as an argument with God to honour his own promise by sending a speedy deliverance.

**Verse 15.** *My times are in thy hand.* The sovereign arbiter of destiny holds in his own power all the issues of our life; we are not waifs and strays upon the ocean of fate, but are steered by infinite wisdom towards our desired haven. Providence is a soft pillow for anxious heads, an anodyne for care, a grave for despair. *Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.* It is lawful to desire escape from persecution if it be the Lord's will; and when this may not be granted us in the form which we desire, sustaining grace will give us deliverance in another form, by enabling us to laugh to scorn all the fury of the foe.

**Verse 16.** *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.* Give me the sunshine of heaven in my soul, and I will defy the tempests of earth. Permit me to enjoy a sense of thy favour, O Lord, and a consciousness that thou art pleased with my manner of life, and all men may frown and slander as they will. It is always enough for a servant if he pleases his master; others may be dissatisfied, but he is not their servant, they do not pay him his wages, and their opinions have no weight with him. *Save me for thy mercies' sake.* The good man knows no plea but mercy; whoever might urge legal pleas David never dreamed of it.

**Verse 17.** *Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee.* Put not my prayers to the blush! Do not fill profane mouths with jeers at my confidence in my God. *Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.* Cause them to their amazement to see my wrongs righted and their own pride horribly confounded. A milder spirit rules our prayers under the gentle reign of the Prince of Peace, and, therefore, we can only use such words as these in their prophetic sense, knowing as we do full well, that shame and the silence of death are the best portion that ungodly sinners can expect. That which they desired for despised believers shall come upon themselves by a decree of retributive justice, at which they cannot cavil—"As he loved mischief, so let it come upon him."

**Verse 18.** *Let the lying lips be put to silence.* A right good and Christian prayer; who but a bad man would give liars more license than need be? May God silence them either by leading them to repentance, by putting them to thorough shame, or by placing them in positions where what they may say will stand for nothing. *Which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.* The sin of slanderers lies partly in the matter of their speech; "they speak grievous things; "things cutting deep into the feelings of good men, and
wounding them sorely in that tender place—their reputations. The sin is further enhanced by the manner of their speech; they speak proudly and contemptuously; they talk as if they themselves were the cream of society, and the righteous the mere scum of vulgarity. Proud thoughts of self are generally attended by debasing estimates of others. The more room we take up ourselves, the less we can afford our neighbours. What wickedness it is that unworthy characters should always be the loudest in railing at good men! They have no power to appreciate moral worth of which they are utterly destitute, and yet they have the effrontery to mount the judgment seat, and judge the men compared with whom they are as so much chaff. Holy indignation may well prompt us to desire anything which may rid the world of such unbearable impertinence and detestable arrogance.

Verses 19-22. Being full of faith, the psalmist gives glory to God for the mercy which he is assured will be his position.

Verse 19. **Oh how great is thy goodness.** Is it not singular to find such a joyful sentence in connection with so much sorrow? Truly the life of faith is a miracle. When faith led David to his God, she set him singing at once. He does not tell us how great was God's goodness, for he could not; there are no measures which can set forth the immeasurable goodness of Jehovah, who is goodness itself. Holy amazement uses interjections where adjectives utterly fail. Notes of exclamation suit us when words of explanation are of no avail. If we cannot measure we can marvel; and though we may not calculate with accuracy, we can adore with fervency. **Which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.** The psalmist in contemplation divides goodness into two parts, that which is in store and that which is wrought out. The Lord has laid up in reserve for his people supplies beyond all count. In the treasury of the covenant, in the field of redemption, in the caskets of the promises, in the granaries of providence, the Lord has provided for all the needs which can possibly occur to his chosen. We ought often to consider the laid up goodness of God which has not yet been distributed to the chosen, but is already provided for them: if we are much in such contemplations, we shall be led to feel devout gratitude, such as glowed in the heart of David. **Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men.** Heavenly mercy is not all hidden in the storehouse; in a thousand ways it has already revealed itself on behalf of those who are bold to avow their confidence in God; before their fellow men this goodness of the Lord has been displayed, that a faithless generation might stand rebuked. Overwhelming are the proofs of the Lord’s favour to believers, history teems with amazing instances, and our own lives are full of prodigies of grace. We serve a good Master. Faith receives a large reward even now, but looks for her
Psalm 31

verse 20. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man. Pride is a barbed weapon: the proud man's contumely is iron which entereth into the soul; but those who trust in God, are safely housed in the Holy of holies, the innermost court, into which no man may dare intrude; here in the secret dwelling place of God the mind of the saint rests in peace, which the foot of pride cannot disturb. Dwellers at the foot of the cross of Christ grow callous to the sneers of the haughty. The wounds of Jesus distil a balsam which heals all the scars which the jagged weapons of contempt can inflict upon us; in fact, when armed with the same mind which was in Christ Jesus, the heart is invulnerable to all the darts of pride. Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. Tongues are more to be dreaded than beasts of prey—and when they strive, it is as though a whole pack of wolves were let loose; but the believer is secure even in this peril, for the royal pavilion of the King of kings shall afford him quiet shelter and serene security. The secret tabernacle of sacrifice, and the royal pavilion of sovereignty afford a double security to the Lord's people in their worst distresses. Observe the immediate action of God, "Thou shalt hide," "Thou shalt keep," the Lord himself is personally present for the rescue of his afflicted.

verse 21. Blessed be the Lord. When the Lord blesses us we cannot do less than bless him in return. For he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. Was this in Mahanaim, where the Lord gave him victory over the hosts of Absalom? Or did he refer to Rabbath of Ammon, where he gained signal triumphs? Or, best of all, was Jerusalem the strong city where he most experienced the astonishing kindness of his God? Gratitude is never short of subjects; her Ebenezers stand so close together as to wall up her path to heaven on both sides. Whether in cities or in hamlets our blessed Lord has revealed himself to us, we shall never forget the hallowed spots: the lonely mount of Hermon, or the village of Emmaus, or the rock of Patmos, or the wilderness of Horeb, are all alike renowned when God manifests himself to us in robes of love.

verse 22. Confession of faults is always proper; and when we reflect upon the goodness of God, we ought to be reminded of our own errors and offences. For I said in my haste. We generally speak amiss when we are in a hurry. Hasty words are but for a moment on the tongue, but they often lie for years on the conscience. I am cut off from before thine eyes. This was an unworthy speech; but unbelief will have a corner in the heart of the firmest believer, and out of
that corner it will vent many spiteful things against the Lord if the course of providence be not quite so smooth as nature might desire. No saint ever was, or ever could be, cut off from before the eyes of God, and yet no doubt many have thought so, and more than one has said so. For ever be such dark suspicions banished from our minds. Nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. What a mercy that if we believe not, yet God abideth faithful, hearing prayer even when we are labouring under doubts which dishonour his name. If we consider the hindrances in the way of our prayers, and the poor way in which we present them, it is a wonder of wonders that they ever prevail with heaven.

Verse 23. O love the Lord, all ye his saints. A most affecting exhortation, showing clearly the deep love of the writer to his God: there is the more beauty in the expression, because it reveals love toward a smiting God, love which many waters could not quench. To bless him who gives is easy, but to cling to him who takes away is a work of grace. All the saints are benefited by the sanctified miseries of one, if they are led by earnest exhortations to love their Lord the better. If saints do not love the Lord, who will? Love is the universal debt of all the saved family: who would wish to be exonerated from its payment? Reasons for love are given, for believing love is not blind. For the Lord preserveth the faithful. They have to bide their time, but the recompense comes at last, and meanwhile all the cruel malice of their enemies cannot destroy them. And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. This also is cause for gratitude: pride is so detestable in its acts that he who shall mete out to it its righteous due, deserves the love of all holy minds.

Verse 24. Be of good courage. Keep up your spirit, let no craven thoughts blanch your cheek. Fear weakens, courage strengthens. Victory waits upon the banners of the brave. And he shall strengthen your heart. Power from on high shall be given in the most effectual manner by administering force to the fountain of vitality. So far from leaving us, the Lord will draw very near to us in our adversity, and put his own power into us. All ye that hope in the Lord. Every one of you, lift up your heads and sing for joy of heart. God is faithful, and does not fail even his little children who do but hope, wherefore then should we be afraid?

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Verse 1. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust. Let us therefore shun mistrust; doubt is death, trust alone is life. Let us make sure that we trust the Lord, and never take our trust on trust. Let me never be ashamed. If David prays against
being ashamed, let us strive against it. Lovers of Jesus should be ashamed of being ashamed. C. H. S.

Verse 1. Deliver me in thy righteousness. For supporting thy faith, mark well whereon it may safely rest; even upon God's righteousness, as well as upon his mercy. On this ground did the apostle in faith expect the crown of righteousness 2Ti 4:7-8, because the Lord from whom he expected it is a righteous judge; and the psalmist is bold to appeal to the righteousness of God. Ps 35:24. For we may be well assured that what God's goodness, grace, and mercy moved him to promise, his truth, his faithfulness, and righteousness will move him to perform. William Gouge.

Verses 1-3.

Shadows are faithless, and the rocks are false;
No trust in brass, no trust in marble walls;
Poor cots are even as safe as princes' halls.
Great God! there is no safety here below;
Thou art my fortress, thou that seemest my foe,
It is thou that strik'st the stroke, must guard the blow.
Thou art my God, by thee I fall or stand;
Thy grace hath given me courage to withstand
All tortures, but my conscience and thy hand.
I know thy justice is thyself; I know,
Just God, thy very self is mercy too;
If not to thee, where, whither shall I go?
—Francis Quarles.

Verse 2. Bow down thy ear. Listen to my complaint. Put thy ear to my lips, that thou mayest hear all that my feebleness is capable of uttering. We generally put our ear near to the lips of the sick and dying that we may hear what they say. To this the text appears to allude. Adam Clarke.

Verse 2. Deliver me speedily. In praying that he might be delivered speedily there is shown the greatness of his danger, as if he had said, All will soon be over with my life, unless God makes haste to help me. John Calvin. Verses 2-3. Be thou my strong rock, etc. What the Lord is engaged to be unto us by covenant, we may pray and expect to find him in effect. "Be thou my strong rock," saith he, "for thou art my rock." David Dickson.

Verse 3. For thy name's sake. If merely a creature's honour, the credit of ministers, or the glory of angels were involved, man's salvation would indeed
be uncertain. But every step involves the honour of God. We plead for his name's sake. If God should begin and not continue, or if he should carry on but not complete the work, all would admit that it was for some reason that must bring reproach on the Almighty. This can never be. God was self moved to undertake man's salvation. His glorious name makes it certain the top stone shall be laid in glory. *William S. Plumer.*

**Verse 3.** *For thy name's sake.* On account of the fame of thy power, thy goodness, thy truth, &c. *Lead me.* As a shepherd an erring sheep, as a leader military bands, or as one leads another ignorant of the way. See Ge 24:27 Ne 9:12-13 Ps 23:3 73:24. Govern my counsels, my affections, and my thoughts. *Martin Geier,* 1614-1681.

**Verse 4.** *Pull me out of the net:* that noted net, as the Hebrew hath it. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 4.** *Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me.* By these words, he intimates that his enemies did not only by open force come against him, but by cunning and policy attempted to circumvent him, as when they put him on, as Saul instructed them, to be the king's son-in-law, and to this end set him on to get two hundred foreskins of the Philistines for a dowry, under a pretence of goodwill, seeking his ruin; and when wait also was laid for him to kill him in his house. But he trusted in God, and prayed to be delivered, if there should be any the like enterprise against him hereafter. *John Mayer.*

**Verse 4.** *For thou art my strength.* Omnipotence cuts the net which policy weaves. When we poor puny things are in the net, God is not. In the old fable the mouse set free the lion, here the lion liberates the mouse. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 5.** *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* These were the last words of Polycarp, of Bernard, of Huss, of Jerome of Prague, of Luther, of Melancthon, and many others. "Blessed are they, "says Luther, "who die not only for the Lord, as martyrs, not only in the Lord, as all believers, but likewise with the Lord, as breathing forth their lives in these words, 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit.'" *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Verse 5.** *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* These words, as they stand in the *Vulgate,* were in the highest credit among our ancestors; by whom they were used on all dangers, difficulties, and in the article of death. *In manus tuas,* *Domine, commendo spiritum meum,* was used by the sick when about to expire, if they were sensible; and if not, the priest said it in their behalf. In *forms of prayer* for sick and dying persons, these words were frequently inserted in
Latin, though all the rest of the prayer was English; for it was supposed there was something sovereign in the language itself. But let not the abuse of such words hinder their usefulness. For an ejaculation nothing can be better; and when the pious or the tempted with confidence use them, nothing can exceed their effect. Adam Clarke.

Verse 5. Into thine hand I commit my spirit, etc. For what are the saints to commit their spirits into the hands of God by Jesus Christ? 1. That they may be safe; i.e., preserved in their passage to heaven, from all the enemies and dangers that may stand in the way. When saints die, the powers of darkness would, doubtless, if possible, hinder the ascending of their souls to God. As they are cast out of heaven, they are filled with rage to see any out of our world going thither. One thing, therefore, which the saint means in committing his spirit into the hands of God, is, that the precious depositum may be kept from all that wish or would attempt its ruin. And they are sure that almighty power belongs to God: and if this is engaged for their preservation, none can pluck them out of his hand. The Redeemer hath spoiled principalities and powers, and proved it by his triumphant ascension to glory; and hath all his and the believer's enemies in a chain, so that they shall be more than conquerors in and through him. Angels, for order's sake, are sent forth to minister to them and be their guard, who will faithfully attend them their charge, till they are brought to the presence of the common Lord of both. "I know, "saith the apostle, "whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

2. They commit their soul into the hands of God, that they may be admitted to dwell with him, even in that presence of his where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore: where all evil is excluded, and all good present, to fill their desires, and find them matter of praise to all eternity.

3. They commit their departing spirits into the hands of God, that their bodies may be at length raised and reunited to them, and that so they may enter at last into the blessedness prepared for them that love him...The grounds on which they may do this with comfort, i.e., with lively hopes of being happy for ever, are many. To mention only two:

(a) God's interest in them, and upon the most endearing foundation, that of redemption. Into thine hand I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me. Redeemed me from hell and the wrath to come, by giving thy Son to die for me. Lord, I am not only thy creature, but thy redeemed creature, bought with a price, saith the saint. Redeemed me from the power of my inward corruption,
and from love to it, and delight in it; and with my consent hast drawn me to be thine, and thine for ever. *Lord, I am thine*, save me unchangeably.

(b) His known faithfulness. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit, O Lord God of truth.* Into thine hand I commit my spirit, who hast been *a God of truth*, in performing thy promises to all thy people that are gone before me out of this world; and has been so to me hitherto, and, I cannot doubt, wilt continue so to the end. *Daniel Wilcox."

**Verse 5. Into thine hand.** When those hands fail me, then I am indeed abandoned and miserable! When they sustain and keep me, then am I safe, exalted, strong, and filled with good. Receive me then, O Eternal Father, for the sake of our Lord's merits and words; for he, by his obedience and his death, hath now merited from thee everything which I do not merit of myself. Into thy hands, my Father and my God, I commend my spirit, my soul, my body, my powers, my desires. I offer up to thy hands, all; to them I commit all that I have hitherto been, that thou mayest forgive and restore all; my wounds, that thou mayest heal them; my blindness, that thou mayest enlighten it; my coldness, that thou mayest inflame it; my wicked and erring way, that thou mayest set me forth in the right path; and all my evils, that thou mayest uproot them all from my soul. I commend and offer up into thy most sacred hands, O my God, what I am, which thou knowest far better than I can know, weak, wretched, wounded, fickle, blind, deaf, dumb, poor, bare of every good, nothing, yea, less than nothing, on account of my many sins, and more miserable than I can either know or express. Do thou, Lord God, receive me and make me to become what he, the divine Lamb, would have me to be. I commend, I offer up, I deliver over into thy divine hands, all my affairs, my cares, my affections, my success, my comforts, my labours, and everything which thou knowest to be coming upon me. Direct all to thy honour and glory; teach me in all to do thy will, and in all to recognise the work of thy divine hands; to seek nothing else, and with this reflection alone to find rest and comfort in everything.

O hands of the Eternal God, who made and still preserve the heavens and earth for my sake, and who made me for yourselves, suffer me not ever to stray from you. In those hands I possess my Lamb, and all I love; in them therefore must I be also, together with him. Together with him, in these loving hands shall I sleep and rest in peace, since he in dying left me hope in them and in their infinite mercies, placed me within them, as my only and my special refuge. Since by these hands I live and am what I am, make me continually to live through them, and in them to die; in them to live in the love of our Lord, and from them only to desire and look for every good; that from them I may at last, together with the Lord, receive the crown. *Fra Thome de Jesu.*
Verse 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* No shadowy form of a dark destiny stands before him at the end of his career, although he must die on the cross, the countenance of his Father shines before him. He does not behold his life melting away into the gloomy floods of mortality. He commends it into the hands of his Father. It is not alone in the general spirit of humanity, that he will continue to live. He will live on in the definite personality of his own spirit, embraced by the special protection and faithfulness of his Father. Thus he does not surrender his life despondingly to death for destruction, but with triumphant consciousness to the Father for resurrection. It was the very centre of his testament: assurance of life; surrender of his life into the hand of a living Father. With loud voice he exclaimed it to the world, which will for ever and ever sink into the heathenish consciousness of death, of the fear of death, of despair of immortality and resurrection, because it for ever and ever allows the consciousness of the personality of God, and of personal union with him, to be obscured and shaken. With the heart of a lion, the dying Christ once more testified of life with an expression which was connected with the word of the Old Testament Psalm, and testified that the Spirit of eternal life was already operative, in prophetic anticipation, in the old covenant. Thus living as ever, he surrendered his life, through death, to the eternally living One. His death was the last and highest fact, the crown of his holy life. *J.P. Lange, D.D., in* "The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ." 1864.

Verse 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* David committed his spirit to God that he might not die, but Christ and all Christians after him, commit their spirit to God, that they may live for ever by death, and after death. This Psalm is thus connected with the twenty-second Psalm. Both of these Psalms were used by Christ on the cross. From the twenty-second he derived those bitter words of anguish, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" From the present Psalm he derived those last words of love and trust which he uttered just before his death. The Psalter was the hymn book and prayer book of Christ. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 6. *I have hated.* Holy men have strong passions, and are not so mincing and charitable towards evil doers as smooth tongued latitudinarians would have them. He who does not hate evil does not love good. There is such a thing as a good hater. *C. H. S*

Verse 6. *They that regard lying vanities.* The Romanists feign miracles of the saints to make them, as they suppose, the more glorious. They say that the house wherein the Virgin Mary was when the angel Gabriel came unto her was, many hundred years after, translated, first, out of Galilee into Dalmatia, above 2,000 miles, and thence over the sea into Italy, where also it removed from one
place to another, till at length it found a place where to abide, and many most miraculous cures, they say, were wrought by it, and that the very trees when it came, did bow unto it. Infinite stories they have of this nature, especially in the Legend of Saints, which they call "The Golden Legend," a book so full of gross stuff that Ludovicus Vives, a Papist, but learned and ingenuous, with great indignations cried out, "What can be more abominable than that book?" and he wondered why they should call it "golden," when as he that wrote it was a man "of an iron mouth and of a leaden heart." And Melchior Canus, a Romish bishop, passed the same censure upon that book, and complains (as Vives also had done before him), that Laertius wrote the lives of philosophers, and Suetonius the lives of the Caesars, more sincerely than some did the lives of the saints and martyrs. They are most vain and superstitious in the honour which they give to the relics of the saints; as their dead bodies, or some parts of them; their bones, flesh, hair; yea, their clothes that they wore, or the like. "You may now, everywhere," saith Erasmus, "see held out for gain, "Mary's milk, which they honour almost as much as Christ's consecrated body; prodigious oil; so many pieces of the cross, that if they were all gathered together a great ship would scarce carry them. Here Francis's hood set forth to view; there the innermost garment of the Virgin Mary; in one place, Anna's comb; in another place, Joseph's stocking; in another place, Thomas of Canterbury's shoe; in another place, Christ's foreskin, which, though it be a thing uncertain, they worship more religiously than Christ's whole person. Neither do they bring forth these things as things that may be tolerated, and to please the common people, but all religion almost is placed in them. (Erasmus, on Mt 23:5).

Christopher Cartwright.

Verse 6. The sense lies thus, that heathen men, when any danger or difficulty approacheth them, are solemnly wont to apply themselves to auguries and divinations, and so to false gods, to receive advice and direction from them: but doing so and observing their responses most superstitiously, they yet gain nothing at all by it. These David detests, and keeps close to God, hoping for no aid but from him. H. Hammond, D.D.

Verse 7. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. In the midst of trouble faith will furnish matter of joy, and promise to itself gladness, especially from the memory of by past experiences of God's mercy; as here, I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. ...The ground of our gladness, when we have found a proof of God's kindness to us should not be in the benefit so much as in the fountain of the benefit; for this giveth us hope to drink again of the like experience from the fountain which did send forth that benefit. Therefore David says, I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. David Dickson.
Verse 7. Thou hast considered my trouble:

Man's plea to man, is, that he never more
Will beg, and that he never begged before:
Man's plea to God, is, that he did obtain
A former suit, and, therefore sues again.
How good a God we serve, that when we sue,
Makes his old gifts the examples of his new!
—Francis Quarles.

Verse 7. Thou hast known my soul in adversities. One day a person who, by the calamities of war, sickness, and other affliction, had been reduced from a state of affluence to penury, came to Gotthold in great distress. He complained that he had just met one of his former acquaintances, who was even not distantly related to him, but that he had not condescended to bow, far less to speak to him, and he had turned his eyes away, and passed him as if he had been a stranger. O sir, he exclaimed with a sigh, how it pained me! I felt as if a dagger had pierced my heart! Gotthold replied, Do not think it strange at all. It is the way of the world to look high, and to pass unnoticed that which is humble and lowly. I know, however, of One who, though he dwelleth on high, humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth Ps 113:5-6, and of whom the royal prophet testifies: Thou hast known my soul in adversities.

Yes; though we have lost our rich attire, and come to him in rags; though our forms be wasted because of grief, and waxed old (Ps 6:7, Luther's Version); though sickness and sorrow have consumed our beauty like a moth Ps 39:11; though blushes, and tears, and dust, overspread our face Ps 69:7, he still recognises, and is not ashamed to own us. Comfort yourself with this, for what harm will it do you at last, though men disown, if God the Lord have not forgotten you? Christian Scriver.

Verse 8. He openeth and no man shutteth. Let us bless the Lord for an open door which neither men nor devils can close. We are not in man's hands yet, because we are in the hands of God; else had our feet been in the stocks and not in the large room of liberty. Our enemies, if they were as able as they are willing, would long ago have treated us as fowlers do the little birds when they enclose them in their hand. C. H. S.

Verse 9. Mine eye is consumed with grief. This expression seems to suggest that the eye really suffers under the influence of grief. There was an old idea, which still prevails amongst the uninstructed, that the eye, under extreme grief, and with a constant profuse flow of tears, might sink away and perish under the ordeal. There is no solid foundation for this idea, but there is a very serious
form of disease of the eyes, well known to oculists by the title of Glaucoma, which seems to be very much influenced by mental emotions of a depressing nature. I have know many striking instances of cases in which there has been a constitutional proneness to Glaucoma, and in which some sudden grief has brought on a violent access of the disease and induced blindness of an incurable nature. In such instances the explanation seems to be somewhat as follows. It is essential to the healthy performance of the functions of the eye, that it should possess a given amount of elasticity, which again results from an exact balance between the amount of fluid within the eye, and the external fibrous case or bag that contains or encloses it. If this is disturbed, if the fluid increases unduly in quantity, and the eye becomes too hard, pain and inflammation may be suddenly induced in the interior of the eye, and sight may become rapidly extinguished. There are a special set of nerves that preside over this peculiar physical condition, and keep the eye in a proper state of elasticity; and it is a remarkable fact, that through a long life, as a rule, we find that the eye preserves this elastic state. If, however, the function of these nerves is impaired, as it may readily be under the influence of extreme grief, or any depressing agent, the eye may become suddenly hard. Until a comparatively recent date, acute Glaucoma, or sudden hardening of the eye, attended with intense pain and inflammation, caused complete and hopeless blindness; but in the present day it is capable of relief by means of an operation. The effect of grief in causing this form of blindness seems to be an explanation of the text, *Mine eye is consumed with grief.* On application for information to the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, as to the effect of grief upon the eye, we received the above, with much other valuable information, from GEORGE CRITCHETT, Esq., the senior medical officer. The courtesy of this gentleman, and of the secretary of that noble institution, deserves special mention.

**Verses 9-10.**

If thou wouldst learn, not knowing how to pray,

Add but a faith, and say as beggars say: *Master, I am poor, and blind, in great distress, Hungry, and lame, and cold, and comfortless; O succour him that's gravelled on the shelf Of pain, and want, and cannot help himself Cast down thine eye upon a wretch, and take Some pity on me for sweet Jesus' sake: But hold! take heed this clause be not put in, I never begged before, nor will again.*—Francis Quarles.

**Verse 10. Mine iniquity.** Italian version, "*my pains; "because that death and all miseries are come into the world by reason of sin, the Scripture doth often confound the names of the cause and of the effects. John Diodati."
Verse 10. I find that when the saints are under trial and well humbled, little sins raise great cries in the conscience; but in prosperity, conscience is a pope that gives dispensations and great latitude to our hearts. The cross is therefore as needful as the crown is glorious. *Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 11. *I was a reproach among all mine enemies.* If anyone strives after patience and humility, he is a hypocrite. If he allows himself in the pleasures of this world, he is a glutton. If he seeks justice, he is impatient; if he seeks it not, he is a fool. If he would be prudent, he is stingy; if he would make others happy, he is dissolute. If he gives himself up to prayer, he is vainglorious. And this is the great loss of the church, that by means like these many are held back from goodness! which the psalmist lamenting says, *I became a reproach among all mine enemies.* *Chrysostom,* quoted by *J.M. Neale.*

Verse 11. *They that did see me without fled from me.* I once heard the following relation from an old man of the world, and it occurs to me, as illustrative of what we are now considering. He was at a public assembly, and saw there an individual withdrawing herself from the crowd, and going into a corner of the room. He went up to her, she was an old and intimate friend of his; he addressed himself to her—she, with a sigh, said, "Oh, I have seen many days of trouble since we last met." What does the man of the world do? Immediately he withdrew himself from his sorrow stricken friend and hid himself in the crowd. Such is the sympathy of the world with Christ or his servants. *Hamilton Verschoyle.*

Verse 12. *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind.* A striking instance of how the greatest princes are forgotten in death is found in the deathbed of Louis XIV. "The Louis that was, lies forsaken, a mass of abhorred clay; abandoned 'to some poor persons, and priests of the *Chapelle Ardente,*' who make haste to put him 'in two lead coffins, pouring in abundant spirits of wine.' The new Louis with his court is rolling towards Choisy, through the summer afternoon: the royal tears still flow; but a word mispronounced by Monseigneur d'Artois sets them all laughing, and they weep no more." *Thomas Carlyle in "The French Revolution."

Verse 12. *I am forgotten,* etc. As a dying man with curtains drawn, whom friends have no hope of, and therefore look off from; or rather like a dead man laid aside out of sight and out of mind altogether, and buried more in oblivion than in his grave; when the news is, "she is dead, trouble not the Master." Lu 8:49. *Anthony Tuckney, D.D.,* 1599-1670.
Verse 12. *I am like a broken vessel.* As a vessel, how profitable soever it hath been to the owner, and how necessary for his turn, yet, when it is broken is thrown away, and regarded no longer: even so such is the state of a man forsaken of those whose friend he hath been so long as he was able to stand them in stead to be of advantage to them. *Robert Cawdrey.*

Verse 13. *I have heard the slander of many.* From my very childhood when I was first sensible of the concerns of men's souls, I was possessed with some admiration to find that everywhere the religious, godly sort of people, who did but exercise a serious care of their own and other men's salvation, were made the wonder and obloquy of the world, especially of the most vicious and flagitious men; so that they that professed the same articles of faith, the same commandments of God to be their law, and the same petitions of the Lord's prayer to be their desire, and so professed the same religion, did everywhere revile those that endeavoured to live in good earnest in what they said. I thought this was impudent hypocrisy in the ungodly, worldly sort of men—to take those for the most intolerable persons in the land who are but serious in their own religion, and do but endeavour to perform what all their enemies also vow and promise. If religion be bad, and our faith be not true, why do these men profess it? If it be true, and good, why do they hate and revile them that would live in the serious practise of it, if they will not practise it themselves? But we must not expect reason when sin and sensuality have made men unreasonable. But I must profess that since I observed the course of the world, and the concord of the word and providence of God, I took it for a notable proof of man's fall, and of the truth of the Scripture, and of the supernatural original of true sanctification, to find such a universal enmity between the holy and the serpentine seed, and to find Cain and Able's case so ordinarily exemplified, and he that is born after the flesh persecuting him that is born after the Spirit. And I think to this day it is a great and visible help for the confirmation of our Christian faith. *Richard Baxter.*


Verse 13. *They took counsel together against me,* etc. While they mangled his reputation, they did it in such a manner as that they covered their wickedness under the appearance of grave and considerate procedure, in consulting among themselves to destroy him as a man who no longer ought to be tolerated on the earth. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that his mind was wounded by so many and so sharp temptations. *John Calvin.*
Verse 14. But I trusted in thee, O Lord. The rendering properly is, And I have trusted in thee, but the Hebrew copulative particle (K), vau, and, is used here instead of the adversative particle yet, or nevertheless. David, setting the steadfastness of his faith in opposition to the assaults of the temptations of which he has made mention, denies that he had ever fainted, but rather maintains, on the contrary, that he stood firm in his hope of deliverance from God. Nor does this imply that he boasted of being so magnanimous and courageous that he could not be overthrown through the infirmity of the flesh. However contrary to one another they appear, yet these things are often joined together, as they ought to be, in the same person, namely, that while he pines away with grief, and is deprived of all strength, he is nevertheless supported by so strong a hope that he ceases not to call upon God. David, therefore, was not so overwhelmed in deep sorrow, and other direful sufferings, as that the hidden light of faith could not shine inwardly in his heart; nor did he groan so much under the weighty load of his temptations, as to be prevented from arousing himself to call upon God. He struggled through many obstacles to be able to make the confession which he here makes. He next defines the manner of his faith, namely, that he reflected with himself thus—that God would never fail him nor forsake him. Let us mark his manner of speech: I have said, Thou art my God. In these words he intimates that he was so entirely persuaded of this truth, that God was his God, that he would not admit even a suggestion to the contrary. And until this persuasion prevails so as to take possession of our minds, we shall always waver in uncertainty. It is, however, to be observed, that this declaration is not only inward and secret—made rather in the heart than with the tongue—but that it is directed to God himself, as to him who is the alone witness of it. Nothing is more difficult, when we see our faith derided by the whole world, than to direct our speech to God only, and to rest satisfied with this testimony which our conscience gives us, that he is our God. And certainly it is an undoubted proof of genuine faith, when, however fierce the waves are which beat against us, and however sore the assaults by which we are shaken, we hold fast this as a fixed principle, that we are constantly under the protection of God, and can say to him freely, Thou art our God. John Calvin.

Verse 14. Thou art my God. How much it is more worth than ten thousand mines of gold, to be able to say, God is mine! God's servant is apprehensive of it, and he seeth no defect, but this may be complete happiness to him, and therefore he delights in it, and comforts himself with it. As he did sometime who was a great courtier in King Cyrus's court, and one in favour with him; he was to bestow his daughter in marriage to a very great man, and of himself he had no great means; and therefore one said to him, O Sir, where will you have
means to bestow a dowry upon your daughter proportionable to her degree? Where are your riches? He answered, What need I care, oπου Κυριος μοι φιλος Cyrus is my friend. But may not we say much more, oπου Κυριος μοι φιλος, where the Lord is our friend, that hath those excellent and glorious attributes that cannot come short in any wants, or to make us happy, especially we being capable of it, and made proportionable. John Stoughton's "Righteous Man's Plea to True Happiness," 1640.

Verse 15. *My times are in thy hand.* It is observable that when, of late years, men grow weary of the long and tedious compass in their voyages to the East Indies, and would needs try a more compendious way by the North west passage, it ever proved unsuccessful. Thus it is that we must not use any compendious way; we may not neglect our body, nor shipwreck our health, nor anything to hasten death, because we shall gain by it. He that maketh haste (even this way) to be rich shall not be innocent; for our times are in God's hands, and therefore to his holy providence we must leave them. We have a great deal of work to do, and must not, therefore, be so greedy of our Sabbath day, our rest, as not to be contented with our working day, our labour. Hence it is that a composed frame of mind, like that of the apostle's Php 1:21, wherein either to stay and work, or to go and rest, is the best temper of all. Edward Reynolds, in J. Spencer's "Things New and Old."

Verse 15. *My times.* He does not use the plural number, in my opinion, without reason; but rather to mark the variety of casualties by which the life of man is usually harassed. John Calvin.

Verse 15. *In thy hand.* The watch hangs ticking against the wall, when every tick of the watch is a sigh, and a consciousness, alas! Poor watch! I called once to see a friend, the physician and the secretary of one of the most noble and admirable of the asylums for the insane in this country. A poor creature, with a clear, bright intelligence, only that some of its chords had become unstrung, who had usually occupied itself innocently by making or unmaking watches, had just before I called, exhibited some new, alarming symptoms, dashing one and then another upon the stone floor, and shivering them. Removed into a more safe room, I visited him with the secretary. "How came you to destroy your favourite watches, so much as you loved them, and so quiet as you are?" said my friend; and the poor patient replied, in a tone of piercing agony, "I could not bear the tick, tick, ticking, and so I dashed it on the pavement." But when the watch is able to surrender itself to the maker, to the hand holding the watch, and measuring out the moments, it becomes a sight affecting indeed, but very beautiful, very sublime. We transfer our thoughts from the watch to the hand that holds the watch. *My times, Thy hand;* the watch and the hour have a
purpose, and so are not in vain. God gives man permission to behold two things. Man can see the whole work, the plan's completeness, also the minutest work, the first step towards the plan's completeness. Nothing is more certain, nothing are men more indisposed to perceive than this. We have to

"Wait for some transcendent life,
Reserved by God to follow this."
—Robert Browning.

To this end God's real way is made up of all the ways of our life. His hand holds all our times. *My times; "Thy hand."* Some lives greatly differ from others. This we know; but see, some lives fulfil life's course, gain life's crown—life in their degree. This, on the contrary, others quite miss. Yet, for even human strength there must be a love meted out to rule it. It is said, there is a moon to control the tides of every sea; is there not a master power for souls? It may not always be so, apparently, in the more earthly lives, but it is so in the heavenly; not more surely does the moon sway tides, than God sways souls. It does not seem sometimes as if man found no adequate external power, and stands forth ordained to be a law to his own sphere; but even then his times are in the hands of God, as the pathway of a star is in the limitations of its system—as the movements of a satellite are in the forces of its planet. But while I would not pause on morbid words or views of life, so neither do I desire you to receive or charge me with giving only a moody, morbid view of the world, and an imperfect theology; but far other. *My times are in thy hand—the hand of my Saviour."

"I report as a man may of God's work—all's love, but all's law. In the Godhead I seek and I find it, and so it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee, a Man like to me Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever, a hand like this hand Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee: See the Christ stand!"—Robert Browning.

And now he is "the restorer of paths to dwell in." The hand of Jesus is the hand which rules our times. He regulates our life clock. Christ for and Christ in us. *My times in his hand. My life can be no more in vain than was my Saviour's life in vain.* E. Paxton Hood, in *"Dark Sayings on a Harp,"* 1865.

**Verse 15.** When David had Saul at his mercy in the cave, those about him said, *This is the time* in which God will deliver thee. 1Sa 24:4. No, saith David, the time is not come for my deliverance till it can be wrought without sin, and I will wait for that time; for it is God's time, and that is the best time. *Matthew Henry.*
Verse 16. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. When the cloud of trouble hideth the Lord's favour, faith knoweth it may shine again, and therefore prayeth through the cloud for the dissolving of it. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. David Dickson.

Verse 18. Lying lips...which speak grievous things proudly and contempuously against the righteous. The primitive persecutors slighted the Christians for a company of bad, illiterate fellows, and therefore they used to paint the God of the Christians with an ass's head and a book in his hand, saith Tertullian; to signify, that though they pretended learning, yet they were silly and ignorant people. Bishop Jewel, in his sermon upon Lu 11:15, cites this out of Tertullian and applies it to his times. Do not our adversaries the like, saith he, against all that profess the gospel? Oh! say they, who are those that favour this way? None but shoemakers, tailors, weavers, and such as never were at the University. These are the bishop's own words. Bishop White said in open court, that the Puritans were all a company of blockheads. Charles Bradbury.

Verse 18. Lying lips...which speak grievous things proudly and contempuously against the righteous. In that venerable and original monument of the Vaudois Church, entitled "The Golden Lesson," of the date 1100, we meet with a verse, which has been thus translated:—

"If there be anyone who loves and fears Jesus Christ, Who will not curse, nor swear, nor lie, Nor be unchaste, nor kill, nor take what is another's. Nor take vengeance on his enemies; They say that he is a Vaudes, and worthy of punishment." —Antoine Monastier, in "A History of Vaudois Church," 1859.

Verse 19. Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee. As a provident man will regulate his liberality towards all men in such a manner as not to defraud his children or family, nor impoverish his own house, by spending his substance prodigally on others; so God, in like manner, in exercizing his beneficence to aliens from his family, knows well how to reserve for his own children that which belongs to them, as it were by hereditary right; that is to say, because of their adoption. John Calvin.

Verse 19. Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee. Mark the phrase "Laid up for them; "his mercy and goodness it is intended for them, as a father that lays by such a sum of money, and writes on the bag, "This is a portion for such a child." But how comes the Christian to have this right to God, and all that vast and untold treasure of happiness which
is in him? This indeed is greatly to be heeded; it is faith that gives him a good title to all this. That which maketh him a child, makes him an heir. Now, faith makes him a child of God. Joh 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." As therefore if you would not call your birthright into question, and bring your interest in Christ and those glorious privileges that come along with him, under a sad dispute in your soul, look to your faith. William Gurnall.

Verse 19. How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee. When I reflect upon the words of thy prophet, it seems to me that he means to depict God as a father who, no doubt, keeps his children under discipline, and subjects them to the rod; but who, with all his labours and pains, still aims at nothing but to lay up for them a store which may contribute to their comfort when they have grown to maturity, and learned the prudent use of it. My Father, in this world thou hidest from thy children thy great goodness, as if it did not pertain to them. But being thy children, we may be well assured that the celestial treasure will be bestowed upon none else. For this reason, I will bear my lot with patience. But, oh! from time to time, waft to me a breath of air from the heavenly land, to refresh my sorrowful heart; I will then wait more calmly for its full fruition. Christian Scriver.

Verse 19. Oh how great is thy goodness. Let me, to set the crown on the head of the duty of meditation, add one thing over and above—let meditation be carried up to admiration: not only should we be affected, but transported, rapt up and ravished with the beauties and transcendencies of heavenly things; act meditation to admiration, endeavour the highest pitch, coming the nearest to the highest patterns, the patterns of saints and angels in heaven, whose actings are the purest, highest ecstasies and admirations. Thus were these so excellent artists in meditation, David, an high actor of admiration in meditation, as often we see it in the psalms; so in Ps 8:1,9 31:19; "Oh how great is thy goodness, "etc.: Ps 104:24 "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, "etc; and in other places David's meditation and admiration were as his harp, well tuned, and excellently played on, in rarest airs and highest strains; as the precious gold, and the curious burnishing; or the richest stone, and the most exquisite polishing and setting of it. So blessed Paul, who was a great artist in musing, acted high in admiration, his soul was very warm and flaming up in it: it was as a bird with a strong and long wing that soars and towers up aloft, and gets out of sight. Nathanael Ranew.

Verse 19. Before the sons of men, i.e., openly. The psalmist here perhaps refers to temporal blessings conferred on the pious, and evident to all. Some, however, have supposed the reference to be to the reward of the righteous,
bestowed with the utmost publicity on the day of judgment; which better agrees with our interpretation of the former part of the verse. Daniel Cresswell, D.D., F.R.S. (1776-1844), in loc.

Verse 19. Believe it, Sirs, you cannot conceive what a friend you shall have of God, would you be but persuaded to enter into covenant with him, to be his, wholly his. I tell you, many that sometimes thought and did as you do now, that is, set light by Christ and hate God, and see no loveliness in him, are now quite of another mind; they would not for ten thousand worlds quit their interest in him. Oh, who dare say that he is a hard Master? Who that knows him will say that he is an unkind friend? Oh, what do poor creatures all, that they do entertain such harsh sour thoughts of God? What, do they think that there is nothing in that scripture, Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee! Doth the psalmist speak too largely? Doth he say more than he and others could prove? Ask him, and he will tell you in verse 21, that he blesseth God. These were things he could speak to, from his own personal experience; and many thousands as well as he, to whom the Lord had showed his marvellous kindness, and therefore he doth very passionately plead with the people of God to love him, and more highly to express their sense of his goodness, that the world might be encouraged also to have good thoughts of him. James Janeway.

Verse 19. Very observable is that expression of the psalmist, Oh how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought before the sons of men for them that trust in thee. In the former clause, God's goodness is said to be laid up; in the latter, to be wrought. Goodness is laid up in the promise, wrought in the performance; and that goodness which is laid up is wrought for them that trust in God; and thus, as God's faithfulness engages us to believe, so our faith, as it were, engages God's faithfulness to perform the promise. Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 20. Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. This our beloved God does secretly, so that no human eyes may or can see, and the ungodly do not know that a believer is, in God, and in the presence of God, so well protected, that no reproach or contempt, and no quarrelsome tongue can do him harm. Arndt, quoted by W. Wilson, D.D.

Verse 22. I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications. Who would have thought those prayers should ever have had any prevalence in God's ears which were mixed with so much infidelity in the petitioner's heart! William Secker.
Verse 22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.* No, no, Christian; a prayer sent up in faith, according to the will of God, cannot be lost, though it be delayed. We may say of it, as David said of Saul's sword and Jonathan's bow, that they never return empty. So David adds, *Nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.* John Flavel.

Verse 22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes,* etc. Let us with whom it was once night, improve that morning joy that now shines upon us. Let us be continual admirers of God's grace and mercy to us. He has prevented us with his goodness, when he saw nothing in us but impatience and unbelief, when we were like Jonas in the belly of hell, his bowels yearned over us, and his power brought us safe to land. What did we to hasten his deliverance, or to obtain his mercy? If he had never come to our relief till he saw something in us to invite him, we had not yet been relieved. No more did we contribute to our restoration than we do to the rising of the sun, or the approach of day. We were like dry bones without motion, and without strength. Eze 37:1-11. And we also said, that 'we were cut off for our parts, and our hope was gone, and he caused breath to enter into us, and we live.' Who is a God like to our God that pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin? that retains not his anger for ever? that is slow to wrath and delights in mercy? that has been displeased with us for a moment, but gives us hope of his everlasting kindness? Oh! what love is due from us to Christ, that has pleaded for us when we ourselves had nothing to say! That has brought us out of a den of lions, and from the jaws of the roaring lion! To say, as Mrs. Sarah Wright did, "I have obtained mercy, that thought my time of mercy past for ever; I have hope of heaven, that thought I was already damned by unbelief; I said many a time, there is no hope in mine end, and I thought I saw it; I was so desperate, I cared not what became of me. Oft was I at the very brink of death and hell, even at the very gates of both, and then Christ shut them. I was as Daniel in the lion's den, and he stopped the mouth of those lions, and delivered me. The goodness of God is unsearchable; how great is the excellency of his majesty, that yet he would look upon such a one as I; that he has given me peace that was full of terror, and walked continually as amidst fire and brimstone." Timothy Rogers.

Verse 22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes:*—i.e., Thou hast quite forsaken me, and I must not expect to be looked upon or regarded by thee any more. I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul, and so be cut off from before thine eyes, be ruined while thou lookest on 1Sa 27:1. This he said in his flight (so some read it), which notes the distress of his affairs: Saul was just at his back, and ready to seize him, which made the temptation strong; in his haste (so we read it), which notes the disturbance and discomposure of his
mind, which made the temptation surprising, so that it found him off his guard. Note, it is a common thing to speak amiss, when we speak in haste and without consideration; but what we speak amiss in haste, we must repent of at leisure, particularly that which we have spoken distrustfully of God. Matthew Henry.

Verse 22. I said in my haste. Sometimes a sudden passion arises, and out it goes in angry and froward words, setting all in an uproar and combustion: by and by our hearts recur upon us, and then we wish, "O that I had bit my tongue, and not given it such an unbridled liberty." Sometimes we break out into rash censures of those that it may be are better than ourselves, whereupon when we reflect, we are ashamed that the fools' bolt was so soon shot, and wish we had been judging ourselves when we were censuring our brethren. Richard Alleine.

Verse 22. Nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. As if he had said, when I prayed with so little faith, that I, as it were, unprayed my own prayer, by concluding my case in a manner desperate; yet God pardoned my hasty spirit, and gave me that mercy which I had hardly any faith to expect; and what use doth he make of this experience, but to raise every saint's hope in time of need? "Be of good courage and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." William Gurnall.

Verse 22. He confesseth the great distress he was in, and how weak his faith was under the temptation; this he doth to his own shame acknowledge also, that he may give the greater glory to God. Whence learn, 1.—The faith of the godly may be slackened, and the strongest faith may sometimes show its infirmity. I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes. 2.—Though faith be shaken, yet it is fixed in the root, as a tree beaten by the wind keeping strong grips of good ground. Though faith seem to yield, yet it faileth not, and even when it is at the weakest, it is uttering itself in some act, as a wrestler, for here the expression of David's infirmity in faith, is directed to God, and his earnest prayer joined with it, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications. 3.—Praying faith, how weak soever, shall not be misregarded of God; for nevertheless, saith he, thou hearest the voice of my supplications. 4.—There may be in a soul at one time, both grief oppressing, and hope upholding; both darkness of trouble, and the light of faith; both desperately doubting, and strong gripping of God's truth and goodness; both a fainting and a fighting; a seeming yielding in the fight, and yet a striving of faith against all opposition; both a foolish haste, and a settled staidness of faith; as here, I said in my haste, etc. David Dickson.

Verse 22. David vents his astonishment at the Lord's condescension in hearing his prayer. How do we wonder at the goodness of a petty man in granting our
desires! How much more should we at the humility and goodness of the most sovereign Majesty of heaven and earth! *Stephen Charnock.*

**Verse 23.** *O love the Lord, all ye his saints.* The holy psalmist in the words does, with all the warmth of an affectionate zeal, incite us to the love of God, which is the incomparably noblest passion of a reasonable mind, its brightest glory and most exquisite felicity; and it is, as appears evident from the nature of the thing, and the whole train of divine revelation, the comprehensive sum of that duty which we owe to our Maker, and the very soul which animates a religious life, that we "love the Lord with all our heart, and strength, and mind." *William Dunlap. A.M., 1692-1720.*

**Verse 23.** *O love the Lord, all ye his saints,* etc. Some few words are to be attended in the clearing of the sense. *Saints* here in the text is or may be read, *ye that feel mercies.* "*Faithful,*" the word is sometimes taken for *persons,* sometimes *things,* and so the Lord is said to preserve true men, and truths, faithful men, and faithfulnesses. *He plenteously rewardeth the proud doer;* or, the Lord rewardeth plenteously; *the Lord,* who doth wonderful things. *Plenteously* is either *in cumulum, abunde,* or *in nepotes,* as some would have it; but I would rather *commend,* than go about to *amend* translations: though I could wish some of my learned brethren's quarrelling hours were spent rather upon clearing the originals, and so conveying over pure Scripture to posterity, than in scratching others with their sharpened pens, and making cockpits of pulpits. *Hugh Peter's "Sermon preached before both Houses of Parliament, "the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, and the Assembly of Divines, at the last Thanksgiving Day, April 2. For the recovering of the West, and disbanding of 5,000 of the King's Horse, etc., 1645.*

**Verse 23.** *And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.* The next query is, *how God rewardeth the proud doer?* in which, though the Lord's proceedings be diverse, and many times his paths in the clouds, and his judgments in the deep, and the uttermost farthing shall be paid the proud doer at the great day; yet so much of his mind he hath left unto us, that even in this life he gives out something to the proud which he calls *"the day of recompense,"* which he commonly manifests in these particulars:

1. By way of *retaliation*—for *Adonibezek* that would be cutting off thumbs, had his thumbs cut off: *Jud 1:7.* So the poor Jews that cried so loud, "*Crucify him, crucify him,* "were so many of them crucified, that if you believe Josephus, there was not wood enough to make crosses, nor in the usual place room enough to set up the crosses when they were made. Snares are made and pits
are digged by the proud for themselves commonly, to which the Scripture throughout gives abundant testimony.

2. By shameful disappointments, seldom reaping what they sow, nor eating what they catch in hunting, which is most clear in the Jewish State when Christ was amongst them. Judas betrays him to get money, and hardly lived long enough to spend it. Pilate, to please Caesar, withstands all counsels against it, and gives way to that murder, by which he ruined both himself and Caesar. The Jewish priests, to maintain that domination and honour (which they thought the son of Joseph and Mary stole from them) cried loud for his death, which proved a sepulchre to them and their glory. And the poor people that crucified him (through fear of the Romans taking their city) by his death had their gates opened to the Romans—yea, Caesar himself, fearing a great change in his government by Christ living near him (which today sets all the king craft in the world to work) met such a change that shortly he had neither crown nor sceptre to boast of, if you read the story of Titus and Vespasian, all which dealings of God with the proud is most elegantly set forth unto us by the psalmist. "Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made." Hugh Peters.

Verse 24. Be of good courage. Christian courage may thus be described. It is the undaunted audacity of a sanctified heart in adventuring upon difficulties and undergoing hardships for a good cause upon the call of God. The genus, the common nature of it is an undaunted audacity. This animosity, as some phrase it, is common both unto men and to some brutes. The lion is said to be the strongest among beasts, that turneth not away from any. Pr 30:30. And there is an elegant description of the war horse in regard of boldness. Job 39:19, etc. And this boldness that is in brutes is spoken of as a piece of this same courage that God is pleased to give to men. Eze 3:9. This is the Lord's promise—"As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead." The word "harder" is the same in the Hebrew that is here in my text—fortiorem petra—the rock that is not afraid of any weather, summer or winter, sun and showers, heat and cold, frost and snow; it blushes not, shrinks not, it changes not its complexion, it is still the same. Such a like thing is courage, in the common nature of it. Secondly, consider the subject, it is the heart, the castle where courage commands and exerciseth military discipline; (shall I so say) it's within the bosom, it is the soul of a valiant soldier. Some conceive our English word courage to be derived from cordis actio, the very acting of the heart. A valiant man is described 2Sa 17:10 for to be a man whose heart is as the heart of a lion. And sometimes the original translated courageous, as Am 2:16, may most
properly be rendered *a man of heart*. Beloved, valour doth not consist in a piercing eye, in a terrible look, in big words; but it consists in the mettle, the vigour that is within the bosom. Sometimes a coward may dwell at the sign of a roaring voice and of a stern countenance; whereas true fortitude may be found within his breast whose outward deportment promises little or nothing in that kind. Thirdly, note the qualification of this same subject; I said a sanctified heart; for I am not now speaking of fortitude as a moral virtue, whereof heathens that have not God are capable, and for which many among them that are not Christians, have been worthily commended. But I am now discoursing of courage as a virtue theological, as a gracious qualification, put upon the people of God by special theological covenant. And there are three things that do characterize it, and which do distinguish it from the moral virtue of fortitude. 

1. The *root*, whence it ariseth; (2) the *rule*, whereby it is directed; (3) the *end*, to which it is referred. The *root*, whence it ariseth, is *love to God*: all the saints of God that love the Lord be of good courage. The love of Christ constraineth me to make these bold and brave adventures, saith the apostle. 2Co 5:14. The *rule*, whereby it is directed, is the *word of God*—what the Lord hath pleased to leave on record for a Christian's guidance in holy pages. 1Ch 22:12-13. "Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed." Be a man of mettle, but let thy mettle be according to my mind, according to this rule. And the *end*, to which it refers, is *God*. For every sanctified man being a self denying and a God advancing man, his God is his centre, wherein his actings, his undertakings rest; and his soul is not, yea, it cannot be satisfied but in God. 

*Verse 24. Be of good courage.* Shall I hint some of the weighty services that are charged upon all our consciences? The work of mortification, to pick out our eyes, to chop off our hands, to cut off our feet; do you think that a milksop, a man that is not a man of a stout spirit, will do this? Now to massacre fleshly lusts, is (as it were) for a man to mangle and dismember his own body; it is a work painful and grievous, as for a man to cut off his own feet, to chop off his own hands, and to pick out his own eyes, as Christ and the apostle Paul do express it. Besides this, there are in Christian's bosoms strongholds to be battered, fortifications to be demolished; there are high hills and mountains that must be levelled with the ground; there are trenches to be made, valleys to be filled. O beloved, I may not mention the hills that lie before us in heaven way, which we must climb up, and craggy rocks that we must get over; and without
Psalm 31

courage certainly the work put upon our hands will not be discharged. There are also the walls of Jerusalem to be repaired, and the temple to be edified again. If Nehemiah had not been a man of a brave spirit he would never have gone through stitch with that church work, those weighty services which he did undertake. How this is applicable to us for the present time, the time of our begun reformation, I speak not, but rather do refer it to your considerations. I beseech you to read Ne 4:17-18, "They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded, and he that sounded the trumpet was by me." While they were at work, they were all ready for war.

Simeon Ash.

Verse 24. *And he shall strengthen your heart.* Put thou thyself forth in a way of bold adventure for him, and his providence shall be sweetly exercised for thy good. A worthy commander, how careful he is of a brave blade, a man that will fight at a cannon's mouth! Doth he hear from him that a bone is broken? Send for the bone setter. Is he like to bleed to death? Call for the surgeon; let him post away to prevent that peril. Doth he grow weaker and weaker? Is there anything in the camp that may restore his spirit? withhold nothing; nothing is too good, too costly; would he eat gold he should have it. Thus it is with God. Oh, what letters of commendation doth he give in manifestation of his own love to them in Pergamos upon this very ground. "Thou, saith the Lord, thou hast held forth my name, and not denied it, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth!" thou didst fight for Christ in the cave where the devil commanded; thou didst stand and appear for him when other men did lose heart and courage. Here is a man that God will own; such a one shall have God's heart and hand to do him honour, to yield him comfort. And therefore I appeal to your consciences, is not this courage worth the having? worth the seeking? Simeon Ash.

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HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Faith expressed, confusion deprecated, deliverance sought.

Verse 1. *(first clause).* Open avowal of faith. 1. Duties which precede it, self examination, etc.

2. Modes of making the confession.

3. Conduct incumbent on those who have made the profession.
Verse 1. (last clause). How far the righteousness of God is involved in the salvation of a believer.

Verse 2. (first clause). God's hearing prayer a great condescension.

Verse 2 (second clause). How far we may be urgent with God as to time.

Verses 2-3 (last and first clauses). That which we have we may yet seek for.

Verses 2-3. (last and first clauses). That which we have we may yet seek for.

Verse 3. Work out the metaphor of God as a rocky fastness of the soul.

Verse 3. (last clause). 1. A blessing needed, lead me.

2. A blessing obtainable.

3. An argument for its being granted, for thy name's sake.

Verse 4. The rescue of the ensnared.

1. The fowlers.
2. The laying of the net.
3. The capture of the bird.
4. The cry of the captive.
5. The rescue.

Verse 4. (last clause). The weak one girt with omnipotence.

Verse 5. 1. Dying, in a saint's account, is a difficult work.

2. The children of God, when considering themselves as dying, are chiefly concerned for their departing immortal spirits.

3. Such having chosen God for their God, have abundant encouragement when dying, to commit their departing spirits into his hand, with hopes of their being safe and happy for ever with him. —Daniel Wilcox.

Verse 5. The believer's requiem. Redemption the foundation of our repose in God.

1. What we do—commit ourselves to God.
2. What God has done—*redeemed us*.

**Verse 6.** Holy detestation, as a virtue discriminated from bigotry: or, the good hater.

**Verse 7.** 1. An endearing attribute rejoiced in.

2. An interesting experience related.

3. A directly personal favour from God delighted in.

**Verse 7.** *(centre clause).* Consider the measure, the effects, the time, the tempering, the ending, and the recompense.

**Verse 7.** *(last clause).* The Lord's familiarity with his afflicted.

**Verse 8.** Christian liberty, a theme for gladness.

**Verse 9.** The mourner's lament.

**Verse 9.** *(last clause).* Excessive sorrow, its injurious effects on the body, the understanding, and the spiritual nature. Sin of it, cure of it.

**Verses 9-10.** The sick man's moan, a reminder to those who enjoy good health.

**Verses 9-10.** The sick man's moan, a reminder to those who enjoy good health.

**Verse 10.** *My strength faileth because of mine iniquity.* The weakening influence of sin.

**Verse 11.** The good man evil spoken of.

**Verses 12-15.**

Forgot as those who in the grave abide,
And as a broken vessel past repair,
Slandered by many, fear on every side.
Who counsel take and would my life ensnare.
But, Lord, my hopes on thee are fixed: I said,
Thou art my God, my days are in thy hand;
Against my furious foes oppose thy aid,
And those who persecute my soul withstand.
—*George Sandys.*
**Verse 12.** The world's treatment of its best friends.

**Verse 14.** Faith peculiarly glorious in season of great trial.

**Verse 15.** The believer the peculiar care of providence.

**Verse 15.** (*first clause*). 1. The character of the earthly experience of the saints, "My times," that is, the changes I shall pass through, etc.

2. The advantage of this variety.

(a) Changes reveal the various aspects of the Christian character.

(b) Changes strengthen the Christian character.

(c) Changes lead us to admire an unchanging God.

3. Comfort for all seasons.

(a) This implies the changes of life are subject to the divine control.

(b) That God will support his people under them.

(c) And, consequently, they shall result in our being abundantly profited.

4. The deportment which should characterise us. Courageous devotion to God in times of persecution; resignation and contentment in times of poverty and suffering; zeal and hope in times of labour. —*From Stems and Twigs, or Sermon Framework*.

**Verse 16.** A sense of divine favour.

1. Its value.
2. How to lose it.
3. How to obtain a renewal of it.
4. How to retain it.

The heavenly servant's best reward.

**Verse 16.** (*last clause*). A prayer for saints in all stages. Note its object, *save me*; and its plea, *Thy mercies' sake*. Suitable to the penitent, the sick, the doubting, the tried, the advanced believer, the dying saint.
Verse 17. The shame and silence of the wicked in eternity. The silence of the grave, its grave eloquence.


Verse 20. The believer preserved from the sneers of arrogance by a sense of the divine presence, and kept from the bitterness of slander by the glory of the King whom he serves.

Verse 21. *Marvellous kindness.* Marvellous that it should come to me in such a way, at such a time, in such a measure, for so long.

Verse 21. Memorable events in life to be observed, recorded, meditated on, repeated, made the subject of gratitude, and the ground of confidence.

Verse 22. Unbelief confessed and faithfulness adored. The mischief of hasty speeches.

Verse 23. An exhortation to love the Lord. 1. The matter of it, *love the Lord.*

2. To whom addressed, *all ye his saints.*

3. By whom spoken.

4. With what arguments supported, *for the Lord preserveth,* etc.

Psalm 32

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

TITLE. A Psalm of David, Maschil. That David wrote this gloriously evangelic Psalm is proved not only by this heading, but by the words of the apostle Paul, in Ro 4:6-8. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, ",&c. Probably his deep repentance over his great sin was followed by such blissful peace, that he was led to pour out his spirit in the soft music of this choice song. In the order of history it seems to follow the fifty-first. Maschil is a new title to us, and indicates that this is an instructive or didactic Psalm. The experience of one believer affords rich instruction to others, it reveals the footsteps of the flock, and so comforts and directs the weak. Perhaps it was important in this case to prefix the word, that doubting saints might not imagine the Psalm to be the peculiar utterance of a singular individual, but might appropriate it to themselves as a lesson from the Spirit of God. David promised in the fifty-first Psalm to teach transgressors the Lord's ways, and here he does it most effectually. Grotius thinks that this Psalm was meant to be sung on the annual day of the Jewish expiation, when a general confession of their sins was made.

DIVISION. In our reading we have found it convenient to note the benediction of the pardoned, Ps 32:1-2; David's personal confession, Ps 32:3-5; and the application of the case to others, Ps 32:6-7. The voice of God is heard by the forgiven one in Ps 32:8-9; and the Psalm then concludes with a portion for each of the two great classes of men, Ps 32:10-11.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. Blessed. Like the sermon on the mount on the mount, this Psalm begins with beatitudes. This is the second Psalm of benediction. The first Psalm describes the result of holy blessedness, the thirty-second details the cause of it. The first pictures the tree in full growth, this depicts it in its first planting and watering. He who in the first Psalm is a reader of God's book, is here a suppliant at God's throne accepted and heard. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. He is now blessed and ever shall be. Be he ever so poor, or sick, or sorrowful, he is blessed in very deed. Pardoning mercy is of all things in the world most to be prized, for it is the only and sure way to happiness. To hear from God's own Spirit the words, "absolvo te" is joy unspeakable. Blessedness is not in this case ascribed to the man who has been a diligent law keeper, for then it would never come to us, but rather to a lawbreaker, who by grace most rich and free has been forgiven. Self righteous Pharisees have no portion in this blessedness. Over the returning prodigal, the word of welcome is here pronounced, and the music and dancing begin. A full, instantaneous, irreversible pardon of transgression turns the poor sinner's hell into heaven, and makes the heir of wrath a partaker in blessing. The word
rendered forgiven is in the original *taken off* or *taken away*, as a burden is lifted or a barrier removed. What a lift is here! It cost our Saviour a sweat of blood to bear our load, yea, it cost him his life to bear it quite away. Samson carried the gates of Gaza, but what was that to the weight which Jesus bore on our behalf? *Whose sin is covered.* Covered by God, as the ark was covered by the mercyseat, as Noah was covered from the flood, as the Egyptians were covered by the depths of the sea. What a cover must that be which hides away for ever from the sight of the all seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit! He who has once seen sin in its horrible deformity, will appreciate the happiness of seeing it no more for ever. Christ's atonement is the propitiation, the covering, the making an end of sin; where this is seen and trusted in, the soul knows itself to be now accepted in the Beloved, and therefore enjoys a conscious blessedness which is the antepast of heaven. It is clear from the text that a man may know that he is pardoned: where would be the blessedness of an unknown forgiveness? Clearly it is a matter of knowledge, for it is the ground of comfort.

**Verse 2.** *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* The word blessed is in the plural, *oh, the blessednesses!* the double joys, the bundles of happiness, the mountains of delight! Note the three words so often used to denote our disobedience: transgression, sin, and iniquity, are the three headed dog at the gates of hell, but our glorious Lord has silenced his barkings for ever against his own believing ones. The trinity of sin is overcome by the Trinity of heaven. Non imputation is of the very essence of pardon: the believer sins, but his sin is not reckoned, not accounted to him. Certain divines froth at the mouth with rage against imputed righteousness, be it ours to see our sin not imputed, and to us may there be as Paul words it, "Righteousness imputed without works." He is blessed indeed who has a substitute to stand for him to whose account all his debts may be set down. *And in whose spirit there is no guile.* He who is pardoned, has in every case been taught to deal honestly with himself, his sin, and his God. Forgiveness is no sham, and the peace which it brings is not caused by playing tricks with conscience. Self deception and hypocrisy bring no blessedness, they may drug the soul into hell with pleasant dreams, but into the heaven of true peace they cannot conduct their victim. Free from guilt, free from guile. Those who are justified from fault are sanctified from falsehood. A liar is not a forgiven soul. Treachery, double dealing, chicanery, dissimulation, are lineaments of the devil's children, but he who is washed from sin is truthful, honest, simple, and childlike. There can be no blessedness to tricksters with their plans, and tricks, and shuffling, and pretending: they are too much afraid of discovery to be at ease; their house is built on the volcano's brink, and eternal destruction must be their portion. Observe the three words to
describe sin, and the three words to represent pardon, weigh them well, and note their meaning. (See note at the end.)

Verses 3-5. David now gives us his own experience: no instructor is so efficient as one who testifies to what he has personally known and felt. He writes well who like the spider spins his matter out of his own bowels.

Verse 3. When I kept silence. When through neglect I failed to confess, or through despair dared not do so, my bones, those solid pillars of my frame, the stronger portions of my bodily constitution, waxed old, began to decay with weakness, for my grief was so intense as to sap my health and destroy my vital energy. What a killing thing is sin! It is a pestilent disease! A fire in the bones! While we smother our sin it rages within, and like a gathering wound swells horribly and torments terribly. Through my roaring all the day long. He was silent as to confession, but not as to sorrow. Horror at his great guilt, drove David to incessant laments, until his voice was no longer like the articulate speech of man, but so full of sighing and groaning, that it resembled to hoarse roaring of a wounded beast. None knows the pangs of conviction but those who have endured them. The rack, the wheel, the flaming fagot are ease compared with the Tophet which a guilty conscience kindles within the breast: better suffer all the diseases which flesh is heir to, than lie under the crushing sense of the wrath of almighty God. The Spanish inquisition with all its tortures was nothing to the inquest which conscience holds within the heart.

Verse 4. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me. God's finger can crush us—what must his hand be, and that pressing heavily and continuously! Under terrors of conscience, men have little rest by night, for the grim thoughts of the day dog them to their chambers and haunt their dreams, or else they lie awake in a cold sweat of dread. God's hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down: better a world on the shoulder, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. The sap of his soul was dried, and the body through sympathy appeared to be bereft of its needful fluids. The oil was almost gone from the lamp of life, and the flame flickered as though it would soon expire. Unconfessed transgression, like a fierce poison, dried up the fountain of the man's strength and made him like a tree blasted by the lightning, or a plant withered by the scorching heat of a tropical sun. Alas! for a poor soul when it has learned its sin but forgets its Saviour, it goes hard with it indeed. Selah. It was time to change the tune, for the notes are very low in the scale, and with such hard usage, the strings of the harp are out of order: the next verse will surely be set to another key, or will rehearse a more joyful subject.
Verse 5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee.* After long lingering, the broken heart bethought itself of what it ought to have done at the first, and laid bare its bosom before the Lord. The lancet must be let into the gathering ulcer before relief can be afforded. The least thing we can do, if we would be pardoned, is to acknowledge our fault; if we are too proud for this we double deserve punishment. *And mine iniquity have I not hid.* We must confess the guilt as well as the fact of sin. It is useless to conceal it, for it is well known to God; it is beneficial to us to own it, for a full confession softens and humbles the heart. We must as far as possible unveil the secrets of the soul, dig up the hidden treasure of Achan, and by weight and measure bring out our sins. *I said.* This was his fixed resolution. *I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.* Not to my fellow men or to the high priest, but unto Jehovah; even in those days of symbol the faithful looked to God alone for deliverance from sin's intolerable load, much more now, when types and shadows have vanished at the appearance of the dawn. When the soul determines to lay low and plead guilty, absolution is near at hand; hence we read, *And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* Not only was the sin itself pardoned, but the iniquity of it; the virus of its guilt was put away, and that at once, so soon as the acknowledgment was made. God's pardons are deep and thorough: the knife of mercy cuts at the roots of the ill weed of sin. *Selah.* Another pause is needed, for the matter is not such as may be hurried over.

"Pause, my soul, adore and wonder,  
Ask, O why such love to me?  
Grace has put me in the number  
Of the Saviour's family.  
Hallelujah!  
Thanks, eternal thanks, to thee."

Verse 6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.* If the psalmist means that on account of God's mercy others would become hopeful, his witness is true. Remarkable answers to prayer very much quicken the prayerfulness of other godly persons. Where one man finds a golden nugget others feel inclined to dig. The benefit of our experience to others should reconcile us to it. No doubt the case of David has led thousands to seek the Lord with hopeful courage who, without such an instance to cheer them, might have died in despair. Perhaps the psalmist meant for this favour or the like all godly souls would seek, and here, again, we can confirm his testimony, for all will draw near to God in the same manner as he did when godliness rules their heart. The mercy seat is the way to heaven for all who shall ever come there. There is, however, a set time for prayer, beyond
which it will be unavailing; between the time of sin and the day of punishment mercy rules the hour, and God may be found, but when once the sentence has gone forth pleading will be useless, for the Lord will not be found by the condemned soul. O dear reader, slight not the accepted time, waste not the day of salvation. The godly pray while the Lord has promised to answer, the ungodly postpone their petitions till the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door, and then their knocking is too late. What a blessing to be led to seek the Lord before the great devouring floods leap forth from their lairs, for then when they do appear we shall be safe. *Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.* The floods shall come, and the waves shall rage, and toss themselves like Atlantic billows; whirlpools and waterspouts shall be on every hand, but the praying man shall be at a safe distance, most surely secured from every ill. David was probably most familiar with those great land floods which fill up, with rushing torrents, the beds of rivers which at other times are almost dry: these overflowing waters often did great damage, and, as in the case of the Kishon, were sufficient to sweep away whole armies. From sudden and overwhelming disasters thus set forth in metaphor the true suppliant will certainly be held secure. He who is saved from sin has no need to fear anything else.

**Verse 7.** *Thou art my hiding place.* Terse, short sentences make up this verse, but they contain a world of meaning. Personal claims upon our God are the joy of spiritual life. To lay our hand upon the Lord with the clasp of a personal "my" is delight at its full. Observe that the same man who in the fourth verse was oppressed by the presence of God, here finds a shelter in him. See what honest confession and full forgiveness will do! The gospel of substitution makes him to be our refuge who otherwise would have been our judge. *Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.* Trouble shall do me no real harm when the Lord is with me, rather it shall bring me much benefit, like the file which clears away the rust, but does not destroy the metal. Observe the three tenses, we have noticed the sorrowful past, the last sentence was a joyful present, this is a cheerful future. *Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* What a golden sentence! The man is encircled in song, surrounded by dancing mercies, all of them proclaiming the triumphs of grace. There is no breach in the circle, it completely rings him round; on all sides he hears music. Before him hope sounds the cymbals, and behind him gratitude beats the timbrel. Right and left, above and beneath, the air resounds with joy, and all this for the very man who, a few weeks ago, was roaring all the day long. How great a change! What wonders grace has done and still can do! *Selah.* There was a need of a pause, for love so amazing needs to be pondered, and joy so great demands quiet contemplation, since language fails to express it.
Verse 8. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.* Here the Lord is the speaker, and gives the psalmist an answer to his prayer. Our Saviour is our instructor. The Lord himself deigns to teach his children to walk in the way of integrity, his holy word and the monitions of the Holy Spirit are the directors of the believer's daily conversation. We are not pardoned that we may henceforth live after our own lusts, but that we may be educated in holiness and trained for perfection. A heavenly training is one of the covenant blessings which adoption seals to us: "All thy children shall be taught by the Lord." Practical teaching is the very best of instruction, and they are thrice happy who, although they never sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and are ignorant of Aristotle, and the ethics of the schools, have nevertheless learned to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. *I will guide thee with mine eye.* As servants take their cue from the master's eye, and a nod or a wink is all that they require, so should we obey the slightest hints of our Master, not needing thunderbolts to startle our incorrigible sluggishness, but being controlled by whispers and love touches. The Lord is the great overseer, whose eye in providence overlooks everything. It is well for us to be the sheep of his pasture, following the guidance of his wisdom.

Verse 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding.* Understanding separates man from a brute—let us not act as if we were devoid of it. Men should take counsel and advice, and be ready to run where wisdom points them the way. Alas! we need to be cautioned against stupidity of heart, for we are very apt to fall into it. We who ought to be as the angels, readily become as the beasts. *Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.* It is much to be deplored that we so often need to be severely chastened before we will obey. We ought to be as a feather in the wind, wafted readily in the breath of the Holy Spirit, but alas! we lie like motionless logs, and stir not with heaven itself in view. Those cutting bits of affliction show how hard mouthed we are, those bridles of infirmity manifest our headstrong and willful manners. We should not be treated like mules if there was not so much of the ass about us. If we will be fractious, we must expect to be kept in with a tight rein. Oh, for grace to obey the Lord willingly, lest like the wilful servant, we are beaten with many stripes. Calvin renders the last words, "Lest they kick against thee," a version more probable and more natural, but the passage is confessedly obscure—not however, in its general sense.

Verse 10. *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.* Like refractory horses and mules, they have many cuts and bruises. Here and hereafter the portion of the wicked is undesirable. Their joys are evanescent, their sorrows are multiplying and ripening. He who sows sin will reap sorrow in heavy sheaves. Sorrows of
conscience, of disappointment, of terror, are the sinner's sure heritage in time, and then for ever sorrows of remorse and despair. Let those who boast of present sinful joys, remember the shall be of the future and take warning. But he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Faith is here placed as the opposite of wickedness, since it is the source of virtue. Faith in God is the great charmer of life's cares, and he who possesses it, dwells in an atmosphere of grace, surrounded with the bodyguard of mercies. May it be given to us of the Lord at all times to believe in the mercy of God, even when we cannot see traces of its working, for to the believer, mercy is as all surrounding as omniscience, and every thought and act of God is perfumed with it. The wicked have a hive of wasps around them, many sorrows; but we have a swarm of bees storing honey for us.

Verse 11. Be glad. Happiness is not only our privilege, but our duty. Truly we serve a generous God, since he makes it a part of our obedience to be joyful. How sinful are our rebellious murmurings! How natural does it seem that a man blest with forgiveness should be glad! We read of one who died at the foot of the scaffold of overjoy at the receipt of his monarch's pardon; and shall we receive the free pardon of the King of kings, and yet pine in inexcusable sorrow? "In the Lord." Here is the directory by which gladness is preserved from levity. We are not to be glad in sin, or to find comfort in corn, and wine, and oil, but in our God is to be the garden of our soul's delight. That there is a God and such a God, and that he is ours, ours for ever, our Father and our reconciled Lord, is matter enough for a never ending psalm of rapturous joy. And rejoice, ye righteous, redouble your rejoicing, peal upon peal. Since God has clothed his choristers in the white garments of holiness, let them not restrain their joyful voices, but sing aloud and shout as those who find great spoil. And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart. Our happiness should be demonstrative; chill penury of love often represses the noble flame of joy, and men whisper their praises decorously where a hearty outburst of song would be far more natural. It is to be feared that the church of the present day, through a craving for excessive propriety, is growing too artificial; so that enquirers' cries and believers' shouts would be silenced if they were heard in our assemblies. This may be better than boisterous fanaticism, but there is as much danger in the one direction as the other. For our part, we are touched to the heart by a little sacred excess, and when godly men in their joy over leap the narrow bounds of decorum, we do not, like Michal, Saul's daughter, eye them with a sneering heart. Note how the pardoned are represented as upright, righteous, and without guile; a man may have many faults and yet be saved, but a false heart is everywhere the damning mark. A man of twisting, shifty ways, of a crooked, crafty nature, is not saved, and in all probability never will be; for
the ground which brings forth a harvest when grace is sown in it, may be weedy and waste, but our Lord tells us it is honest and good ground. Our observation has been that men of double tongues and tricky ways are the least likely of all men to be saved: certainly where grace comes it restores man's mind to its perpendicular, and delivers him from being doubled up with vice, twisted with craft, or bent with dishonesty. Reader, what a delightful Psalm! Have you, in perusing it, been able to claim a lot in the goodly land? If so, publish to others the way of salvation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

**Title.** The term *Maschil* is prefixed to thirteen Psalms. Our translators have not ventured to do more, in the *text*, than simply print the word in English characters; in the *margin* however they render it, as the Geneva version had done before them, "to give instruction." It would be going too far to affirm that this interpretation is subject to no doubt. Some good Hebraists take exception to it; so that, perhaps, our venerable translators did well to leave it untranslated. Still the interpretation they have set down in the margin, as it is in the most ancient, so it is sustained by the great preponderance of authority. It agrees remarkably with the contents of the thirty-second Psalm, which affords the earliest instance of its use, for that Psalm is preeminently didactic. Its scope is to instruct the convicted soul how to obtain peace with God, and be compassed about with songs of deliverance. *William Binnie, D.D., in "The Psalms: Their History, Teachings, and Use, "1870.*

**Whole Psalm.** This is a Didactic Psalm, wherein David teacheth sinners to repent by his doctrine, who taught them to sin by his example. This science is universal and pertaineth to all men, and which necessarily we must all learn; princes, priests, people, men, women, children, tradesmen; all, I say, must be put to this school, without which lesson all others are unprofitable. But to the point. This is a mark of a true penitent, when he hath been a stumbling block to others, to be as careful to raise them up by his repentance as he was hurtful to them by his sin; and I never think that man truly penitent who is ashamed to teach sinners repentance by his own particular proof. The Samaritan woman, when she was converted, left her bucket at the well, entered the city, and said, "Come forth, yonder is a man who hath told me all that I have done." And our Saviour saith to St. Peter, "When thou art converted, strength thy brethren." *Joh 4:29 Lu 22:32.* St. Paul also after his conversion is not ashamed to call himself chiefest of all sinners, and to teach others to repent of their sins by repenting for his own. Happy, and thrice happy, is the man who can build so much as he hath cast down. *Archibald Symson.*
Whole Psalm. It is told of Luther that one day being asked which of all the Psalms were the best, he made answer, "Psalmi Paulini," and when his friends pressed to know which these might be, he said, "The 32nd, the 51st, the 130th, and the 143rd. For they all teach that the forgiveness of our sins comes, without the law and without works, to the man who believes, and therefore I call them Pauline Psalms; and David sings, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared, this is just what Paul says, 'God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' Ro 11:32. Thus no man may boast of his own righteousness. That word, 'That thou mayest be feared, 'dusts away all merit, and teaches us to uncover our heads before God, and confess gratia est, non meritum: remissio, non satisfactio; it is mere forgiveness, not merit at all." Luther's Table Talk.

Whole Psalm. Some assert that this Psalm used to be sung on the day of expiation. Robert Leighton.

The Penitential Psalms. When Galileo was imprisoned by the Inquisition at Rome, for asserting the Copernican System, he was enjoined, as a penance, to repeat the Seven Penitential Psalms every week for three years. This must have been intended as extorting a sort of confession from him of his guilt, and acknowledgment of the justice of his sentence; and in which there certainly was some cleverness and, indeed, humour, however adding to the iniquity (or foolishness) of the proceeding. Otherwise it is not easy to understand what idea of painfulness or punishment the good fathers could attach to a devotional exercise such as this, which, in whatever way, could only have been agreeable and consoling to their prisoner. M. Montague, in "The Seven Penitential Psalms in Verse...with an Appendix and Notes," 1844.

Verse 1. Blessed. Or, O blessed man; or, Oh, the felicities of that man! to denote the most supreme and perfect blessedness. As the elephant, to denote its vast bulk, is spoken of in the plural number, Behemoth. Robert Leighton.

Verse 1. Notice, this is the first Psalm, except the first of all, which begins with Blessedness. In the first Psalm we have the blessing of innocence, or rather, of him who only was innocent: here we have the blessing of repentance, as the next happiest state to that of sinlessness. Lorinus, in Neale's Commentary.

Verse 1. Blessed is the man, saith David, whose sins are pardoned, where he maketh remission of sins to be true felicity. Now there is no true felicity but that which is enjoyed, and felicity cannot be enjoyed unless it be felt; and it cannot be felt unless a man know himself to be in possession of it; and a man cannot know himself to be in possession of it, if he doubt whether he hath it or...
not; and therefore this doubting of the remission of sins is contrary to true felicity, and is nothing else but a torment of the conscience. For a man cannot doubt whether his sins be pardoned or not, but straightway, if his conscience be not seared with a hot iron, the very thought of his sin will strike a great fear into him; for the fear of eternal death, and the horror of God's judgment will come to his remembrance, the consideration of which is most terrible. *William Perkins.*

**Verse 1.** Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Get your sins hid. There is a covering of sin which proves a curse. Pr 28:13. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; "there is a covering it, by not confessing it, or which is worse, by denying it—Gehazi's covering—a covering of sin by a lie; and there is also a covering of sin by justifying ourselves in it. I have not done this thing; or, I did no evil in it. All these are evil coverings: he that thus covereth his sin shall not prosper. But there is a blessed covering of sin: forgiveness of sin is the hiding it out of sight, and that's the blessedness. *Richard Alleine.*

**Verse 1.** Whose transgression is forgiven. We may lull the soul asleep with carnal delights, but the virtue of that opium will be soon spent. All those joys are but stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret—a poor sorry peace that dares not come to the light and endure the trial; a sorry peace that is soon disturbed by a few serious and sober thoughts of God and the world to come; but when once sin is pardoned, then you have true joy indeed. "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Mt 9:2. *Thomas Manton.*

**Verse 1.** Forgiven. Holy David, in the front of this Psalm shows us wherein true happiness consists: not in beauty, honour, riches (the world's trinity), but in the forgiveness of sin. The Hebrew word to forgive, signifies to carry out of sight; which well agrees with that Jer 50:20. "In those days, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." This is an incomprehensible blessing, and such as lays a foundation for all other mercies. I shall but glance at it, and lay down these five assertions about it. 1. Forgiveness is an act of God's free grace. The Greek word to forgive, deciphers the original of pardon; it ariseth not from anything inherent in us, but is the pure result of free grace. Isa 43:25. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." When a creditor forgives a debtor, he doeth it freely. Paul cries out, "I obtained mercy." 1Ti 1:13. The Greek signifies, "I was be-mercied; "he who is pardoned, is all bestrewed with mercy. When the Lord pardons a sinner, he doth not pay a debt, but gives a legacy.
2. God in forgiving sin, remits the guilt and penalty. Guilt cries for justice: no sooner had Adam eaten the apple, but he saw the flaming sword, and heard the curse; but in remission God doth indulge the sinner; he seems to say thus to him: Though thou art fallen into the hands of my justice, and deserve to die, yet I will absolve thee, and whatever is charged upon thee shall be discharged.

3. Forgiveness of sin is through the blood of Christ. Free grace is the impulsive cause; Christ's blood is the meritorious. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb 9:22. Justice would be revenged either on the sinner or the surety. Every pardon is the price of blood.

4. Before sin is forgiven, it must be repentanted of. Therefore repentance and remission are linked together. "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." Lu 24:47. Not that repentance doth in a Popish sense merit forgiveness; Christ's blood must wash our tears; but repentance is a qualification, though not a cause. He who is humbled for sin will the more value pardoning mercy.

5. God having forgiven sin, he will call it no more into remembrance. Jer 31:34. The Lord will make an act of indemnity, he will not upbraid us with former unkindnesses, or sue us with a cancelled bond. "He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Mic 7:19. Sin shall not be cast in as a cork which riseth up again, but as lead which sinks to the bottom. How should we all labour for this covenant blessing! Thomas Watson.

Verse 1. Sin is covered. Every man that must be happy, must have something to hide and cover his sins from God's eyes; and nothing in the world can do it, but Christ and his righteousness, typified in the ark of the covenant, whose cover was of gold, and called a propitiatory, that as it covered the tables that were within the ark, so God covers our sins against those tables. So the cloud covering the Israelites in the wilderness, signified God's covering us from the danger of our sins. Thomas Taylor's "David's Learning: or the Way to True Happiness." 1617.

Verse 1. Sin covered. This covering hath relation to some nakedness and filthiness which should be covered, even sin, which defileth us and maketh us naked. Why, saith Moses to Aaron, hast thou made the people naked? Ex 32:25. The garments of our merits are too short and cannot cover us, we have need therefore to borrow of Christ Jesus his merits and the mantle of his righteousness, that it may be unto us as a garment, and as those breeches of leather which God made unto Adam and Eve after their fall. Garments are ordained to cover our nakedness, defend us from the injury of the weather, and
to adorn us. So the mediation of our Saviour serveth to cover our nakedness, that the wrath of God seize not upon us—he is that "white raiment" wherewith we should be clothed, that our filthy nakedness may not appear—to defend us against Satan—he is "mighty to save," etc.—and to be an ornament to decorate us, for he is that "wedding garment: " "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Re 3:18 Isa 63:1 Mt 22:11 Ro 13:14. Archibald Symson.

Verse 1. The object of pardon—about which it is conversant, is set forth under diverse expressions—iniquity, transgression, and sin. As in law many words of like import and signification are heaped up and put together, to make the deed and legal instrument more comprehensive and effectual. I observe it the rather, because when God proclaims his name the same words are used, Ex 34:7, "Taking away iniquity, transgressions, and sin." Well, we have seen the meaning of the expression. Why doth the holy man of God use such vigour and vehemency of inculcation. "Blessed is the man!" and again, "Blessed is the man!" Partly with respect to his own case. David knew how sweet it was to have sin pardoned; he had felt the bitterness of sin in his own soul, to the drying up of his blood, and therefore he doth express his sense of pardon in the most lively terms. And then, partly, too, with respect to those for whose use this instruction was written, that they might not look upon it as a light and trivial thing, but be thoroughly apprehensive of the worth of so great a privilege. Blessed, happy, thrice happy they who have obtained pardon of their sins, and justification by Jesus Christ. Thomas Manton.

Verses 1-2. In these verses four evils are mentioned; 1.—Transgression, (evp) pesha. 2. Sin, (hajx) chataah. 3.—Iniquity, (Nwe) avon. 4.—Guile, (hymd) remiyah. The first signifies the passing over a boundary, doing what is prohibited. The second signifies the missing of a mark, not doing what was commanded; but it is often taken to express sinfulness, or sin in the nature, producing transgression in the life. The third signifies what is turned out of its proper course or situation; anything morally distorted or perverted. Iniquity, what is contrary to equity or justice. The fourth signifies fraud, deceit, guile, etc. To remove these evils, three acts are mentioned: forgiving, covering, and not imputing.

1. TRANSGRESSION, (evp) pesha, must be forgiven, (ywsn) nesui, borne away, i.e., by a vicarious sacrifice; for bearing sin, or bearing away sin, always implies this.

2. SIN, (hajx) chataah, must be covered, (ywob) kesui, hidden from the sight. It is odious and abominable, and must be put out of sight.
3. INIQUITY, (Nwe) avon, what is perverse or distorted, must not be imputed, (bsxyal) lo yachshobh, must not be reckoned to his account.

4. GUILE, (hymd) remiyah, must be annihilated from the soul. In whose spirit there is no GUILE. The man whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is hidden, God having cast it as a millstone into the depths of the sea; whose iniquity and perversion is not reckoned to his account; and whose guile, the deceitful and desperately wicked heart, is annihilated, being emptied of sin, and filled with righteousness, is necessarily a happy man. Adam Clarke.


Sin. Some understand those inward inclinations, lusts, and motions, whereby the soul swerves from the law of God, and which are the immediate cause of external sins.

Iniquity. Notes original sin, the root of all.

Levatus, forgiven, eased, signifies to take away, to bear, to carry away. Two words in Scripture are chiefly used to denote remission, to expiate, to bear or carry away: the one signifies the manner whereby it is done, namely, atonement, the other the effect of this expiation, carrying away; one notes the meritorious cause, the other the consequent.

Covered. Alluding to the covering of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Menochius thinks it alludes to the manner of writing among the Hebrews, which he thinks to be the same with that of the Romans; as writing with a pencil upon wax spread upon tables, which when they would blot out they made the wax plain, and drawing it over the writing, covered the former letters. And so it is equivalent with that expression of "blotting out sin, "as in the other allusion it is with "casting sin into the depths of the sea."

Impute. Not charging upon account. As sin is a defection from the law, so it is forgiven; as it is offensive to God's holiness, so it is covered; as it is a debt involving man in a debt of punishment, so it is not imputed; they all note the certainty, and extent, and perfection of pardon: the three words expressing sin here, being the same that are used by God in the declaration of his name. Stephen Charnock.

Verses 1-2, 6-7. Who is blessed? Not he who cloaks, conceals, confesses not his sin. As long as David was in this state he was miserable. There was guile in
his spirit Ps 32:2 misery in his heart, his very bones waxed old, his moisture was dried up as the drought in summer Ps 32:3-4. Who is blessed? He that is without sin, he who sins not, he who grieves no more by his sin the bosom on which he reclines. This is superlative blessedness, its highest element the happiness of heaven. To be like God, to yield implicit, ready, full, perfect obedience, the obedience of the heart, of our entire being; this is to be blessed above all blessedness. But among those who live in a world of sin, who are surrounded by sin, who are themselves sinners, who is blessed? He whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity; and especially does he feel it to be so, who can, in some degree, enter into the previous state of David's soul Ps 32:3-4. Ah, in what a wretched state was the psalmist previously to this blessedness! How must sin have darkened and deadened his spiritual faculties, to have guile in the spirit of one who could elsewhere exclaim, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, " any way of pain or grief, any way of sin which most surely leads to these. Ps 139:23-34. What a mournful condition of soul was his, who while he roared all the day long, yet kept silence before God, had no heart to open his heart unto God, was dumb before him, not in submission to his will, not in accepting the punishment of his iniquity Le 26:46, not in real confession, and honest, upright, and sincere acknowledgment of his iniquity to him against whom he had committed it. "I kept silence, "not merely I was silent, "I kept silence, "resolutely, perseveringly; I kept it notwithstanding all the remembrance of my past mercies, notwithstanding my reproaches of conscience, and my anguish of heart. I kept it notwithstanding "thy hand was heavy upon me day and night, "notwithstanding "my moisture, "all that was spiritual in me, my vital spirit, all that was indicative of spiritual life in my soul, seemed dried up and gone. Yes, Lord, notwithstanding all this, I kept it. But Nathan came, thou didst send him. He was to me a messenger full of reproof, full of faithfulness, but full of love. He came with thy word, and with the word of a King there was power. I acknowledged my sin unto him, and my iniquity did I not hide, but this was little. Against thee, thee only, did I sin, and to thee was my confession made. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, O Lord. I solemnly said that I would do so, and I did it. I confessed my transgression unto the Lord, "and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. Behold the man who is blessed; blessed in the state of his mind, his guileless spirit, his contrite heart, the fruit of the spirit of grace; blessed in the forgiveness of a forgiving God; a forgiveness, perfect, entire, lacking nothing, signified by sin "covered, ""iniquity not imputed" of the Lord; blessed in the blessings which followed it.
Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Beneath the hollow of that hand which was once so heavy upon me, I can now repose. Thou art my hiding place, I dread thee no more; nay, I dwell in thee as my habitation, and my high tower, my covert, my safety, my house. Safe in thy love, whatever trouble may be my portion, and by the mouth of Nathan thy servant thou hast declared that trouble shall be my portion, I shall yet be preserved; yea, more, so fully wilt thou deliver me that I believe thou wilt encompass me so with the arms of thy mercy, as to call forth songs of grateful praise for thy gracious interposition.

Behold, the blessedness of him whom God forgives! No wonder, then, that the psalmist adds, for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. As much as if he had said, Surely after this thy gracious conduct towards me, all that truly love and fear thee, every one that is godly, when he hears of thy dealings with me, "will pray unto thee." Encouraged by my example, he will not keep silence as I foolishly and sinfully did, but will confess and supplicate before thee, since thou art to be found, and hast so wondrously shown that thou art, of all that truly seek thee, since there is the place of finding, as I lay my hand upon the victim, and look through that victim to him the promised Seed; since there is the time of finding, declared in thy word, and manifested by the secret drawing of my heart to thee by thy grace; since the unwillingness is not in thee, but in thy sinning creature to come to thee; for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, then, however deep the water floods may be, however fierce the torrent, and headlong the stream, they shall not even come nigh unto him, much less shall they overwhelm him.

James Harrington Evans, M.A., 1785-1849.

Verse 2. Unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. Aben Ezra paraphrases it, of whose sins God does not think, does not regard them, so as to bring them into judgment, reckoning them as if they were not; ou me logizetai does not count or calculate them; does not require for them the debt of punishment. To us the remission is entirely free, our Sponsor having taken upon him the whole business of paying the ransom. His suffering is our impunity, his bond our freedom, and his chastisement our peace; and therefore the prophet says, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed."

Robert Leighton.

Verse 2. In whose spirit there is no guile. In the saint's trouble, conscience is full of Scripture sometimes, on which it grounds its verdict, but very ill interpreted. Oh, saith the poor soul, this place is against me! Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.
Here, saith he, is a description of a sincere soul, to be one in whose spirit there is no guile; but I find much guile in me, therefore I am not the sincere one. Now this is a very weak, yea, false inference. By a spirit without guile, is not meant a person that hath not the least deceitfulness and hypocrisy remaining in his heart. To be without sin, and to be without guile, in this strict sense are the same—a prerogative here on earth peculiar to the Lord Christ 1Pe 2:22, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." And therefore when we meet with the same phrase attributed to the saints, as to Levi, Mal 2:6; "Iniquity was not found in his lips; "and to Nathanael, Joh 1:47: "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile!" we must sense it in an inferior way, that may suit with their imperfect state here below, and not put that which was only Christ's crown on earth, and is the glorified saint's robe in heaven, on the weak Christian while militant here on earth, not only with a devil without, but with a body of sin within him. Wipe thine eyes again, poor soul, and then if thou readest such places, wherein the Spirit of God speaks so highly and hyperbolically of his saint's grace, thou shalt find he doth not assert the perfection of their grace, free from all mixture of sin, but rather to comfort poor drooping souls, and cross their misgiving hearts, which, from the presence of hypocrisy, are ready to overlook their sincerity as none at all, he expresses his high esteem of their little grace, by speaking of it as if it were perfect, and their hypocrisy none at all. William Gurnall.

Verse 2. In whose spirit there is no guile. When once pardon is realized, the believer has courage to be truthful before God: he can afford to have done with guile in the spirit. Who would not declare all his debts when they are certain to be discharged by another? Who would not declare his malady when he was sure of a cure? True faith knows not only that guile before God is impossible, but also that it is no longer necessary. The believer has nothing to conceal: he sees himself as before God, stripped, and laid open, and bare; and if he has learned to see himself as he is, so also has he learned to see God as he reveals himself. There is no guile in the spirit of one who is justified by faith; because in the act of justification truth has been established in his inward parts. There is no guile in the spirit of him who sees the truth of himself in the light of the truth of God. For the truth of God shows him at once that in Christ he is perfectly righteous before God, and in himself he is the chief of sinners. Such a one knows he is not his own, for he is bought with a price, and therefore he is to glorify God. There is no guile in the spirit of him whose real object is to glorify Christ and not himself. But when a man is not quite true to Christ, and has not quite ceased to magnify self, there may be guile, for he will be more occupied with thoughts about himself than with the honour of Christ. But if the truth, and honour, and glory of Christ be his supreme care, he may leave

**Verse 2. No guile.** Sincerity is that property to which pardoning mercy is annexed. True, indeed, it is that Christ covers all our sins and failings; but it is only the sincere soul over which he will cast his skirt. *Blessed is he whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* None will doubt this; but which is the man? The next words tell us his name; *And in whose spirit there is no guile.* Christ's righteousness is the garment which covers the nakedness and shame of our unrighteousness; faith the grace that puts this garment on; but what faith? None but the faith unfeigned, as Paul calls it. 2Ti 1:5. "Here is water," said the eunuch, "what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Ac 8:36. Now mark Philip's answer, Ac 8:37, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest;" as if he had said, Nothing but an hypocritical heart can hinder thee. It is the false heart only that finds the door of mercy shut. *William Gurnall.*

**Verse 2. Guile.** The guile of the spirit is an inward corruption in the soul of man, whereby he dealeth deceitfully with himself before God in the matter of salvation. *Thomas Taylor.*

**Verse 3. My bones waxed old.** God sports not at the sins of his elect, but outwardly doth deal with them more hardly, and chastise them more rigorously than he doth the reprobate. David's troubles and pains were partly external, partly internal: external I call those that were cast on his body; internal upon his conscience. And in the body were torments and vexations, seizing sometimes on his flesh—which was less painful—sometimes on his bones, which was more grievous, yea, almost intolerable, as experience teacheth. And this is God's just recompense; when we bestow our strength on sin, God abates it, and so weakens us. Samson spent his strength on Delilah, but to what weakness was he brought! Let us, therefore, learn, that God hath given us bones and the strength thereof for another use, that is, to serve him, and not waste or be prodigal of them in the devil's service. *Archibald Symson.*

**Verse 3. My bones waxed old.** By bones, the strength of the body, the inward strength and vigour of the soul is meant. The conscience of sin, and the terror of judgment doth break the heart of a true penitent, so long as he beholdeth his sin deserving death, his judge ready to pronounce the sentence of it, hell open to receive him for it, and the evil angels, God's executioners, at hand to hurry him to it. *Samuel Page, in "David's Broken Heart," 1646.*
Verse 3. *My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* David here not only mourns for sin as a man, but he roars, as it were, like a pained beast. He seems fitter for a wilderness to cry out, than for a secret chamber to weep in; at other times he can "water his couch" in the night, now he "roars" all the day long; at other times, "his moisture is dried, "now his "bones, ‘the pillars of his house shake and wax old. *Alexander Carmichael, 1677.*

Verse 4. *Thy hand.* A correcting hand, whereby God scourges and buffets his own children. Now the sense of God's power punishing or correcting, is called God's hand, as 1Sa 5:11. The hand of God was sore at Ekron, because of the ark; and a heavy hand in resemblance, because when men smite they lay their hand heavier than ordinary. Hence, we may note three points of doctrine: first, that all afflictions are God's hand; secondly, that God lays his hand heavily often upon his dear children; thirdly, that God often continues his heavy hand night and day on them. *Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 4. *My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* Another meaning may be attributed to these words. We may suppose the psalmist to be referring to spiritual drought. *Charles H. Bingham, B.A., in "Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm," 1836.*

Verse 4. *My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* The summer is from the middle of August to the middle of November. The intensity of the heat is great, and almost intolerable...Up to the beginning or middle of September there are no showers, rain being as scarce in summer as snow...The dry grass of the fields sometimes takes fire, and produces desolating conflagrations, and the parched earth is cleft and broken into chasms. *John Eadie, D.D., LL.D., in Biblical Cyclopaedia, 1868.*

Verse 4. *The drought of summer.* Dr. Russell, in his account of the weather at Aleppo, which very much resembles that of Judea, says that the verdure of the spring fades before the middle of May, and before the end of that month the whole country puts on so parched and barren an aspect that one would scarce think it capable of producing anything, there being but very few plants that have vigour enough to resist the extreme heat. *Thomas Harmer's Observations," 1775.*

Verse 4. *The drought of summer.* During the twelve years from 1846 to 1859 only two slight showers fell in Jerusalem between the months of May and October. One fell in July, 1858, another in June 1859. *Dr. Whitty's "Water Supply of Jerusalem," quoted in Kitto's Cyclopaedia.*
Verse 4. If God striketh those so sore whom he favoureth, how sharply and sore will he strike them whom he favoureth not. Gregory.

Verses 4-5. If our offences have been not gnats, but camels, our sorrow must be not a drop, but an ocean. Scarlet sins call for bloody tears; and if Peter sin heinously he must weep bitterly. If, then, thy former life hath been a cord of iniquity, twisted with many threads, a writing full of great blots, a course spotted with various and grievous sins, multiply thy confessions and enlarge thy humiliation; double thy fastings and treble thy prayers; pour out thy tears, and fetch deep sighs; in a word, iterate and aggravate thy acknowledgments, though yet, as the apostle saith in another case, I say in this, "Grieve not as without hope," that upon thy sincere and suitable repentance divine goodness will forgive thee thy sins. Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. The godly man is ingenuous in laying open his sins. The hypocrite doth vail and smother his sin; he doth not abscindere peccatum, but abscondere; like a patient that hath some loathsome disease in his body, he will rather die than confess his disease; but a godly man's sincerity is seen in this—he will confess and shame himself for sin. "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly." 2Sa 24:17. Nay, a child of God will confess sin in particular; an unsound Christian will confess sin by wholesale; he will acknowledge he is a sinner in general, whereas David doth, as it were, point with his finger to the sore: "I have done this evil" Ps 51:4; he doth not say I have done evil, but this evil. He points at his blood guiltiness. Thomas Watson.

Verse 5. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Be thine own accuser in the free confession of thy sins. Peccavi pater (as the prodigal child), "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." For it fares not in the court of heaven as it doth in our earthly tribunals. With men a free confession makes way for a condemnation; but with God, the more a sinner bemoans his offence, the more he extenuates the anger of his Judge. Sin cannot but call for justice, as it is an offence against God; yet, when once it is a wound to the soul it moveth him to mercy and clemency. Wherefore as David having but resolved to confess his sins, was accosted eftsoon with an absolution: so, Tu agnosce, et Dominus ignoscet (Augustine.) Be thou unfeigned in confessing, and God will be faithful in forgiving. 1Jo 1:9. Only let confessio peccati be professo desinendi (Hilary.)—the acknowledgment of thy sin an obligation to leave it; and then thou mayest build upon it. "He that confesseth and forsaketh shall have mercy." Pr 28:13. Isaac Craven's Sermon at Paul's Cross, 1630.
Verse 5. *I said, I will confess,* etc. Justified persons, who have their sins forgiven, are yet bound to confess sin to God...There are many queries to be dispatched in the handling of this point. The first query is, what are the reasons why persons justified and pardoned are yet bound to make confession of sin unto God in private? The reasons are six. First, they are to confess sin unto God because holy confession gives a great deal of ease and holy quiet unto the mind of a sinner: concealed and indulged guilt contracts horror and dread on the conscience. Secondly, because God loves to hear the complaints and the confessions of his own people. Lying on the face is the best gesture, and the mourning weed the best garment that God is well pleased with. A third reason is, because confession of sin doth help to quicken the heart to strong and earnest supplication to God (see Ps 32:6). Confession is to the soul as the whetstone is to the knife, that sharpens it and puts an edge on it; so doth confession of sin. Confessing thy evils to God doth sharpen and put an edge on thy supplication; that man will pray but faintly that doth confess sin but slightly. A fourth reason is, because confession of sin will work a holy contrition and a godly sorrow in the heart. Ps 38:18. Declaration doth work compunction. Confession of sin is but the causing of sin to recoil on the conscience, which causeth blushing and shame of face, and grief of heart. A fifth reason is, because secret confession of sin doth give a great deal of glory to God. It gives glory to God's justice. I do confess sin, and do confess God in justice may damn me for my sin. It gives glory to God's mercy. I confess sin, yet mercy may save me. It gives glory to God's omniscience. In confessing sin I do acknowledge that God knoweth my sin. A sixth reason why justified persons must confess sin unto God is, because holy confession of sin will embitter sin, and endear Christ to them, when a man shall let sin recoil on his conscience, by a confession. Condensed from Christopher Love's "Soul's Cordial," 1683.

Verse 5. *I said, I will confess...and thou forgavest.* It remaineth as a truth, remission is undoubtedly annexed to confession. *Tantum valent tres syllabae* PEC-CA-VI, saith St. Austin, of so great force are those three syllables in the Latin, three words in the English, when uttered with a contrite heart, "I have sinned." Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 5. *Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* This sin seems very probably to have been his adultery with Bathsheba, and murder of Uriah. Now David, to make the pardoning mercy of God more illustrious, saith he did not only forgive his *sin,* but the *iniquity* of his sin; and what was that? Surely the worst that can be said of that, his complicated sin, is that there was so much hypocrisy in it, he woefully juggled with God and man in it; this, I do not doubt to say, was the *iniquity* of his sin, and put a colour deeper on it than the blood
which he shed. And the rather—I lay the accent there—because God himself, when he would set out the heinousness of this sin, seems to do it rather from the hypocrisy in the fact than the fact itself, as appears by the testimony given this holy man 1Ki 15:5: "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." Were there not other false steps which David took beside this? Doth the Spirit of God, by excepting this, declare his approbation of all that else he ever did? No, sure the Spirit of God records other sins that escaped this eminent servant of the Lord; but all those are drowned here, and this mentioned is the only stain of his life. But why? Surely because there appeared less sincerity, yea, more hypocrisy in this one sin than in all his others put together; though David in them was wrong as to the matter of his actions, yet his heart was more right in the manner of committing them. But here his sincerity was sadly wounded, though not to the total destruction of the habit, yet to lay it in a long swoon, as to any actions thereof. And truly the wound went very deep when that grace was stabbed in which did run the life blood of all the rest. We see, then, God hath reason, though his mercy prompted him, yea, his covenant obliged him, not to let his child die of this wound, yet so to heal it that a scar might remain upon the place, a mark upon the sin, whereby others might know how odious hypocrisy is to God. William Gurnall.

Verse 5. Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. We must observe the matter forgiven, and the manner of forgiving. The matter forgiven is the iniquity of his sin. It is disputed what is here meant by iniquity, whether culpa or paena. Some understand paenam, and think that an allusion is made in this word unto the message of Nathan, wherein God doth remit the heaviest stroke of his wrath, but yet retains some part in punishing the child, and permitting Absalom to rebel and abuse king David's concubines: so Theodoret, Deus non condigna paena Davidem punivit. Some understand culpam, and will have this phrase to be an amplification of that, as if superbia defendens, or taciturnitas celans, or impietas contra Deum assurgens, or some such great guilt were meant by this phrase. But as I do not censure these opinions, which may well stand, so I think the phrase looks back into that word which was in the confession. The sin confessed was (evp) and this is but an analysis of this word; for (ytajx Nwe), what is it, word for word, but the perverseness of my aberration? (hajx) is an aberration from the scope or mark whereat we aim; all men aim at felicity, but most men stray from it, because they are not led by the law that guides unto it, the violating whereof is called (hajx) But some do stray out of mere ignorance, and they only break the law; some out of stubbornness, which will not submit themselves to the Lawgiver; these men's sin is called perverseness, which God
Psalm 32

Verse 6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found, etc. Seeing he is such a God, who should refuse or delay his return! Surely every rational and pious mind will, without delay, invoke so gentle and mild a Lord; will pray to him while he is exorable, or, as the Hebrew expresses it, in a time of finding. For he who promises pardon, does not promise tomorrow. There are tempora fandi—certain times in which he may be spoken with, and a certain appointed day of pardon and of grace, which if a man by stupid perverseness despise, or by sloth neglect, surely he is justly overwhelmed with eternal might and misery, and must necessarily perish by the deluge of divine wrath; since he has contemned and derided that Ark of salvation which was prepared, and in which whoever enters into it shall be safe, while the world is perishing. 

Arthur Lake.

Verse 6. For this shall every one that is godly pray to thee, saith David. For this! What? Because of his sins. And who? Not the most wicked, but the godly, in this respect, have cause to pray. And for what should he pray? Surely, for renewed pardon, for increase of grace, and for the perfection of glory. We cannot say we have no sin. Oh, then let us pray with David, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!” Where there is a double emphasis observable, it is not ab hoste, but a servo. Though God's servant, yet he would not have God to enter into judgment with him. And again, ne intres, it is the very entrance into judgment that he dreads, and prayeth against; not only do not proceed, but do not so much as enter. 

Robert Leighton.

Verse 6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee. Here we see not only that all the godly pray, but

is said here to forgive. So that David did not confess more against himself than God includes in his pardon. Well may God exceed our desire; he never doth come short thereof if it do concern our spiritual, our eternal good. As he doth exclude no sinner that doth confess, so doth he except against no sin that is confessed. Arthur Lake.
every one of them prays for pardon. This is the very thing which our Saviour teaches his disciples: "When ye pray, say, Forgive us our trespasses." And this praying does not only regard the manifestation of forgiving mercy, as some would have it, but the exercise of it. William Jay.

Verse 6. Godly. A godly man is like God, he hath the same judgment with God! he thinks of things as God doth; he hath a God like disposition; he partakes of the divine nature. 2Pe 1:4. A godly man doth bear God's name and image: godliness is God likeness. Thomas Watson.

Verse 6. A time. There be seasons, which, if taken, sweeten actions, and open the door for their better entertainment: Pr 25:11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver; "the Hebrew is, A word spoken upon its wheels: fit times and seasons are wheels to carry words with great advantage. And so for actions; when things are done in due time they are beautiful, acceptable. When God gives rain to a land in season, how acceptable is it! when a tree bears fruit in its season, it is grateful: so when angels or men do things seasonably, it is pleasing to the Lord Christ: there are fit times, which, if we miss, actions are unlovely, and miss of their aims. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found. There are times, if we have the wisdom to discern them, when prayer will be seasonable, acceptable, effectual. William Greenhill.

Verse 6. Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. The effects of prayer heretofore have been wonderful. Prayer hath sent down hailstones from heaven to overcome five kings with their armies. Prayer hath shut up the windows of heaven that it should not rain, and again hath opened them that the earth might give her increase. Prayer hath stayed the swift course of the sun and caused it to go backward fifteen degrees. Prayer hath held God's hands that he could not strike when he was ready to plague his people. Prayer without any other help or means hath thrown down the strong walls of Jericho. Prayer hath divided the sea that the floods thereof could not come near the Israelites. In this place it delivereth the faithful man from all the dangers of this world. Surely in the floods of many waters they shall not come nigh unto him. The sum is this, That no calamity of this world, no troubles of this life, no terrors of death, no guiltiness of sin, can be so great, but that a godly man by means of his faith and felicity in Christ shall wade out of them well enough. For howsoever other things go, still he shall have such a solace in his soul, such a comfort in his conscience, such a heaven in his heart, knowing himself reconciled to God and justified by faith, that, Surely in the floods of many waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Which, that it may better appear, I shall desire you to observe two things, the danger, the deliverance. The danger
is in these words, *In the floods of many waters*; where the tribulations that the
godly man is subject to in this life are likened, first, to *waters*; then to *many*
waters; thirdly, to a *flood* of many waters. The deliverance is in these words,
*Surely they shall not come near him*; where the deliverance of the godly man
hath three degrees also. First, "they shall not come near; "secondly, *him*, "they
shall not come near *him*; "then, *surely—"surely they shall not come near him."
*Thomas Playfere.*

**Verse 6.** *The floods of great waters.* The afflictions of the faithful are likened to
*waters.* Fire and water have no mercy, we say. But of the two water is the
worst. For any fire may be quenched with water; but the force of water, if it
begins to be violent, cannot by any power of man, be resisted. But these our
tribulations which are *waters* are "*many waters." Our common proverb is,
"Seldom comes sorrow alone:" but as waters come rolling and waving many
together, so the miseries of this life. *Thomas Playfere.*

**Verse 6.** *Floods of great waters.* Unfamiliar with the sudden flooding of thirsty
water courses, we seldom comprehend the full force of the most striking
images in the Old and New Testaments. *W.J. Conybeare, and J.S. Howson, in
"Life and Epistles of St. Paul."*

**Verse 6.** *In the floods,* etc. Washed he may be, as Paul was in the shipwreck,
but not drowned with those floods of great waters: be they never so great they
are bounded. *Joseph Trapp.*

**Verse 6.** *Him.* This word must in no case be omitted; it helpeth us to answer a
very strong objection. For it may be said, Many holy men have lost their goods,
have suffered great torments in their body, have been troubled also in mind;
how then did not the "*floods of many waters*" come near them? The word *him*
helps us to answer. The very philosophers themselves reckoned their goods
pertained no more to them, than, be it spoken with reverence and regard, the
parings of their nails. *Zenon* hearing news he had lost all he had by sea, said
only thus, Thou hast done very well, Fortune, to leave me nothing but my
cloak. Another, called *Anaxarchus,* when as *Nicocreon* the tyrant commanded
he should be beaten to death in a mortar, spake thus to the executioner, Beat
and bray as long as thou wilt Anaxarchus his bag or satchel (so he called his
own body), but Anaxarchus thou canst not touch. Yet these, making so small
reckoning of their goods and body, set their minds notwithstanding at a high
rate. The mind of a man is himself, say they. Hence it is that Julius Caesar,
when Amyclas the pilot was greatly afraid of the tempest, spake to him thus:
What meanest thou to fear, base fellow? dost thou not know thou carriest
Caesar with thee? As if he should say, Caesar's body may well be drowned, as
any other man's may; but his mind, his magnanimity, his valour, his fortitude, can never be drowned. Thus far went philosophy; but divinity goeth a degree further. For philosophy defines him, that is, a man, by his reason, and the moral virtues of the mind; but divinity defines a Christian man by his faith, and his conjunction thereby with Christ. Excellently saith Saint Austin: Whence comes it that the soul dieth? Because faith is not in it. Whence that the body dieth? Because a soul is not in it. Therefore the soul of thy soul is faith. So that if we would know what is a faithful man, we must define him, not by his natural soul, as he is reasonable, but by the soul of his soul, which is his faith. And then we easily answer the objection, that a flood may come near a faithful man's goods, near his body, near his reasonable soul; but to his faith, that is, to HIM, it can never come near. Thomas Playfere.

Verse 6. Few verses in the Psalms are harder to be understood than this: and none has given rise to more varied expositions among the commentators. For this. Some will have it: encouraged by this example, that after so foul a fall God so readily forgave. Others again: for this, namely, warned by this example, they who are holy shall make their prayers that they may not be permitted to fall as David did. Whichever be the sense, they well argue from this passage, that the state of absolute and enduring perfection is impossible to a Christian in this life. Lorinus, and Cajetan (1469-1534), quoted by Neale.

Verse 7. Thou art my hiding place. David does not say, "Thou art a hiding place" merely, as one among many; or the "hiding place," as the only one; but, "Thou art my hiding place." There lies all the excellency of the text. "He is mine; I have embraced the offer of his salvation, "says David; "I have applied to him in my own person: I have, as a sinner, taken shelter in his love and compassion; I have placed myself under his wings; I have covered myself with the robe of his righteousness; and now, therefore, I am safe." "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." This is having a part and a lot in the matter, having the personal and individual benefit of the Saviour's work of atonement. How different is an appropriating from a speculative faith! Men tell us that they believe the doctrine, that they acknowledge the truth, that they assent to our creed; and they say, that to declare to them the character of Christ as the sinner's only help and safety, is merely putting before them what they already know. Now, follow up the idea suggested by the figure in our text, and see the folly and danger of acting thus. Suppose a traveller upon a bleak and exposed heath to be alarmed by the approach of a storm. He looks out for shelter. But if his eye discern a place to hide him from the storm, does he stand still and say, "I see there is a shelter, and therefore I may remain where I am"? Does he not betake himself to it?
Does he not run, in order to escape the stormy wind and tempest? It was a "hiding place" before; but it was his hiding place only when he ran into it, and was safe. Had he not gone into it, though it might have been a protection to a thousand other travellers who resorted there, to him it would have been as if no such place existed. Who does not see at once, from this simple illustration, that the blessings of the gospel are such only in their being appropriated to the soul? The physician can cure only by being applied to; the medicine can heal only by being taken; money can enrich only by being possessed; and the merchantman in the parable would have been none the wealthier for discovering that there was a "pearl of great price, "had he not made it his. So with the salvation of the gospel: if Christ is the "Balm in Gilead, "apply the remedy; if he is the "physician there, "go to him; if he is the "pearl of great price, "sell all that you have and buy it; and if he is the "hiding place, "run into it and be safe; there will be no solid joy and peace in the mind until he is your "hiding place." Fountain Elwin, 1842.


Verse 7. Hiding place. Kirke White has a beautiful hymn upon this word, beginning, "Awake, sweet harp of Judah, wake." We have no room to quote it, but it will be found in "Our Own Hymn Book, "No. 381.

Verse 7. Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. If we content ourselves with that word which our translators have chosen here, trouble, we must rest in one of these two senses; either that God shall arm, and indue those that are his with such a constancy, as those things that trouble others shall not trouble them; but, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in them, so their consolation also abundeth by Christ:"

"As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" 2Co 1:5 6:9; for God uses both these ways in the behalf of his servants—sometimes to suspend the working of that that should work their torment, as he suspended the rage of the lions for Daniel, and the heat of the fire in the furnace for the others; sometimes by imprinting a holy stupefaction and insensibleness in the person that suffers; so St. Lawrence was not only patient, but merry and facetious when he lay broiling upon the fire, and so we read of many other martyrs that have been less moved, less affected with their torments than their executioners or their persecutors have been. That which troubled others never troubled them; or else the phrase must have this sense, that though they be troubled with their troubles, though God submit them so far to the common condition of men, that they be sensible of them, yet he shall preserve them from that trouble so as that
it shall never overthrow them, never sink them into a dejection of spirit, or
diffidence in his mercy! they shall find storms, but a stout and strong ship
under foot; they shall feel thunder and lightning, but garlands of triumphant
bays shall preserve them; they shall be trodden into earth with scorns and
contempt, but yet as seed is buried, to multiply to more. So far this word of our
translators assists our devotion, *Thou shalt preserve me from trouble,* thou shalt
make me insensible of it, or thou shalt make me victorious in it. *John Donne.*

**Verse 7. Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.** In these
words the prophet David riseth up by a gradation, and goeth beyond that which
he had formerly said concerning his confidence in God. First, he had said that
God was his *hiding place*; secondly, that he would *preserve him in trouble*; and
now, thirdly, that the Lord would make him *joyful,* and to triumph over his
troubles and enemies, by compassing him, instead of troubles, with mercies...
Learn to acknowledge God's goodness to thyself with particular application, as
David saith here, "Thou shalt compass *me* about with songs of deliverance." 
Not only confess his goodness to others, as to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; nor only
his deliverance of Noah, Daniel, Lot; but also his mercies to and deliverance of
thyself, as Paul did: "Christ gave himself for *me,* and died for *me.*" *Ga 2:20.*
This will exceedingly whet up thankfulness; whereas only to acknowledge God
good in himself, or to others, and not to thyself, will make thee murmur and
repine. *Thomas Taylor.*

**Verse 7. Thou shalt compass me about.** This word imports, that as we are
besieged on every side with troubles, so we are compassed with as many
comforts and deliverances; as our crosses grow daily, so our consolations are
augmented day by day. We are on every side offended and on every side
defended; therefore we ought on every side to sound God's praise, as David
saith, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me." *Ps 103:1.*
*Archibald Symson.*

**Verse 7. Songs of deliverance.** In that he will not be content only with thanks,
but also will have them conjoined with *songs,* he letteth us see how high all the
strings of his heart are bent that he cannot contain himself for the mercies of
God to his church, and for his manifold deliverances for the same. Many sing
praises to God with an half open mouth; and, albeit, they can sing aloud any
filthy ballad in their house, they make the mean, I warrant you, in the church,
that scarce can they hear the sound of their own voice. I think they be ashamed
to proclaim and show forth God's praises, or they fear to deafen God by their
loud singing; but David bent all his forces within and without to praise his God.
*Archibald Symson.*
Verse 8. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. No other than God himself can undertake so much as is promised in the text. For here is faith, a rectifying of the understanding, I will instruct thee, and in the original there is somewhat more than our translation reaches to; it is there, Intelligere faciam te, I will make thee understand. Man can instruct, God only can make us understand. And then it is Faciam te, I will make thee, thee understand; the work is the Lord's, the understanding is the man's: for God does not work in man as the devil did in idols and in pythonissis, and in ventrisloquis, in possessed persons, who had no voluntary concurrence with the action of the devil, but were merely passive; God works so in man as that he makes man work too, faciam te, I will make thee understand; that that shall be done by me, but in thee; the power that rectifies the act is God's, the act is man's; Faciam te, says God, I will make thee, thee, every particular person (for that arises out of this singular and distributive word, thee, which threatens no exception, no exclusion), I will make every person to whom I present instruction, capable of that instruction; and if he receive it not, it is only his, and not my fault. And so this first part is an instruction de credendis, of such things, as by God's rectifying of our understanding we are bound to believe. And then, in a second part, there follows a more particular instructing, Docebo, "I will teach thee, "and that in via, "in the way; "it is not only de via, to teach thee which is the way, that thou mayest find it, but in via, how to keep the way when thou art in it; he will teach thee, not only ut gradiaris, that you may walk in it and not sleep, but quomodo gradieris, that you may walk in it and not stray; and so this second part is an institution de agendis, of those things which, thine understanding being formerly rectified, and deduced into a belief, thou art bound to do. And then in the last words of the text, I will guide thee with mine eye, there is a third part, and establishment, a confirmation by an incessant watchfulness in God; he will consider, consult upon us (for so much the original word imports), he will not leave us to contingencies, to fortune; no, nor to his own general providence, by which all creatures are universally in his protection and administration, but he will ponder us, consider us, study us; and that with his eye, which is the sharpest and most sensible organ and instrument, soonest feels if anything be amiss, and so inclines him quickly to rectify us; and so this third part is an instruction de sperandis, it hath evermore a relation to the future, to the constancy and perseverance of God's goodness towards us; to the end, and in the end he will guide us with his eye: except the eye of God can be put out we cannot be put out of his sight and his care. So that, both our freight which we are to take in, that is, what we are to believe concerning God; and the voyage which we are to make, how we are to steer and govern our course, that is, our behaviour and conversation in the household of the faithful; and then the haven to which we must go, that is, our assurance of arriving at the
heavenly Jerusalem, are expressed in this chart, in this map, in this instruction, in this text. *John Donne.*

**Verse 8.** This threefold repetition, *I will instruct thee, I will teach thee, I will guide thee,* teaches us three properties of a good teacher. First, to make the people understand the way of salvation; secondly, to go before them; thirdly, to watch over them and their ways. *Archibald Symson.*

**Verse 8.** *The way.* If we compare this way with all other ways, it will whet our care to enter into and continue in it; for, first, this is the *King's highway,* in which we have promise of protection. Ps 91:11. Secondly, God's ways are the *cleanest* of all. 2Sa 22:31. Thirdly, God's ways are the *rightest* ways; and, being rightest, they be also the *shortest* ways. Ho 14:9. Fourthly, God's ways are most *lightsome* and *cheerful.* Pr 3:17. Therefore, God's ways being the safest, cleanest, rightest, shortest, and lightsomest ways, we must be careful to walk in them. *Condensed from Thomas Taylor.*

**Verse 8.** *I will guide thee with mine eye.* We read in natural story (A reviewer remarks upon the bad natural history which we quote. We reply that to alter it would be to spoil the allusions, and we are making a book for men, not for babes. No person in his senses is likely at this day to believe the fables which in former ages passed current for facts.), of some creatures, *Qui solo oculorum aspectu fovent ova* (Pliny), which hatch their eggs only by looking upon them. What cannot the eye of God produce and hatch in us? *Plus est quod probatur aspectu, quam quod sermone* (Ambrose.) A man may seem to commend in words, and yet his countenance shall dispraise. His word infuses good purposes into us; but if God continue his eye upon us it is a further approbation, for he is a God of pure eyes, and will not look upon the wicked. "This land doth the Lord thy God care for, and the eyes of the Lord are always upon it from beginning of the year, even to the end thereof." De 11:12. What a cheerful spring, what a fruitful autumn hath that soul, that hath the eye of the Lord always upon her! The eye of the Lord upon me makes midnight noon; it makes Capricorn Cancer, and the winter's the summer's solstice; the eye of the Lord sanctifies, nay, more than sanctifies, glorifies all the eclipses of dishonour, makes melancholy cheerfulness, diffidence assurance, and turns the jealousy of the sad soul into infallibility...This guiding us with his eye manifests itself in these two great effects; conversion to him, and union with him. First, his eye works upon ours; his eye turns ours to look upon him. Still it is so expressed with an *Ecce;* "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon all them that fear him;" his eye calls ours to behold that; and then our eye calls upon his, to observe our cheerful readiness...When, as a well made picture doth always look upon him that looks upon it, this image of God in our soul is turned to him, by his turning
to it, it is impossible we should do any foul, any uncomely thing in his presence...The other great effect of his guiding us with his eye, is, that it unites us to himself; when he fixes his eye upon us, and accepts the return of ours to him, then he "keeps" us as the "apple" of his "eye." Zec 2:8 ...These are the two great effects of his guiding us by his eye, that first, his eye turns us to himself, and then turns us into himself; first, his eye turns ours to him, and then, that makes us all one with himself, so as that our afflictions shall be put upon his patience, and our dishonours shall be injurious to him; we cannot be safer than by being his; but thus we are not only his, but he; to every persecutor, in every one of our behalf, he shall say, Cur me? Why persecutest thou me? And as he is all power, and can defend us, so here he makes himself all eye, which is the most tender part, and most sensible of our pressures. Condensed from John Donne.

Verse 8. I will guide thee with mine eye. Margin, I will counsel thee, mine eye shall be upon thee. The margin expresses the sense of the Hebrew. The literal meaning is, "I will counsel thee; mine eyes shall be upon thee." De Wette: "my eye shall be directed towards thee." The idea is that of one who is telling another what way he is to take in order that he may reach a certain place; and he says he will watch him, or will keep an eye upon him; he will not let him go wrong. Albert Barnes.

Verse 8. Mine eye. We may consider mercies as the beamings of the Almighty's eye, when the light of his countenance is lifted up upon us; and that man as guided by the eye, whom mercies attract and attach to his Maker. But oh! let us refuse to be guided by the eye, and it will become needful that we be curbed with the hand. If we abuse our mercies, if we forget their Author, and yield him not gratefully the homage of our affections, we do but oblige him, by his love for our souls, to apportion us disaster and trouble. Complain not, then, that there is so much of sorrow in your lot; but consider rather how much of it you may have wilfully brought upon yourselves. Listen to the voice of God. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye—mine eye, whose glance gilds all that is beautiful, whose light disperses all darkness, prevents all danger, diffuses all happiness. And why, then, is it that ye are sorely disquieted? why is it that "fear and the pit" are so often upon you; that one blessing after another disappears from your circle; and that God seems to deal with you as with the wayward and unruly, on whom any thing of gentleness would be altogether lost? Ah! if you would account for many mercies that have departed, if you would insure permanence to those that are yet left, examine how deficient you may hitherto have been, and strive to be more diligent for the future, in obeying an admonition which implies that we
should be guided by the soft lusters of the eye, if our obduracy did not render indispensable the harsh constraints of the rein. Henry Melvill.

Verse 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule*, etc. How many run mad of this cause, inordinate and furious lusts! The prophet Jeremiah, Jer 2:24, compares Israel to "a swift dromedary, traversing her ways, "and to "a wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure." *Be ye not*, said the psalmographer, "as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." Men have understanding, not beasts; yet when the frenzy of lust overwhelms their senses, we may take up the word of the prophet and pour it on them: "Every man is a beast by his own knowledge." And therefore "man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like unto beasts that perish" Ps 49:20. Did not the bridle of God's overruling providence restrain their madness, they would cast off the saddle of reason, and kick nature itself in the face. Thomas Adams.

Verse 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule*, etc. According to the several natures of these two beasts, the fathers and other expositors have made several interpretations; at least, several allusions. They consider the horse and the mule to admit any rider, any burden, without discretion or difference, without debate or consideration; they never ask whether their rider be noble or base, nor whether their load be gold for the treasure, or roots for the market. And those expositors find the same indifference in an habitual sinner to any kind of sin; whether he sin for pleasure, or sin for profit, or sin but for company, still he sins. They consider in the mule, that one of his parents being more ignoble than the other, he is like the worst, he hath more of the ass than of the horse in him; and they find in us, that all our actions and thoughts taste more of the more ignoble part of the earth than of heaven. St. Hierome thinks fierceness and rashness to be presented in the horse, and sloth in the mule. And St. Augustine carries these two qualities far; he thinks that in this fierceness of the horse the Gentiles are represented, which ran far from the knowledge of Christianity; and by the laziness of the mule the Jews, who came nothing so fast, as they were invited by their former helps to the embracing thereof. They have gone far in these allusions and applications; and they might have gone as far further as it had pleased them; they have sea room enough, that will compare a beast and a sinner together; and they shall find many times, in the way, the beast the better man. John Donne.

Verse 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule*, etc. Consider the causes why a broken leg is incurable in a horse, and easily curable in a man. The horse is incapable of counsel to submit himself to the farrier; and therefore in case his leg be set he flings, flounces, and flies out, unjointing it again by his
misemployed mettle, counting all binding to be shackles and fetters unto him: whereas a man willingly resigns himself to be ordered by the surgeon, preferring rather to be a prisoner for some days, than a cripple all his life. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; but "let patience have its perfect work in thee." Jas 1:4. Thomas Fuller.

**Verse 9.** *Bit and bridle* (Norw-ntk) The LXX render the first of these two words by calinw, the second by kemw. The word calinos signifies the iron of the common bridle, which is put into the horse's mouth, the bit, or curb. But kemoz was something like a muzzle, which was put upon mischievous horses or mules to keep them from biting. Xenophon says, that it allowed them to breathe, but kept the mouth shut, so that they could not bite. Not knowing the term of art for this contrivance, I call it a muzzle. The verb (brq) is a military term, and signifies to advance, as an enemy, to attack. The "coming near, therefore, intended here, is a coming near to do mischief. The admonition given by the psalmist to his companions, is to submit to the instruction and guidance graciously promised from heaven, and not to resemble, in a refractory disposition, those ill conditioned colts which are not to be governed by a simple bridle; but, unless their jaws are confined by a muzzle, will attack the rider as he attempts to mount, or the groom as he leads them to the pasture and the stable. Samuel Horsley.

**Verse 9.** *Lest they come near unto thee.* The common version of this clause would be suitable enough in speaking of a wild beast, but in reference to a mule or a horse the words can only mean, because they will not follow or obey thee of their own accord; they must be constantly coerced, in the way both of compulsion and restraint. J. A. Alexander.

**Verse 9.** "Be ye not like a horse or mule, which have no understanding, and whose ornament is a bridle and bit, to hold them: they do not come unto thee of themselves." Charles Carter, in "The Book of Psalms." 1869. A new Translation.

**Verse 10.** *He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.* Even as in the midst of the sphere is the centre, from which all lines being drawn do tend towards their circumference: so a good Christian man hath God for his circumference; for whatever he thinketh, speaketh, or doth, it tendeth to Christ, of whom he is compassed round about. Robert Cawdray.

**Verse 10.** Mercy shall compass him about. He shall be surrounded with mercy—as one is surrounded by the air, or by the sunlight. He shall find mercy and favour everywhere—at home, abroad; by day, by night; in society, in
Psalm 32

solitude; in sickness, in health; in life, in death; in time, in eternity. He shall walk amidst mercies; he shall die amidst mercies; he shall live in a better world in the midst of eternal mercies. Albert Barnes.

Verse 10. "Mark that text, "said Richard Adkins to his grandson Abel, who was reading to him the thirty-second Psalm. "Mark that text, 'He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.' I read it in my youth and believed it; and now I read it in my old age, thank God, I know it to be true. Oh! it is a blessed thing in the midst of the joys and sorrows of the world, Abel, to trust in the Lord." The Christian Treasury, 1848.

Verse 11. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart. This exhortation containeth three parts. First, what he doth exhort unto, to rejoice. Secondly, whom, the righteous, and upright men. Thirdly, the limitation, in the Lord. He exhorteth them three times—be glad, rejoice, and be joyful; and as he made mention of a threefold blessing, so doth he of a threefold joy. Wherein we have two things necessary to be observed. First the dulness of our natures, who as slow horses need many spurs and provocations to spiritual things, whereas we are naturally overmuch bent to carnal things, that we need no incitations thereunto. But by the contrary in spiritual things, we are cast into a deep sleep, who cannot be awakened at the first cry; but as men after drink have need to be roused often, that they may behold the light; so men drunken with the pleasures of sin, as Nazianzen saith, must be wakened by divers exhortations; as this same prophet in the subsequent Psalm redoubles his exhortations for the same effect. And the apostle to the Philippians saith: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice," Php 4:4. Next, perceive that this exhortation grows: for the word be glad, properly in the original signifieth an inward and hearty joy, by the presence or hope at least of a thing desirable or good. The word rejoice, to express our joy by some outward gesture, sometimes used for dancing, as, "The hills skip for gladness." Ps 65:12. The word be joyful, to cry for gladness, as the dumb man's tongue shall sing. This gradation teacheth us, that this is the nature of spiritual joy—that it still increaseth in us by certain degrees, until it come to the perfection of all joy, which is signified by the last word, importing, as it were, a triumph and shouting after victory. So that they are truly penitent who have overcome sin and Satan in their spiritual combat, and have triumphed over them as vanquished enemies. Archibald Symson.

Verse 11. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous. There's never a joyful man alive but a believer. Will you say that men take pleasure in their sins? Why, that is the Devil's joy; or that they rejoice in full barns and bags? That is the fool's joy; or that they rejoice in wine, that is, all dainties that gratify the
palate? That is a Bedlam joy. Read and believe Ec 2:3; indeed, from the first verse to the eleventh, the whole book, but especially that chapter, is the most divine philosophy that ever was or will be. *Christopher Fowler* (1610-1678), in "Morning Exercises."

**Verse 11.** *Shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.* When the poet Carpani enquired of his friend Haydn, how it happened that his church music was so cheerful, the great composer made a most beautiful reply. "I cannot," he said, "make it otherwise, I write according to the thoughts I feel: when I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance, and leap, as it were, from my pen: and, since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve him with a cheerful spirit." *John Whitecross's Anecdotes.*

**Verse 11.** Here the sensual man, that haply would catch hold when it is said, *Rejoice,* by and by, when it is added, *in the Lord,* will let his hold go. But they that, by reason of the billows and waves of the troublesome sea of this world, cannot brook the speech when it is said, *Rejoice,* are to lay sure hold fast upon it when it is added, *Rejoice in the Lord.* *Henry Airay.*

**Verse 11.**

O sing unto this glittering glorious King.  
O praise his name let every living thing;  
Let heart and voice, like bells of silver, ring  
The comfort that this day doth bring.  
—*Kinwellmersh, quoted by A. Moody Stuart.*

**Verse 11.** It is storied by the famous Tully concerning Syracuse, that there is no day throughout the whole year so stormy and tempestuous in which the inhabitants have not some glimpse and sight of the sun. The like observation may be truly made on all those Psalms of David in which his complaints are most multiplied, his fears and pressures most insisted on; that there is not any of them so totally overcast with the black darkness of despair, but that we may easily discern them to be here and there intervened and streaked with some comfortable expressions of his faith and hope in God. If in the beginning of a Psalm we find him restless in his motions, like Noah's dove upon the overspreading waters; yet in the close we shall see him like the same dove returning with an olive branch in its mouth, and fixing upon the ark. If we find him in another Psalm staggering in the midst of his distresses, through the prevalence of carnal fears, we may also in it behold him recovering himself again, by fetching arguments from faith, whose topics are of a higher elevation than to be shaken by the timorous suggestions that arise from the flesh. If at
another time we behold him like to a boat on drift, that is, tossed and beaten by
the inconstant winds and fierce waves; yet we shall still find all his rollings and
agitations to be such as carry him towards the standing shore, where he rides at
last both in peace and safety. William Spurstowe.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Gospel benedictions. Take the first Psalm with thirty-second, show the
doctrinal and practical harmoniously blended. Or, take the first, the thirty-
second, and the forty-first, and show how we go from reading the word, to
feeling its power, and thence to living charitably towards men.

Verse 1. Evangelical Blessedness. 1. The original condition of its possessor.
2. The nature of the benefit received.
3. The channel by which it came.
4. The means by which it may be obtained by us.

Verses 1-2. The nature of sin and the modes of pardon.

Verse 2. Non imputation, a remarkable doctrine.—Prove, explain, and improve it.

Verse 2. No guile. The honesty of heart of the pardoned man.

Verse 3. Retention of our griefs to ourselves. Natural tendency of timidity and
despair; danger of it; means of divulging grief; encouragements to do so; the
blessed person who is ready to hear confession. The silent mourner the greatest
sufferer.

Verses 3-4. "Terrible Conviction and Gentle Drawings." See "Spurgeon's
Sermons," No. 313.

Verse 4. The sorrows of a convinced soul. Daily, nightly, from God, heavy,
weakening, destroying.

Verse 4. (last clause) Spiritual drought.

Verse 5. The gracious results of a full confession; or, confession and absolution
scripturally explained.

Verse 6. The experience of one, the encouragement of all.

Verse 6. (first clause).—The day of grace, how to improve it.

Verse 6. (whole verse).—Pardon of sin the guarantee that other mercies shall be given.

Verse 6. (last clause).—Imminent troubles, eminent deliverances.

Verse 6. (last clause).—The felicity of the faithful. Thomas Playfere.

Verse 7. Danger felt, refuge known, possession claimed, joy experienced.

Verse 7. (first sentence).—Christ, a hiding place from sin, Satan, and sorrow, in death and at judgment.

Verse 7. (second sentence).—Troubles from which saints shall be preserved.

Verse 7. (last sentence).—The circle of song—who draws the circle, what is the circumference, who is in the centre.

Verse 7. Songs of deliverance. From guilt, hell, death, enemies, doubts, temptations, accidents, plots, etc. The divine schoolmaster, his pupils, their lessons, their chastisements and their rewards.

Verse 8. The power of the eye. Henry Melvill. In which he vainly tries to prove infant baptism and episcopacy, which he admits are not expressly taught in Scripture, but declares them to be hinted at as with the divine eye.

Verse 9. God's bits and bridles, the mules who need them, and reasons why we ought not to be of the number.

Verse 9. How far in our actions we are better, and how far worse than horses and mules.

Verse 10. The many sorrows which result from sin. The encompassing mercy of the believer's life even in his most troublesome times. The portion of the wicked, and the lot of the faithful.
Verse 11. A believer's gladness. *Its spring,* "in the Lord; "*its vivacity,* "shout; "*its propriety,* it is commanded; *its beautiful results and its abundant reasons.*

Verse 11. *Upright in heart,* an instructive description. Not horizontal or grovelling, nor bent, nor inclined, but vertical in heart.

WORKS UPON THE THIRTY-SECOND PSALM

This treatyse concernynge the fruytful sonnges of David the Kynge & prophete in the seuen penytenyall psalmes. Deuyded in seuen sermons was made and compyled by the ryght reuerent fader In god Juhau fyssher doctore of dyuynyte & bysshop of Rochester at the exortacyo and sterynge of the most excellet princesse Margarete contesse of Rychemont and Derby & moder to our souerayne lorde Kynge henry the VII.

(No date, but marked in the B.M. Cat. 1509. An 8 volume edition has on Title Page, An. M.D.J.A.)


Meditations on Psalm XXXII. in Archbishop Leighton's Works.


A Godly and Fruitful Exposition on the Thirty-second Psalme, the Third of the Penitentials; in A Sacred Septenarie; or, a Godly and Fruitful Exposition on the Seven Psalmes of Repentance. By Mr. ARCHIBALD SYMSION, late Pastor of the Church at Dalkeeth in Scotland. 1638.

Meditations and Disquisitions upon the 32 Psalme, in Meditations and Disquisitions upon the Seven Psalmes of David, commonly called the Penitential Psalmes. By SIR RICHARD BAKER, Knight. 1639.

Psalm 33

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

**TITLE.** This song of praise bears no title or indication of authorship; to teach us, says Dickson, "to look upon Holy Scripture as altogether inspired of God, and not put price upon it for the writers thereof."

**SUBJECT AND DIVISION.** The praise of Jehovah is the subject of this sacred song. The righteous are exhorted to praise him, Ps 33:1-3; because of the excellency of his character, Ps 33:4-5; and his majesty in creation, Ps 33:6-7. Men are bidden to fear before Jehovah because his purposes are accomplished in providence, Ps 33:8-11. His people are proclaimed blessed, Ps 33:12. The omniscience and omnipotence of God, and his care for his people are celebrated, in opposition to the weakness of an arm of flesh, Ps 33:13-19; and the Psalm concludes with a fervent expression of confidence, Ps 33:20-21, and an earnest prayer, Ps 33:22.

**EXPOSITION**

**Verse 1. Rejoice in the Lord.** Joy is the soul of praise. To delight ourselves in God is most truly to extol him, even if we let no notes of song proceed from our lips. That God is, and that he is such a God, and our God, ours for ever and ever, should wake within us an unceasing and overflowing joy. To rejoice in temporal comforts is dangerous, to rejoice in self is foolish, to rejoice in sin is fatal, but to rejoice in God is heavenly. He who would have a double heaven must begin below to rejoice like those above. *O ye righteous.* This is peculiarly your duty, your obligations are greater, and your spiritual nature more adapted to the work, be ye then first in the glad service. Even the righteous are not always glad, and have need to be stirred up to enjoy their privileges. *For praise is comely for the upright.* God has an eye to things which are becoming. When saints wear their choral robes, they look fair in the Lord's sight. A harp suits a blood washed hand. No jewel more ornamental to a holy face than sacred praise. Praise is not comely from unpardoned professional singers; it is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout. Crooked hearts make crooked music, but the upright are the Lord's delight. Praise is the dress of saints in heaven, it is meet that they should fit it on below.

**Verse 2. Praise the Lord with harp.** Men need all the help they can get to stir them up to praise. This is the lesson to be gathered from the use of musical instruments under the old dispensation. Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days, when Jesus gives us spiritual
manhood, we can make melody without strings and pipes. We who do not believe these things to be expedient in worship, lest they should mar its simplicity, do not affirm them to be unlawful, and if any George Herbert or Martin Luther can worship God better by the aid of well tunes instruments, who shall gainsay their right? We do not need them, they would hinder than help our praise, but if others are otherwise minded, are they not living in gospel liberty? Sing unto him. This is the sweetest and best of music. No instrument like the human voice. As a help to singing the instrument is alone to be tolerated, for keys and strings do not praise the Lord. With the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. The Lord must have a full octave, for all notes are his, and all music belongs to him. Where several pieces of music are mentioned, we are taught to praise God with all the powers which we possess.

Verse 3. Sing unto him a new song. All songs of praise should be unto him. Singing for singing's sake is nothing worth; we must carry our tribute to the King, and not cast it to the winds. Do most worshippers mind this? Our faculties should be exercised when we are magnifying the Lord, so as not to run in an old groove without thought; we ought to make every hymn of praise a new song. To keep up the freshness of worship is a great thing, and in private it is indispensable. Let us not present old worn out praise, but put life, and soul, and heart, into every song, since we have new mercies every day, and see new beauties in the work and word of our Lord. Play skilfully. It is wretched to hear God praised in a slovenly manner. He deserves the best that we have. Every Christian should endeavour to sing according to the rules of the art, so that he may keep time and tune with the congregation. The sweetest tunes and the sweetest voices, with the sweetest words, are all too little for the Lord our God; let us not offer him limping rhymes, set to harsh tunes, and growled out by discordant voices. With a loud noise. Heartiness should be conspicuous in divine worship. Well bred whispers are disreputable here. It is not that the Lord cannot hear us, but that it is natural for great exultation to express itself in the loudest manner. Men shout at the sight of their kings: shall we offer no loud hosannas to the Son of David?

Verse 4. For the word of the Lord is right. His ordinances both natural, moral, and spiritual, are right, and especially his incarnate Word, who is the Lord our righteousness. Whatever God has ordained must be good, and just, and excellent. There are no anomalies in God's universe, except what sin has made; his word of command made all things good. When we look at his word of promise, and remember its faithfulness, what reasons have we for joy and thankfulness! And all his works are done in truth. His work is the outflow of his word, and it is true to it. He neither doth nor saith anything ill; in deed and
Psalm 33

speech he agrees with himself and the purest truth. There is no lie in God's word, and no sham in his works; in creation, providence, and revelation, unalloyed truth abounds. To act truth as well as to utter it is divine. Let not children of God ever yield their principles in practice any more than in heart. What a God we serve! The more we know of him, the more our better natures approve his surpassing excellence; even his afflicting works are according to his truthful word.

"Why should I complain of want of distress, Afflictions or pain? he told me no less; The heirs of salvation, I know from his word, Through much tribulation must follow their Lord."

God writes with a pen that never blots, speaks with a tongue that never slips, acts with a hand which never fails. Bless his name.

Verse 5. He loveth righteousness and judgment. The theory and practice of right he intensely loves. He doth not only approve the true and the just, but his inmost soul delights therein. The character of God is a sea, every drop of which should become a wellhead of praise for his people. The righteousness of Jesus is peculiarly dear to the Father, and for its sake he takes pleasure in those to whom it is imputed. Sin, on the other hand, is infinitely abhorrent to the Lord, and woe unto those who die in it; if he sees no righteousness in them, he will deal righteously with them, and judgment stern and final will be the result. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Come hither, astronomers, geologists, naturalists, botanists, chemists, miners, yea, all of you who study the works of God, for all your truthful stories confirm this declaration. From the midge in the sunbeam to leviathan in the ocean all creatures own the bounty of the Creator. Even the pathless desert blazes with some undiscovered mercy, and the caverns of ocean conceal the treasures of love. Earth might have been as full of terror as of grace, but instead thereof it teems and overflows with kindness. He who cannot see it, and yet lives in it as the fish lives in the water, deserves to die. If earth be full of mercy, what must heaven be where goodness concentrates its beams?

Verse 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made. The angelic heavens, the sidereal heavens, and the firmament or terrestrial heavens, were all made to start into existence by a word; what if we say by the Word, "For without him was not anything made that is made." It is interesting to note the mention of the Spirit in the next clause, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth; the breath is the same as is elsewhere rendered Spirit. Thus the three persons of the Godhead unite in creating all things. How easy for the Lord to make the most
ponderous orbs, and the most glorious angels! A word, a breath could do it. It is as easy for God to create the universe as for a man to breathe, nay, far easier, for man breathes not independently, but borrows the breath in his nostrils from his Maker. It may be gathered from this verse that the constitution of all things is from the infinite wisdom, for his word may mean his appointment and determination. A wise and merciful Word has arranged, and a living Spirit sustains all the creation of Jehovah.

Verse 7. *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap.* The waters were once scattered like corn strewn upon a threshing floor: they are now collected in one spot as an heap. Who else could have gathered them into one channel but their great Lord, at whose bidding the waters fled away? The miracle of the Red Sea is repeated in nature day by day, for the sea which now invades the shore under the impulse of sun and moon, would soon devour the land if bounds were not maintained by the divine decree. *He layeth up the depth in storehouses.* The depths of the main are God's great cellars and storerooms for the tempestuous element. Vast reservoirs of water are secreted in the bowels of the earth, from which issue our springs and wells of water. What a merciful provision for a pressing need? May not the text also refer to the clouds, and the magazines of hail, and snow, and rain, those treasures of merciful wealth for the fields of earth? These aqueous masses are not piled away as in lumber rooms, but in storehouses for future beneficial use. Abundant tenderness is seen in the foresight of our heavenly Joseph, whose granaries are already filled against earth's time of need. These stores might have been, as once they were, the ammunition of vengeance, they are now a part of the commissariat of mercy.

Verse 8. *Let all the earth fear the Lord.* Not only Jews, but Gentiles. The psalmist was not a man blinded by national prejudice, he did not desire to restrict the worship of Jehovah to the seed of Abraham. He looks for homage even to far off nations. If they are not well enough instructed to be able to praise, at least let them fear. There is an inferior kind of worship in the trembling which involuntarily admits the boundless power of the thundering God. A defiant blasphemer is out of place in a world covered with tokens of the divine power and Godhead: the whole earth cannot afford a spot congenial for the erection of a synagogue of Atheism, nor a man in whom it is becoming to profane the name of God. *Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.* Let them forsake their idols, and reverently regard the only living God. What is here placed as a wish may also be read as a prophecy: the adoration of God will yet be universal.
Verse 9. *For he spake, and it was done.* Creation was the fruit of a word. Jehovah said, "Light be, "and light was. The Lord's acts are sublime in their ease and instantaneousness. "What a word is this?" This was the wondering enquiry of old, and it may be ours to this day. *He commanded, and it stood fast.* Out of nothing creation stood forth, and was confirmed in existence. The same power which first uplifted, now makes the universe to abide; although we may not observe it, there is as great a display of sublime power in confirming as in creating. Happy is the man who has learned to lean his all upon the sure word of him who built the skies!

Verse 10. *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought.* While his own will is done, he takes care to anticipate the wilfulness of his enemies. Before they come to action he vanquishes them in the council chamber; and when, well armed with craft, they march to the assault, he frustrates their knaveries, and makes their promising plots to end in nothing. Not only the folly of the heathen, but their wisdom too, shall yield to the power of the cross of Jesus: what a comfort is this to those who have to labour where sophistry, and philosophy, falsely so called, are set in opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus. *He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.* Their persecutions, slanders, falsehoods, are like puff balls flung against a granite wall—they produce no result at all; for the Lord overrules the evil, and brings good out of it. The cause of God is never in danger: infernal craft is outwitted by infinite wisdom, and Satanic malice held in check by boundless power.

Verse 11. *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever.* He changes not his purpose, his decree is not frustrated, his designs are accomplished. God has a predestination according to the counsel of his will, and none of the devices of his foes can thwart his decree for a moment. Men's purposes are blown to and from like the thread of the gossamer or the down of the thistle, but the eternal purposes are firmer than the earth. *The thoughts of his heart to all generations.* Men come and go, sons follow their sires to the grave, but the undisturbed mind of God moves on in unbroken serenity, producing ordained results with unerring certainty. No man can expect his will or plan to be carried out from age to age; the wisdom of one period is the folly of another, but the Lord's wisdom is always wise, and his designs run on from century to century. His power to fulfil his purposes is by no means diminished by the lapse of years. He who was absolute over Pharaoh in Egypt is not one whit the less today the King of kings and Lord of lords; still do his chariot wheels roll onward in imperial grandeur, none being for a moment able to resist his eternal will.

Verse 12. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.* Israel was happy in the worship of the only true God. It was the blessedness of the chosen nation to
have received a revelation from Jehovah. While others grovelled before their
idols, the chosen people were elevated by a spiritual religion which introduced
them to the invisible God, and led them to trust in him. All who confide in the
Lord are blessed in the largest and deepest sense, and none can reverse the
blessing. And the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.
Election is at the bottom of it all. The divine choice rules the day; none take
Jehovah to be their God till he takes them to be his people. What an ennobling
choice this is! We are selected to no mean estate, and for no ignoble purpose:
we are made the peculiar domain and delight of the Lord our God. Being so
blessed, let us rejoice in our portion, and show the world by our lives that we
serve a glorious Master.

Verse 13. The Lord looketh from heaven. The Lord is represented as dwelling
above and looking down below; seeing all things, but peculiarly observing and
caring for those who trust in him. It is one of our choicest privileges to be
always under our Father's eye, to be never out of sight of our best Friend. He
beholdeth all the sons of men. All Adam's sons are as well watched as was
Adam himself, their lone progenitor in the garden. Ranging from the frozen
pole to the scorching equator, dwelling in hills and valleys, in huts and palaces,
alike doth the divine eye regard all the members of the family of man.

Verse 14. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants
of the earth. Here the sentiment is repeated: it is worth repeating, and it needs
repeating, for man is most prone to forget it. As great men sit at their windows
and watch the crowd below, so doth the Lord; he gazes intently upon his
responsible creatures, and forgets nothing of what he sees.

Verse 15. He fashioneth their hearts alike. By which is meant that all hearts are
equally fashioned by the Lord, kings' hearts as well as the hearts of beggars.
The text does not mean that all hearts are created originally alike by God, such
a statement would scarcely be true, since there is the utmost variety in the
constitutions and dispositions of men. All men equally owe the possession of
life to the Creator, and have therefore no reason to boast themselves. What
reason has the vessel to glorify itself in presence of the potter? He considereth
all their words. Not in vain doth God see men's acts: he ponders and judges
them. He reads the secret design in the outward behaviour, and resolves the
apparent good into its real elements. This consideration foretokens a judgment
when the results of the divine thoughts will be meted out in measures of
happiness or woe. Consider thy ways, O man, for God considereth them!

Verse 16. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host. Mortal power is a
fiction, and those who trust in it are dupes. Serried ranks of armed men have
failed to maintain an empire, or even to save their monarch's life when a decree from the court of heaven has gone forth for the empire's overthrow. The all seeing God preserves the poorest of his people when they are alone and friendless, but ten thousand armed men cannot ensure safety to him whom God leaves to destruction. *A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.* So far from guarding others, the valiant veteran is not able to deliver himself. When his time comes to die, neither the force of his arms nor the speed of his legs can save him. The weakest believer dwells safely under the shadow of Jehovah's throne, while the most mighty sinner is in peril every hour. Why do we talk so much of our armies and our heroes? the Lord alone has strength, and let him alone have praise.

**Verse 17.** *An horse is a vain thing for safety.* Military strength among the Orientals lay much in horses and scythed chariots, but the psalmist calls them a lie, a deceitful confidence. Surely the knight upon his gallant steed may be safe, either by valour or by flight? Not so, his horse shall bear him into danger or crush him with its fall. *Neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.* Thus the strongest defences are less than nothing when most needed. God only is to be trusted and adored. Sennacherib with all his calvary is not a match for one angel of the Lord, Pharaoh's horses and chariots found it vain to pursue the Lord's anointed, and so shall all the leaguered might of earth and hell find themselves utterly defeated when they rise against the Lord and his chosen.

**Verse 18.** *Behold.* For this is a greater wonder than hosts and horses, a surer confidence than chariots or shields. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him.* That eye of peculiar care is their glory and defence. None can take them at unawares, for the celestial watcher foresees the designs of their enemies, and provides against them. They who fear God need not fear anything else; let them fix their eye of faith on him, and his eye of love will always rest upon them. *Upon them that hope in his mercy.* This one would think to be a small evidence of grace, and yet it is a valid one. Humble hope shall have its share as well as courageous faith. Say, my soul, is not this an encouragement to thee? Dost thou not hope in the mercy of God in Christ Jesus? Then the Father's eye is as much upon thee as upon the elder born of the family. These gentle words, like soft bread, are meant for babes in grace, who need infant's food.

**Verse 19.** *To deliver their soul from death.* The Lord's hand goes with his eye; he sovereignly preserves those whom he graciously observes. Rescues and restorations hedge about the lives of the saints; death cannot touch them till the King signs his warrant and gives him leave, and even then his touch is not so much mortal as immortal; he doth not so much kill us as kill our mortality. *And to keep them alive in famine.* Gaunt famine knows its master. God has meal and
oil for his Elijahs somewhere. "Verily thou shalt be fed" is a divine provision for the man of faith. The Preserver of men will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish. Power in human hands is outmatched by famine, but God is good at a pinch, and proves his bounty under the most straitened circumstances. Believer, wait upon thy God in temporals. His eye is upon thee, and his hand will not long delay.

**Verse 20.** Our soul waits for the Lord. Here the godly avow their reliance upon him whom the Psalm extols. To wait is a great lesson. To be quiet in expectation, patient in hope, single in confidence, is one of the bright attainments of a Christian. Our soul, our life, must hang upon God; we are not to trust him with a few gewgaws, but with all we have and are. He is our help and our shield. Our help in labour, our shield in danger. The Lord answereth all things to his people. He is their all in all. Note the three "ours" in the text. These holdfast words are precious. Personal possession makes the Christian man; all else is mere talk.

**Verse 21.** For our hearts shall rejoice in him. The duty commended and commanded in the first verse is here presented to the Lord. We, who trust, cannot but be of a glad heart, our inmost nature must triumph in our faithful God. Because we have trusted in his holy name. The root of faith in due time bears the flower of rejoicing. Doubts breed sorrow, confidence creates joy.

**Verse 22.** Here is a large and comprehensive prayer to close with. It is an appeal for mercy, which even joyful believers need; and it is sought for in a proportion which the Lord has sanctioned. "According to your faith be it unto you," is the Master's word, and he will not fall short of the scale which he has himself selected. Yet, Master, do more than this when hope is faint, and bless us far above what we ask or even think.

**EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS**

**Whole Psalm.** A thanksgiving of the church triumphant in the latter ages, for her final deliverance, by the overthrow of Antichrist and his armies. Samuel Horsley.

**Whole Psalm.** Let us follow the holy man a moment in his meditation. His Psalm is not composed in scholastic form, in which the author confines himself to fixed rules; and, scrupulously following a philosophic method, lays down principals, and infers consequences. However, he establishes principles, the most proper to give us sublime ideas of the Creator; and he speaks with more
precision of the works and attributes of God than the greatest philosophers have spoken of them.

How absurdly have the philosophers treated of the origin of the world! How few of them have reasoned conclusively on this important subject! Our prophet solves the important question by one single principle; and, what is more remarkable, this principle, which is nobly expressed, carries the clearest evidence with it. The principle is this: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," Ps 33:6. This is the most rational account that was ever given of the creation of the world. The world is the work of a self efficient will, and it is this principle alone that can account for its creation. The most simple appearances in nature are sufficient to lead us to this principle. Either my will is self efficient, or there is some other being whose will is self efficient. What I say of myself, I say of my parents; and what I affirm of my parents, I affirm of my more remote ancestors, and of all the finite creatures from whom they derive their existence. Most certainly either finite beings have a self efficient will, which it is impossible to suppose, for a finite creature with a self efficient will is a contradiction: either, I say, a finite creature has a self efficient will, or there is a First Cause who has a self efficient will; and that there is such a Being is the principle of the psalmist; "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

If philosophers have reasoned inconclusively on the origin of the world, they have spoken of its government with equal uncertainty. The psalmist determines this question with a great facility, by a single principle, which results from the former, and which, like the former, carries its evidence with it. "The Lord looketh from heaven; he considereth all the works of all the inhabitants of the earth," Ps 33:13-14. This is the doctrine of providence. And on what is the doctrine of providence founded? On this principle: God "fashioneth their hearts alike," Ps 33:15. Attend a moment to the evidence of this reasoning, my brethren. The doctrine of providence expressed in these words, "God considereth the works of the inhabitants of the earth, "is a necessary consequence of his principle, "God fashioneth their hearts alike; "and this principle is a necessary consequence of that which the psalmist had before laid down to account for the origin of the world. Yes, from that doctrine of God the Creator of men, follows that of God the inspector, the director, rewarder, and the punisher of their actions. One of the most specious objections that has ever been opposed to the doctrine of providence, is a contrast between the grandeur of God and the meanness of men. How can such an insignificant creature as man be the object of the care and attention of such a magnificent being as God?
No objection can be more specious, or, in appearance, more invincible. The
distance between the meanest insect and the mightiest monarch, who treads and
 crushes reptiles to death without the least regard to them, is a very imperfect
 image of the distance between God and man. That which proves that it would
 be beneath the dignity of a monarch to observe the motions of ants, or worms,
to interest himself in their actions, to punish, or to reward them, seems to
demonstrate that God would degrade himself were he to observe, to direct, to
punish, to reward mankind, who are infinitely inferior to him. But one fact is
sufficient to answer this specious objection: that is, God has created mankind.
Does God degrade himself more by governing than by creating mankind? Who
can persuade himself that a wise Being has given to intelligent creatures
faculties capable of obtaining knowledge and virtue, without willing that they
should endeavour to acquire knowledge and virtue? Or who can imagine, that a
wise Being, who wills that his intelligent creatures should acquire knowledge
and virtue, will not punish them if they neglect those acquisitions; and will not
show by the distribution of his benefits that he approves their endeavours to
obtain them?

Unenlightened philosophers have treated of the attributes of God with as much
abstruseness as they have written of his works. The moral attributes of God, as
they are called in the schools, were mysteries which they could not unfold.
These may be reduced to two classes; attributes of goodness, and attributes of
justice. Philosophers, who had admitted these, have usually taken that for
granted which they ought to have proved. They collected together in their
minds all perfections; they reduced them all to one object which they
denominated a perfect being: and supposing, without proving, that a perfect
being existed, they attributed to him, without proof, everything that they
considered as a perfection. The psalmist shows by a surer way that there is a
God supremely just and supremely good. It is necessary, in order to convince a
rational being of the justice and goodness of God, to follow such a method as
that which we follow to prove his existence. When we would prove the
existence of God, we say, there are creatures, therefore there is a Creator. In
like manner, when we would prove that a creature is a just and a good being,
we say, there are qualities of goodness and justice in creatures, therefore he,
from whom these creatures derive their existence, is a being just and good.
Now, this is the reasoning of the psalmist in this Psalm: "The Lord loveth
righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord" Ps
33:5; that is to say, it is impossible to consider the work of the Creator, without
receiving evidence of his goodness. And the works of nature which
demonstrate the goodness of God, prove his justice also; for God has created us
with such dispositions, that we cannot enjoy the gifts of his goodness without
obeying the laws of his righteousness. The happiness of an individual who procures a pleasure by disobeying the laws of equity, is a violent happiness, which cannot be of long duration; and the prosperity of public bodies, when it is founded in iniquity, is an edifice which, with its basis, will be presently sunk and gone.

But what we would particularly remark is, that the excellent principle of the psalmist concerning God are not mere speculations; but truths from which he derives practical inferences; and he aims to extend their influence beyond private persons, even to legislators and conquerors. One would think, considering the conduct of mankind, that the consequences, which are drawn from the doctrines of which we have been speaking, belong to none but to the dregs of the people; that lawgivers and conquerors have a plan of morality peculiar to themselves, and are above the rules to which other men must submit. Our prophet had other notions. What are his maxims of policy? They are all included in these words: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance, "Ps 33:12. What are his military maxims? They are all included in these words: "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength, "Ps 33:16-17. Who proposes these maxims? A hermit, who never appeared on the theatre of the world? or a man destitute of the talents necessary to shine there? No: one of the wisest of kings; one of the most bold and able generals: a man whom God has self elected to govern his chosen people, and to command those armies which fought the most obstinate battles, and gained the most complete victories. Were I to proceed in explaining the system of the psalmist, I might prove, that as he had a right to infer the doctrine of providence from the works of nature, and that of the moral attributes of God from the works of creation; so from the doctrines of the moral attributes of God, of providence, and of the works of creation, he had a right to conclude, that no conquerors or lawgivers could be truly happy but those who acted agreeably to the laws of the just and good Supreme. James Saurin.

Verse 1. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous. Exult, ye righteous, in Jehovah!
The Hebrew verb, according to the etymologists, originally means to dance for joy, and is therefore a very strong expression for the liveliest exultation. J. A. Alexander.

Verse 1. Rejoice, O ye righteous: not in yourselves, for that is not safe, but in the Lord. Augustine.
Verse 1. Praise is comely for the upright. Praise is not comely for any but the godly. A profane man stuck with God's praise is like a dunghill stuck with flowers. Praise in the mouth of a sinner is like an oracle in the mouth of a fool: how uncomely is it for him to praise God, whose whole life is a dishonouring of God? It is as indecent for a wicked man to praise God, who goes on in sinful practices, as it is for an usurer to talk of living by faith, or for the devil to quote Scripture. The godly are only fit to be choristers in God's praise; it is called, "the garment of praise." Isa 61:3. This garment sits handsome only on a saint's back. Thomas Watson.

Verse 1. This Psalm is coupled with the foregoing one by the catchword with which it opens, which is a repetition of the exhortation with which the preceding ends, Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; "Shout for joy, all ye upright." Christopher Wordsworth.

Verse 1. He pleaseth God whom God pleaseth. Augustine.

Verse 2. Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Here we have the first mention of musical instruments in the Psalms. It is to be observed that the early fathers almost with one accord protest against their use in churches; as they are forbidden in the Eastern church to this day, where yet, by the consent of all, the singing is infinitely superior to anything that can be heard in the West. J. M. Neale.

Verse 2. Harp; Psaltery, etc. Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaise. Thomas Aquinas. It was only permitted to the Jews, as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols; but now instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal. Chrysostom. The use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the Christian churches as it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain song. Justin Martyr.

Verse 2. (last clause). It is said that David praised God upon an instrument of ten strings; and he would never have told how many strings there were, but that without doubt he made use of them all. God hath given all of us bodies, as it were, instruments of many strings; and can we think it music good enough to strike but one string, to call upon him with our tongues only? No, no; when the still sound of the heart by holy thoughts, and the shrill sound of the tongue by holy words, and the loud sound of the hands by pious works, do all join
together, that is God's concert, and the only music wherewith he is affected. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 3. Sing unto him. I. Singing is the music of nature. The Scriptures tell us the mountains sing Isa 55:12; the valleys sing Ps 65:13; the trees of the wood sing 1Ch 16:33; nay, the air is the birds' music room, they chant their musical notes. II. Singing is the music of ordinances. Augustine reports of himself, that when he came to Milan and heard the people sing, he wept for joy in the church to hear that pleasing melody. And Beza confesses that at his first entrance into the congregation, and hearing them sing the ninety-first Psalm, he felt himself exceedingly comforted, and did retain the sound of it afterwards upon his heart. The Rabbins tell us that the Jews, after the feast of the Passover was celebrated, sang the hundred and eleventh and five following Psalms; and our Saviour and his apostles sang a hymn immediately after the blessed Supper. Mt 26:30. III. Singing is the music of saints. (1.) They have performed this duty in their greatest numbers. Ps 149:1-2. (2.) In their greatest straits. Isa 26:19. (3.) In their greatest flight. Isa 42:10-11. (4.) In their greatest deliverances. (5.) In their greatest plenties. Isa 65:14. In all these changes singing hath been their stated duty and delight. And indeed it is meet that the saints and servants of God should sing forth their joys and praises to the Lord Almighty: every attribute of him can set both their song and their tune. IV. Singing is the music of angels. Job tells us "the morning stars sang together, "Job 38:7. Now these "morning stars, "as Pineda tells us, are the angels; to which the Chaldee paraphrase accords, naming these morning stars, aciem angelorum, an host of angels. Nay, when this heavenly host was sent to proclaim the birth of our dearest Jesus, they deliver their message in this raised way of duty. Lu 2:13. They were (ainountev), delivering their messages in a laudatory singing, the whole company of angels making a musical quire. Nay, in heaven there is the angels' joyous music; they there sing hallelujahs to the Most High, and to the Lamb who sits upon the throne, Re 5:11. V. Singing is the music of heaven: the glorious saints and angels accent their praises this way, and make one harmony in their state of blessedness; and this is the music of the Bride chamber. The saints who were tuning here their Psalms, are now singing their hallelujahs in a louder strain, and articulating their joys, which here they could not express to their perfect satisfaction; here they laboured with drowsy hearts, and faltering tongues; but in glory these impediments are removed, and nothing is left to jar their joyful celebration. John Wells, in "Morning Exercises."

Verse 3. A new song. That is to say, a new and recent composition on account of recent benefits; or constantly new songs, song succeeding song as daily new material for divine praise offers itself to the attentive student of the works of
Psalm 33


Verse 3. A new song; namely, sung with such fervency of affections as novelties usually bring with them; or, always new, seeing God's graces never wax old; or, sung by the motion of this new spirit of grace, which doth not so much look after the old benefits of the creation as after the new benefit of the redemption in Christ, which renews all things. Ps 40:3 96:1 Re 5:9 14:3. John Diodati.

Verse 3. Sing unto him a new song. It is a melancholy proof of the decline of the church, when the exhortation to sing a new song is no longer attended to: in such a case, there is need of the greatest care to prevent the old ones falling into oblivion. E. W. Hengstenberg.

Verse 3. Play skilfully. It is not an easy matter to praise God aright; it must be done corde, ore, spere, with the very best of the best. John Trapp.

Verse 4. The word of the Lord is right. His word of promise given to the church. The divine revelation to all setting forth what is to be believed, hoped for, and done. The decrees of God and his penal judgments. The whole counsel and determination of God in the creation and government of the world. Is right, without defect or error. The word right is opposed to tortuous; it means true or certain. John de Pineda (1577-1637); D.H. Mollerus (1639), and others, in Synopsis.

Verse 4. All his works are done in truth.
Truth is in each flower
As well as in the most solemn things of God:
Truth is the voice of nature and of time—
Truth is the startling monitor within us—
Nought is without it, it comes from the stars,
The golden sun, and every breeze that blows—
Truth, it is God! and God is everywhere!
—William Thomas Bacon.

Verse 5. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. If we reflect on the prodigious number of human beings who constantly receive their food, raiment, and every pleasure they enjoy, from their mother earth, we shall be convinced of the great liberality with which nature dispenses her gifts; and not only human beings, but an innumerable quantity of living creatures besides— Inhabitants of the air, the waters, and the earth—are daily indebted to nature for their support. Those animals which are under our care are still indebted to the earth for their subsistence; for the grass, which nature spontaneously produces, is their chief food. The whole race of fishes, except those which men feed for their amusement, subsist without any of their aid. The species of birds which is perhaps the most despised and most numerous, is the sparrow. What they require for their support is incredible, but nature takes care to feed them; they are however but the smallest part of her children. So great is the quantity of insects, that ages may pass before even their species and classes can be known. How many and how diversified the sorts of flies that play in the air! The blood taken from us by the gnat is very accidental food for them; and we may suppose that where there is one gnat that lives upon it, there are millions that have never tasted human blood, or that of any other animal. On what can all these creatures subsist? Perhaps every handful of earth contains living insects; they are discovered in every drop of water; their multiplying and means of support are incomprehensible. While nature is thus prolific in children, she is also fruitful in means for their subsistence; or, rather, it is the God of nature who has poured into her bosom this inexhaustible store of riches. He provides each creature with its food and dwelling. For them he causes the grass and other herbs to grow, leaving each to select its proper food. And, however mean many creatures may appear to us, he feeds and assists them all. O Almighty God, how manifest is thy greatness! Thou dost what the united efforts of all mankind would fail to accomplish. Thou hast given life, and breath, and being to all creatures that live in the air, the waters, or the earth. Surely thou wilt do for thy believing people what thou dost for animals and insects! When we are filled with doubts and fears, let us consider the ravens whom the Lord feeds when they cry. Let them and all creatures beside, which man takes no care of,
teach us the art of contentment. The great Author of nature knows all our wants. Let us cast our every care on him, for he careth for us; and may we come boldly to the throne of grace in faith and sincerity, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in every time of need. Christopher Christian Sturm.

Verse 5. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. To hear its worthless inhabitants complain, one would think that God dispensed evil, not good. To examine the operation of his hand, everything is marked with mercy, and there is no place where his goodness does not appear. The overflowing kindness of God fills the earth. Even the iniquities of men are rarely a bar to his goodness: he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends his rain upon the just and the unjust. Adam Clarke.

Verse 5. The goodness of the Lord. In discoursing on the glorious perfections of God, his goodness must by no means be omitted; for though all his perfections are his glory, yet this is particularly so called, for when Moses, the man of God, earnestly desired to behold a grand display of the glory of Jehovah, the Lord said in answer to his petition, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee; "thus intimating that he himself accounted his goodness to be his glory Ex 33:19 34:7; and it includes that mercy, grace, longsuffering, and truth, which are afterwards mentioned. When it relieves the miserable, it is mercy; when it bestows favours on the worthless, it is grace; when it bears with provoking rebels, it is long suffering; when it confers promised blessings, it is truth; when it supplies indigent beings, it is bounty. The goodness of God is a very comprehensive term; it includes all the forms of his kindness shown to men; whether considered as creatures, as sinners, or as believers. George Burder, 1838

Verse 5. The goodness of the Lord. He might, if he had pleased, have made everything we tasted bitter, everything we saw loathsome, everything we touched a sting, every smell a stench, every sound a discord. William Paley, D.D., 1743-1805.

Verse 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. That the (hwd) is not spirit, but breath, is evident from the words of his mouth (compare Isa 11:4), and from the parallelism with word. Simple word is simple breath: both together, they stand in contrast to that exercise of strength, that labour, that use of means and instruments without which feeble man can bring nothing to perfection. Then there are the parallel passages, "All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job 27:3. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the
breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job 33:4. "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust, thou sendest forth thy breath, they are created." Ps 104:29,30. On the other hand, however, the exposition which would interpret (wyp xwr), without reference to the Spirit of God, cannot be a correct one. In the history of the creation, to which the verse before us, as well as verses seven and nine, generally refer, the creation is described as the work of the SPIRIT of God, and his WORD. First, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, then God said. We may also suppose that the Spirit and the power of God are here represented by the figure of breath, because that in man is the first sign of life. E. W. Hengstenberg.

Verse 6. By the word of the Lord. May be understood of the hypostatic Word, as John teaches us. Joh 1:1. (John Cocceius), 1603-1669. This is an illustration of the old saying, that while Grotius finds Christ nowhere, Cocceius finds Christ everywhere. C. H. S.

Verse 6. Let any make a world, and he shall be a God, saith Augustine; hence is it that the church maketh it the very first article of her Creed to believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. John Weemse.

Verses 6, 9. It is all one with God to do as to say, to perform as to promise; it is as easy, he is as willing, as able, to do the one as the other. There is no such distance betwixt God's saying and doing, as amongst men. His saying is doing: He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made. "The worlds were framed by the word of God." Heb 11:3. There is omnipotence in his word, both of command and promise; therefore called, "The word of his power." Heb 1:3. One word of his can do more in an instant than the united powers of heaven and earth can do in eternity. This consideration removes at once the chief discouragements that hinder the lively actings of faith; for what is it that weakens our confidence of the promises' performance, but because we look upon the accomplishment as uncertain or difficult, or future and afar off! Now from hence faith may conclude the performance is certain, easy, and present. David Clarkson.

Verse 7. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap, etc. "God called the gathering together of the waters, seas." Ge 1:10. This unstable element must, like all other elements, be put under law, and confined within bounds, that there might be a habitable earth for man and all the creatures around him. Thus the psalmist sings, He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. The boundary was such as to cause his servants to wonder. They looked from the shore, as we do, and under the influence of a well known law, the billows in their heaving
swells, seemed as if they would, as if they did, touch the sky itself; and as if they were so much higher than the shore, that they were in danger of leaving their basin and stretching over the land. Just such an impression, we with all our science, popularly hold. The prophets thus looked as we do, and under the same kind of feeling. How wonderful, they thought, is all this! A low barrier of sand is made Jehovah's agent for bounding the deep. "The Lord hath placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it." Jer 5:22. John Duns, D.D., in "Science and Christian Thought," 1868.

**Verse 7. The waters of the sea.** Of all objects that I have ever seen, there is none which affect my imagination so much as the sea or ocean. I cannot see the heavings of this prodigious bulk of waters, even in a calm, without a very pleasing astonishment; but when it is worked up in a tempest, so that the horizon on every side is nothing but foaming billows and floating mountains, it is impossible to describe the agreeable horror that rises from such a prospect. A troubled ocean, to a man who sails upon it, is, I think, the biggest object that he can see in motion, and consequently gives his imagination one of the highest kinds of pleasure that can arise from greatness. I must confess it is impossible for me to survey this world of fluid matter without thinking on the hand that first poured it out, and made a proper channel for its reception. Such an object naturally raises in my thoughts the idea of an Almighty Being, and convinces me of his existence as much as a metaphysical demonstration. The imagination prompts the understanding, and by the greatness of the sensible object, produces in it the idea of a Being who is neither circumscribed by time nor space. *Spectator.*

**Verse 7. As a heap.** Dealing with fluids as if they were solids, with an obvious allusion to Ex 15:8. *Depths,* masses of water. The main point of the description is God's handling these vast liquid masses, as men handle solid substances of moderate dimensions, heaping the waves up, and storing them away, as men might do with stones or wheat. *J. A. Alexander.*

**Verse 7.** The vast masses of waters which had hitherto covered the entire surface of the globe, was on the third day of creation brought within narrower compass, and large tracts of the submerged earth reclaimed and rendered habitable ground...The waters were, *for the most part,* congregated together in one vast body, instead of being universally diffused over the face of the earth. This is the state of things which we now contemplate; the various great seas and oceans constituting in fact but one body of water called in different regions...
by different names, as the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Southern, etc., oceans. *George Bush*, on Ge 1:9.

**Verse 8.** *Let all the earth.* For who can doubt that God can do as he wills upon earth, since he so tamed the unconquerable nature of the sea? *Hugo Grotius,* 1583-1645.

**Verse 8.** *Let all the earth fear the Lord,* etc. Let them not fear another instead of him. Doth a wild beast rage? Fear God. Doth a serpent lie in wait? Fear God. Doth man hate thee? Fear God. Doth the devil fight against thee? Fear God. For the whole creation is under him whom thou art commanded to fear. *Augustine.*

**Verse 9.** *He spake, and it was done.* As we say in Latin, *Dictum factum,* SAID DONE, no delay having interposed. *Hugo Grotius.*

**Verse 9.** *He spake, and it was done;* so that the creatures were not emanations from the divine nature, but effects of the divine will, the fruits of intelligence, and design, and counsel. *William Binnie, D.D.*

**Verse 10.** *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought,* etc. The more the Pharisees of old, and their successors the prelates of late, opposed the truth, the more it prevailed. The Reformation in Germany was much furthered by the Papists' opposition; yea, when two kings (amongst many others), wrote against Luther, namely, Henry 8th of England, and Ludovicus of Hungary, this kingly title being entered into the controversy (making men more curious to examine the matter), stirred up a general inclination towards Luther's opinions. *Richard Younge's Christian Library,* 1655.

**Verse 11.** *The counsel of the Lord.* Note the contrast between the counsel of the heathen in the last verse, and the counsel of the Lord in this. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 11.** *The thoughts.* The same word as *devices* in the preceding verse. *William de Burgh, D.D., in loc.*

**Verse 11.** The wheels in a watch or a clock move contrary one to another, some one way, some another, yet all serve the intent of the workman, to show the time, or to make the clock strike. So in the world, the providence of God may seem to run cross to his promises; one man takes this way, another runs that way; good men go one way, wicked men another, yet all in conclusion accomplish the will, and centre in the purpose of God the great Creator of all things. *Richard Sibbes.*
Verse 11. (last clause). Think not, brethren, because he said, The thoughts of his heart, that God as it were sitteth down and thinketh what he should do, and taketh counsel to do anything, or not to do anything. To thee, O man, belongs such tardiness. Augustine.

Verse 12. Blessed—whom he hath chosen. A man may have his name set down in the chronicles, yet lost; wrought in durable marble, yet perish; set upon a monument equal to a Colossus, yet be ignominious; inscribed on the hospital gates, yet go to hell; written in the front of his own house, yet another come to possess it; all these are but writings in the dust, or upon the waters, where the characters perish so soon as they are made; they no more prove a man happy than the fool could prove Pontius Pilate because his name was written in the Creed. But the true comfort is this, when a man by assurance can conclude with his own soul that his name is written in those eternal leaves of heaven, in the book of God's election, which shall never be wrapped up in the cloudy sheets of darkness but remain legible to all eternity. Thomas Adams.

Verse 12. The people whom he hath chosen. Some read it, The people which hath chosen him for their inheritance. It cometh all to one. See De 26:17-19. John Trapp.

Verse 12. It's an happiness to have an interest in one greater than ourselves; an interest in a beggar is of no worth, because he is of no power; but interest in a prince all men seek, therefore it is said, Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord. Joseph Symonds.

Verse 12. Lest it should be thought that men obtain so great a good by their own efforts and industry, David teaches us expressly that it proceeds from the fountain of God's gracious electing love that we are accounted the people of God. John Calvin.

Verse 12. I have sometimes compared the great men of the world, and the good men of the world to the consonants and vowels in the alphabet. The consonants are the most and the biggest letters; they take up most room, and carry the greatest bulk; but, believe it, the vowels though they are the fewest and least of all the letters, yet they are most useful; they give the greatest sound of all; there is no pronunciation without vowels. O beloved, though the great men of the world take up room, and make a show above others, yet they are but consonants, a company of mute and dumb consonants for the most part; the good men they are the vowels that are of the greatest use and most concernment at every turn: a good man to help with his prayers; a good man to advise with his counsels; a good man to interpose with his authority; this is the loss we
lament, we have lost a good man; death has blotted out a vowel; and I fear me there will be much silence where he is lacking; silence in the bed, and silence in the house, and silence in the shop, and silence in the church, and silence in the parish, for he was everywhere a vowel, a good man in every respect. John Kitchin, M.A., in a Funeral Sermon, 1660.

Verse 15. He fashioneth their hearts alike. As an illustration of the passage as it stands in our version, we append the following:—"Every circumstance concurs in proving that mankind are not composed of species essentially different from each other; that, on the contrary, there was originally but one species, which, after multiplying and spreading over the whole surface of the earth, has undergone various changes, from the influence of climate, food, mode of living, diseases, and mixture of dissimilar individuals; that at first these changes were not so conspicuous, and produced only individual varieties; that these varieties became afterward more specific, because they were rendered more general, more strongly marked, and more permanent, by the continual action of the same causes; and that they are transmitted from generation to generation." G. L. Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1707-1788.

Verse 15. The Creator of all things fashioneth their hearts alike; the word (dxy), which signifies together at once, intimating that the hearts of all men though separated from one another by never so vast a gulf of time or place, are as exactly alike in respect of their original inclinations, as if they had been all moulded at the same time. The worship of a God and then some kind of religion, is necessary to us, we cannot shift it off. William Pinke, 1631.

Verse 15. (last clause). Two men give to the poor, one seeketh his reward in heaven, the other the praise of men. Thou in two seest one thing, God understandeth two. For he understandeth what is within, and knoweth what is within; their ends he seeth, their base intentions he seeth. He understandeth all their works. Augustine.

Verse 16. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host. At the battle of Arbela, the Persian hosts numbered between five hundred thousand and a million men, but they were utterly put to the rout by Alexander's band of fifty thousand; and the once mighty Darius was soon vanquished. Napoleon led more than half a million of men into Russia:

"Not such the numbers, nor the host so dread, 
By northern Bren, or Scythian Timour led."
But the terrible winter left the army a mere wreck, and their leader was soon a prisoner on the lone rock of St. Helena. All along the line of history this verse has been verified. The strongest battalions melt like snowflakes when God is against them. C. H. S.

**Verse 16.** A mighty man; or a giant; Goliath for instance. As the most skilful swimmers are often drowned, so here. *John Trapp.*

**Verses 16-17.**

Not the chief his serried lances,  
Not his strength secures the brave;  
All in vain the warhorse prances,  
Weak his force his lord to save.  
---*Richard Mant.*

**Verses 16-17.** The weakness and insufficiency of all human *power,* however great, as before of all human *intellect.* *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Verses 16-17.** As a passenger in a storm, that for shelter against the weather, steps out of the way, betakes him to a fair spread oak, stands under the boughs, with his back close to the body of it, and finds good relief thereby for the space of some time; till at length comes a sudden gust of wind, that tears down a main arm of it, which falling upon the poor passenger, either maims or mischieves him that resorted to it for succour. Thus falleth it out with not a few, meeting in the world with many troubles, and with manifold vexations, they step aside out of their own way, and too, too often out of God's, to get under the wing of some great one, and gain, it may be, some aid and shelter thereby for a season; but after awhile, that great one himself coming down headlong, and falling from his former height of favour, or honour, they are also called in question and to fall together with him, that might otherwise have stood long enough on their own legs, if they had not trusted to such an arm of flesh, such a broken staff that deceived them. *Thomas Gataker.*

**Verse 17.** An horse. If the strength of horses be of God, or be his gift Job 39:19, then trust not in the strength of horses: use the strength of horses, but do not trust the strength of horses. If you trust the strength which God hath given to horses, you make them your god. How often doth God forbid trusting in the strength of horses, as knowing that we are apt to trust in anything that is strong, though but a beast. *An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.* As if God had said, you think a horse can save you, but know he is a vain thing. And when the psalmist saith, "A horse is a vain
thing, "he doth not mean it of a weak horse, but of a horse of the greatest strength imaginable; such a horse is a vain thing to save a man, neither can he deliver any by his strength; and therefore the Lord, when he promised great deliverances to his people, lest they should expect it by the strength of horses, saith Ho 1:7, "I will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen; "as if he had told them, do not look after creature strength to be saved by; a horse will be a vain thing to save you, and I can save you effectually without horses, and I will. 

Joseph Caryl.

Verses 17-20. Man is sensible of his want of earthly blessings, and will never cease, with excessive care, diligence, and vexation, to hunt after them, till he come to know that God will provide for him. When one hath great friends which they are known to lean upon, we say of them, such need take no care, they know such and such will see to them. On the contrary, come to one who knows no end of toiling and caring, ask him, Why will you thus tire yourself out? He will answer, I must needs do it, I have none but myself to trust to. So Christ followeth his disciples' carefulness to this door, their unbelief, which did not let them consider our heavenly Father cared for them. No present estate, though never so great, can free the heart from distraction, because it is subject to decay and vanishing; we shall never cast the burden of care off our own shoulders, till we learn by faith to cast it upon the Lord, whose eye is over us for good. He will never renounce carnal supports who make not God the stay of his soul for outward things. He will trust in the abundance of his riches, wisdom, friends, or strength, that makes not God his strength. The heart of man, being aware of his inability to sustain himself if he be not underset, will seek out some prop, true or false, sound or rotten, to lean unto. They will go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, who look not to the Holy One of Israel, and seek not the Lord. John Ball.

Verse 18. Behold, etc. Hitherto he had given a proof of God's providence towards all men, but now he descends to a particular proof of it, by his care over his church, which he wonderfully guides, defends, and protects in all dangers and assaults; and that notice may be taken of it, he begins with, "Behold!" Adam Clarke.

Verse 18. The eye of the Lord is upon. Look upon the sun, how it casts light and heat upon the whole world in its general course, how it shineth upon the good and the bad with an equal influence; but let its beams be but concentrated in a burning glass, then it sets fire on the object only, and passeth by all others: and thus God in the creation looketh upon all his works with a general love,
erant omnia valde bona, they pleased him very well. Oh! but when he is pleased to cast the beams of his love, and cause them to shine upon his elect through Christ, then it is that their hearts burn within them, then it is that their affections are inflamed; whereas others are but as it were a little warmed, have a little shine of common graces cast upon them. Richard Holdsworth, 1651.

Verse 18. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy. This is a very encouraging character. They who cannot claim the higher distinctions of religion, may surely know that they "fear God, and hope in his mercy." Some may wonder at the combination; and suppose that the qualities are incompatible with each other. But the first Christians "walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost." They may think that the fear will injure the hope, or the hope the fear. But these are even mutually helpful; and they are, not only never so beautiful, but never so influential as when they are blended. The fear promotes hope by the evidence it affords; and by keeping us from loose and careless walking, which must always affect our peace and pleasure. And hope no less befriends this fear. For never is God seen so glorious, so worthy of all our devotedness to him as when we hope in his mercy; and even the more assured we are of his regard, the more we shall enquire, Lord, what wilt thou have ne to do? The more we shall tremble at the thought of offending and grieving him, the more we shall continue upon our knees praying, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer." It is called "a lively hope:" and Christians know, by experience, that upon all their principles and duties it has the same influence as Spring has upon the fields and the gardens. William Jay.

Verse 18. Who hope in his mercy. When thou canst not get assurance, make as much improvement of the grounds upon which thou mayest build hopes of salvation. The probable grounds thou hast, thou wouldst not part with for all the world. If thy heart is not full of joy through sense of God's love, yet thine eyes are full of tears, and thy soul full of sorrow, through the sense of thy sin: wouldst thou change thy condition with any hypocrite whatsoever, with the richest man that hath no grace? I would not have thee rest satisfied with a probability, but yet bless God for a probability of salvation. Is it nothing that one that hath deserved hell most certainly, should have a probability that he should escape it? Would not this be a little ease to the torments of the damned, if they had but a strong probability that they should be saved? but no hope makes it heavy. When thou art sick, thou enquirest of the physician, Sir, what do you think of me? Shall I live, or shall I die? If he reply it is not certain, but there is good hopes, it is probable you will live and do well; this is some

Verse 18. The weakest believer, the least of saints, hath ground to hope. The gospel is so ordered, the covenant so methodised, God hath made such ample provision, that every one may "have good hope through grace" 1Th 2:16; and all that bear this character are allowed, encouraged, nay, commanded to hope: their hoping is as mighty a pleasure to God, as it is a comfort to themselves. Samuel Doolittle's "Righteous Man's Hope in Death, "1693.

Verses 18-19. During the siege of Rochelle, which was endured with unexampled bravery for nearly fifteen months, the inhabitants were reduced by famine to the misery of being obliged to have recourse to the flesh of horses, asses, mules, dogs, cats, rats, and mice; and a single peck of corn is said to have been sold for a sum equivalent to about twenty-five pounds sterling of our money in the present day. There were numerous examples of great and liberal generosity among the inhabitants. Some dispensed their charity so secretly that their names were never discovered. Among the rest, the following example is narrated:—"The Sieur de la Goute, an honorary king's advocate, had a sister, the widow of a merchant named Prosni, who, being a very religious and benevolent woman, at the time when the famine became more severe than it had been, freely assisted the poor with her present surplus. Her sister-in-law, the wife of her brother, De la Goute, being differently inclined, reproved her for her conduct, asking her in anger, `What she would do when all should be expended?' Her reply was, `My sister, the Lord will provide for me.' The siege was continued, and the famine increased its fearful ravages; and poor widow Prosni, who had four children, found herself in a great strait—all her store of provisions being exhausted. She applied to her sister for relief, who, in the stead of comforting, reproached her for her improvidence; tauntingly adding that, as she had done mighty well to be so reduced under all her great faith and fine words, that 'the Lord will provide for her.' so in good time he might provide for her. Wounded to the heart by these words, poor widow Prosni returned to her house in sad distress; resolving nevertheless to meet death patiently. On reaching her home, her children met her with gladdened hearts and joyous faces, and told her that a man, to them an entire stranger, had knocked at the door, it being late; and, on its being opened, he threw in a sack of about two bushels of wheat; and then, without saying a word, suddenly departed. The widow Prosni, scarcely able to believe her own eyes, with an overflowing, grateful heart towards her gracious benefactor, immediately ran to her sister-in-law as quickly as her famished condition would allow; and upon seeing her, exclaimed aloud, 'My sister, the Lord HATH provided for me; 'and,
saying no more, returned home again. By means of this unexpected relief, conveyed to her so opportunely, she was enabled to support herself and family until the end of the siege, and she never knew to whom she was instrumentally indebted for this timely and merciful assistance. The Biblical Treasury, Vol. 4

Verse 20. Our soul waiteth for the Lord. There is an emphasis on the word soul which should be attended to; for although this is a common mode of speech among the Hebrews, yet it expresses earnest affection; as if believers should say, We sincerely rely upon God with our whole heart, accounting him our shield and help. John Calvin.

Verse 20. Our soul. Not our souls, but our soul, as if they all had only one. And what is the language of God by the prophet? "I will give them one heart and one way." And thus the two disciples going to Emmaus exclaimed, upon their discovery and surprise, "Did not our heart burn within us?" And thus in the beginning of the gospel it was said, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul." We have seen several drops of water on the table, by being brought to touch, running into one. If Christians were better acquainted with each other, they would easily unite. William Jay.

Verse 20. He is our help. Antigonus, king of Syria, being ready to give battle near the Isle of Andreos, sent out a squadron to watch the motions of his enemies, and to descry their strength: return was made that they had more ships, and better manned than he was. "How?" says Antigonus, "that cannot be; quam multis meipsum opponis (for how many dost thou reckon me?)" intimating that the dignity of a general weighed down many others, especially when poised with valour and experience. And where is valour, where is experience to be found, if not in God? He is the Lord of hosts; with him alone is strength and power to deliver Israel our of all her troubles. He may do it, he can do it, he will do it; he is wise in heart and mighty in strength; besides him there is no Saviour, no deliverer; he is a shield to the righteous, strength to the weak, a refuge to the oppressed. He is instar omnium (all in all), and who is like unto him in all the world? John Spencer.

Verse 20. There is an excellent story of a young man, that was at sea in a mighty raging tempest; and when all the passengers were at their wits' end for fear, he only was merry; and when he was asked the reason of his mirth, he answered, "That the pilot of the ship was his father, and he knew his father would have a care of him." The great and wise God, who is our Father, hath from all eternity decreed what shall be the issue of all wars, what the event of all troubles; he is our pilot, he sits at the stern; and though the ship of the church or state be in a sinking condition, yet be of good comfort, our Pilot will
have a care of us. There is nothing done in the lower house of Parliament on
earth, but what is first decreed in the higher house in heaven. All the lesser
wheels are ordered and overruled by the upper. Are not five sparrows, saith
Christ, sold for a farthing? One sparrow is not worth half a farthing. And there's
no man shall have half a farthing's worth of harm more than God hath decreed
from all eternity. *Edmund Calamy.*

**Verse 22.** *According as we hope in thee;* not according to any merits of theirs,
but according to the measure of grace, of the grace of hope which God had
bestowed on them, and encouraged them to exercise on him, in expectation of
finding grace and mercy with him. *John Gill.*

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

**Whole Psalm.** This Psalm is *eucharistic:* the contents are:


2. The *arguments* to enforce the duty Ps 33:4-19.

3. The *confidence* of God's people in his name, their happiness, and petition Ps
   33:20-22.

   —Adam Clarke.

**Verse 1.** Rejoicing—the soul of praise; the Lord—a wellspring of joy.
Character—indispensable to true enjoyment.

**Verse 1. (last clause).** *Praise comely.* *What?* Vocal, meditative, habitual praise.
*Why?* It is comely as wings to an angel, we mount with it; as flowers to a tree,
it is our fruit; as a robe to a priest, it is our office; as long hair to a woman, it is
our beauty; as a crown to a king, it is our highest honour. *When?* Evermore, but
chiefly amid blasphemy, persecution, sickness, poverty, death. *Whom?* Not
from the ungodly, hypocritical, or thoughtless. To be without praise is to miss
our comeliest adomment.

**Verse 2.** Instrumental music. Is it lawful? Is it expedient? If so, its uses, limits,
and laws. A sermon to improve congregational music.
Verse 3. (first clause). The duty of maintaining the freshness of our devotions. Freshness, skill, and heartiness, to be combined in our congregational psalmody.

Verse 4. God's word and works, their rightness, and agreement, and our view of both.

Verse 4. (first clause). The word doctrinal, preceptive, historical, prophetic, promissory, and experimental, always right, i.e., free from error or evil.

Verse 4. (second clause). God's work of creation, providence, and grace, always in conformity with truth. His hatred of everything like a sham.

Verses 4-5. A fourfold argument for praise, from the truth, the faithfulness the justice, and goodness of God:

1. For the word of the Lord is right.
2. All his works are done in truth.
3. He loveth righteousness and judgment.
4. The earth is full of his goodness.
—Adam Clarke.

Verse 5. Justice and goodness equally conspicuous in the divine action.

Verse 5. (last clause). A matchless theme for an observant eye and an eloquent tongue.

Verse 6. The power of the Word and the Spirit in the old and new creations.

Verse 7. God's control of destructive and reconstructive agencies.


Verse 8. Reasons for universal worship, obstacles to it, future prospects of it, our duty in relation to it.

Verse 8. (last clause). Awe—the soul of worship.

Verse 9. The irresistible word of Jehovah in creation, in calling his people, in their comfort and deliverance, in their entrance to glory.

Verse 10. Educated and philosophical heathen within the reach of missions.
Verses 10-11. The opposing counsels.

Verse 11. The eternity, immutability, efficiency, and wisdom of the divine decrees. God's purposes, "the thoughts of his heart," hence their wisdom, and yet more their love.

Verse 12. Two elections made by a blessed people and a gracious God, and their happy result. The happiness of the church of God. God's delight in his people, and their delight in him.


Verse 15. God's acquaintance with men hearts, and his estimate of their actions. The similarity of human nature.

Verses 16-18. The fallacy of human trust, and the security of faith in God.


Verse 18.

1. The eyes of God's knowledge are upon them.
2. The eyes of his affection are upon them.
3. The eyes of his providence are upon them.
   —William Jay.

Verse 19. Life in famine, natural and spiritual, especially a famine of inward hope and legal satisfaction.

Verse 20. Waiting for the Lord, includes:

1. Conviction—a persuasion that the Lord is the supreme good.
2. Desire—it is expressed by hungering and thirsting after righteousness.
3. Hope.
4. Patience—God is never slack concerning his promise.
   —William Jay.

Verse 20. (first clause). The believer's hourly position.

Verse 21. Joy, the outflow of faith.
Verse 22. A prayer for believers only.

Verse 22. Measure for measure, or mercy proportioned to faith.
Exposition

Verse 1. I will bless the Lord at all times. He is resolved and fixed, I will; he is personally and for himself determined, let others so as they may; he is intelligent in head and inflamed in heart—he knows to whom the praise is due, and what is due, and for what and when. To Jehovah, and not to second causes our gratitude is to be rendered. The Lord hath by right a monopoly in his creatures praise. Even when a mercy may remind us of our sin with regard to it, as in this case David's deliverance from the Philistine monarch was sure to do, we are not to rob God of his meed of honour because our conscience justly awards a censure to our share in the transaction. Though the hook was rusty, yet God sent the fish, and we thank him for it. At all times, in every situation, under every circumstance, before, in and after trials, in bright days of glee, and dark nights of fear. He would never have done praising, because never satisfied that he had done enough; always feeling that he fell short of the Lord's deservings. Happy is he whose fingers are wedded to his harp. He who praises
Psalm 34

Verse 1. God for mercies shall never want a mercy for which to praise. To bless the Lord is never unseasonable. His praise shall continually be in my mouth, not in my heart merely, but in my mouth too. Our thankfulness is not to be a dumb thing; it should be one of the daughters of music. Our tongue is our glory, and it ought to reveal the glory of God. What a blessed mouthful is God's praise! How sweet, how purifying, how perfuming! If men's mouths were always thus filled, there would be no repining against God, or slander of neighbours. If we continually rolled this dainty morsel under our tongue, the bitterness of daily affliction would be swallowed up in joy. God deserves blessing with the heart, and extolling with the mouth—good thoughts in the closet, and good words in the world.

Verse 2. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord. Boasting is a very natural propensity, and if it were used as in this case, the more it were indulged the better. The exultation of this verse is no mere tongue bragging, "the soul" is in it, the boasting is meant and felt before it is expressed. What scope there is for holy boasting in Jehovah! His person, attributes, covenant, promises, works, and a thousand things besides, are all incomparable, unparalleled, matchless; we may cry them up as we please, but we shall never be convicted of vain and empty speech in so doing. Truly he who writes these words of comment has nothing of his own to boast of, but much to lament over, and yet none shall stop him of his boast in God so long as he lives. The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. They are usually grieved to hear boastings; they turn aside from vauntings and lofty speeches, but boasting in the Lord is quite another matter; by this the most lowly are consoled and encouraged. The confident expressions of tried believers are a rich solace to their brethren of less experience. We ought to talk of the Lord's goodness on purpose that others may be confirmed in their trust in a faithful God.

Verse 3. O magnify the Lord with me. Is this request addressed to the humble? If so it is most fitting. Who can make God great but those who feel themselves to be little? He bids them help him to make the Lord's fame greater among the sons of men. Jehovah is infinite, and therefore cannot really be made greater, but his name grows in manifested glory as he is made known to his creatures, and thus he is said to be magnified. It is well when the soul feels its own inability adequately to glorify the Lord, and therefore stirs up others to the gracious work; this is good both for the man himself and for his companions. No praise can excel that which lays us prostrate under a sense of our own nothingness, while divine grace like some topless Alp rises before our eyes and sinks us lower and lower in holy awe. Let us exalt his name together. Social, congregated worship is the outgrowth of one of the natural instincts of the new
life. In heaven it is enjoyed to the full, and earth is like heaven where it abounds.

Verse 4. I sought the Lord, and he heard me. It must have been in a very confused manner that David prayed, and there must have been much of self sufficiency in his prayer, or he would not have resorted to methods of such dubious morality as pretending to be mad and behaving as a lunatic; yet his poor limping prayer had an acceptance and brought him succour: the more reason for then celebrating the abounding mercy of the Lord. We may seek God even when we have sinned. If sin could blockade the mercyseat it would be all over with us, but the mercy is that there are gifts even for the rebellious, and an advocate for men who sin. And delivered me from all my fears. God makes a perfect work of it. He clears away both our fears and their causes, all of them without exception. Glory be to his name, prayer sweeps the field, slays all the enemies and even buries their bones. Note the egoism of this verse and of those preceding it; we need not blush to speak of ourselves when in so doing we honestly aim at glorifying God, and not at exalting ourselves. Some are foolishly squeamish upon this point, but they should remember that when modesty robs God it is most immodest.

Verse 5. They looked unto him, and were lightened. The psalmist avows that his case was not at all peculiar, it was matched in the lives of all the faithful; they too, each one of them on looking to their Lord were brightened up, their faces began to shine, their spirits were uplifted. What a means of blessing one look at the Lord may be! There is life, light, liberty, love, everything in fact, in a look at the crucified One. Never did a sore heart look in vain to the good Physician; never a dying soul turned its darkening eye to the brazen serpent to find its virtue gone. And their faces were not ashamed. Their faces were covered with joy but not with blushes. He who trusts in God has no need to be ashamed of his confidence, time and eternity will both justify his reliance.

Verse 6. This poor man cried. Here he returns to his own case. He was poor indeed, and so utterly friendless that his life was in great jeopardy; but he cried in his heart to the protector of his people and found relief. His prayer was a cry, for brevity and bitterness, for earnestness and simplicity, for artlessness and grief; it was a poor man's cry, but it was none the less powerful with heaven, for the Lord heard him, and to be heard of God is to be delivered; and so it is added that the Lord saved him out of all his troubles. At once and altogether David was clean rid of all his woes. The Lord sweeps our griefs away as men destroy a hive of hornets, or as the winds clear away the mists. Prayer can clear us of troubles as easily as the Lord made riddance of the frogs and flies of Egypt when Moses entreated him. This verse is the psalmist's own personal
testimony: he being dead yet speaketh. Let the afflicted reader take heart and be of good courage.

**Verse 7.** The angel of the Lord. The covenant angel, the Lord Jesus, at the head of all the bands of heaven, surrounds with his army the dwellings of the saints. Like hosts entrenched so are the ministering spirits encamped around the Lord's chosen, to serve and succour, to defend and console them. Encampeth round about them that fear him. On every side the watch is kept by warriors of sleepless eyes, and the Captain of the host is one whose prowess none can resist. And delivereth them. We little know how many providential deliverances we owe to those unseen hands which are charged to bear us up lest we dash our foot against a stone.

**Verse 8.** O taste and see. Make a trial, an inward, experimental trial of the goodness of God. You cannot see except by tasting for yourself; but if you taste you shall see, for this, like Jonathan's honey, enlightens the eyes. That the Lord is good. You can only know this really and personally by experience. There is the banquet with its oxen and fatlings; its fat things full of marrow, and wine on the lees well refined; but their sweetness will be all unknown to you except you make the blessings of grace your own, by a living, inward, vital participation in them. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. Faith is the soul's taste; they who test the Lord by their confidence always find him good, and they become themselves blessed. The second clause of the verse, is the argument in support of the exhortation contained in the first sentence.

**Verse 9.** O fear the Lord, ye his saints. Pay to him humble childlike reverence, walk in his laws, have respect to his will, tremble to offend him, hasten to serve him. Fear not the wrath of men, neither be tempted to sin through the virulence of their threats; fear God and fear nothing else. For there is no want to them that fear him. Jehovah will not allow his faithful servants to starve. He may not give luxuries, but the promise binds him to supply necessaries, and he will not run back from his word. Many whims and wishes may remain unfulfilled, but real wants the Lord will supply. The fear of the Lord or true piety is not only the duty of those who avow themselves to be saints, that is, persons set apart and consecrated for holy duties, but it is also their path of safety and comfort. Godliness hath the promise of the life which now is. If we were to die like dogs, and there were no hereafter, yet were it well for our own happiness' sake to fear the Lord. Men seek a patron and hope to prosper; he prospers surely who hath the Lord of Hosts to be his friend and defender.

**Verse 10.** The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger. They are fierce, cunning, strong, in all the vigour of youth, and yet they sometimes howl in their
ravenous hunger, and even so crafty, designing, and oppressing men, with all their sagacity and unscrupulousness, often come to want; yet simple minded believers, who dare not act as the greedy lions of earth, are fed with food convenient for them. To trust God is better policy than the craftiest politicians can teach or practice. But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. No really good thing shall be denied to those whose first and main end in life is to seek the Lord. Men may call them fools, but the Lord will prove them wise. They shall win where the world's wiseacres lose their all, and God shall have the glory of it.

Verse 11. Come, ye children. Though a warrior and a king, the psalmist was not ashamed to teach children. Teachers of youth belong to the true peerage; their work is honourable, and their reward shall be glorious. Perhaps the boys and girls of Gath had made sport of David in his seeming madness, and if so, he here aims by teaching the rising race to undo the mischief which he had done aforetime. Children are the most hopeful persons to teach—wise men who wish to propagate their principles take care to win the ear of the young. Hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. So far as they can be taught by word of mouth, or learned by the hearing of the ear, we are to communicate the faith and fear of God, inculcating upon the rising generation the principles and practices of piety. This verse may be the address of every Sabbath school teacher to his class, of every parent to his children. It is not without instruction in the art of teaching. We should be winning and attractive to the youngsters, bidding them "come," and not repelling them with harsh terms. We must get them away, apart from toys and sports, and try to occupy their minds with better pursuits; for we cannot well teach them while their minds are full of other things. We must drive at the main point always, and keep the fear of the Lord ever uppermost in our teachings, and in so doing we may discreetly cast our own personality into the scale by narrating our own experiences and convictions.

Verse 12. Life spent in happiness is the desire of all, and he who can give the young a receipt for leading a happy life deserves to be popular among them. Mere existence is not life; the art of living, truly, really, and joyfully living, it is not given to all men to know. To teach men how to live and how to die, is the aim of all useful religious instruction. The rewards of virtue are the baits with which the young are to be drawn to morality. While we teach piety to God we should also dwell much upon morality towards man.

Verse 13. Keep thy tongue from evil. Guard with careful diligence that dangerous member, the tongue, lest it utter evil, for that evil will recoil upon thee, and mar the enjoyment of thy life. Men cannot spit forth poison without
feeling some of the venom burning their own flesh. *And thy lips from speaking guile.* Deceit must be very earnestly avoided by the man who desires happiness. A crafty schemer lives like a spy in the enemy's camp, in constant fear of exposure and execution. Clean and honest conversation, by keeping the conscience at ease, promotes happiness, but lying and wicked talk stuffs our pillow with thorns, and makes life a constant whirl of fear and shame. David had tried the tortuous policy, but he here denounces it, and begs others as they would live long and well to avoid with care the doubtful devices of guile.

**Verse 14.** *Depart from evil.* Go away from it. Not merely take your hands off, but yourself off. Live not near the pest house. Avoid the lion's lair, leave the viper's nest. Set a distance between yourself and temptation. *And do good.* Be practical, active, energetic, persevering in good. Positive virtue promotes negative virtue; he who does good is sure to avoid evil. *Seek peace.* Not merely prefer it, but with zeal and care endeavour to promote it. Peace with God, with thine own heart, with thy fellow man, search after this as the merchantman after a precious pearl. Nothing can more effectually promote our own happiness than peace; strife awakens passions which eat into the heart with corroding power. Anger is murder to one's own self, as well as to its objects. *And pursue it.* Hunt after it, chase it with eager desire. It may soon be lost, indeed, nothing is harder to retain, but do your best, and if enmity should arise let it be no fault of yours. Follow after peace when it shuns you; be resolved not to be of a contentious spirit. The peace which you thus promote will be returned into your own bosom, and be a perennial spring of comfort to you.

**Verse 15.** *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.* He observes them with approval and tender consideration; they are so dear to him that he cannot take his eyes off them; he watches each one of them as carefully and intently as if there were only that one creature in the universe. *His ears are open unto their cry.* His eyes and ears are thus both turned by the Lord towards his saints; his whole mind is occupied about them: if slighted by all others they are not neglected by him. Their cry he hears at once, even as a mother is sure to hear her sick babe; the cry may be broken, plaintive, unhappy, feeble, unbelieving, yet the Father's quick ear catches each note of lament or appeal, and he is not slow to answer his children's voice.

**Verse 16.** *The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.* God is not indifferent to the deeds of sinners, but he sets his face against them, as we say, being determined that they shall have no countenance and support, but shall be thwarted and defeated. He is determinately resolved that the ungodly shall not prosper; he sets himself with all his might to overthrow them. *To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* He will stamp out their fires, their honour
shall be turned into shame, their names forgotten or accursed. Utter destruction shall be the lot of all the ungodly.

Verse 17. *The righteous cry.* Like Israel in Egypt, they cry out under the heavy yoke of oppression, both of sin, temptation, care, and grief. *And the Lord heareth;* he is like the night watchman, who no sooner hears the alarm bell than he flies to relieve those who need him. *And delivereth them out of all their troubles.* No net of trouble can so hold us that the Lord cannot free us. Our afflictions may be numerous and complicated, but prayer can set us free from them all, for the Lord will show himself strong on our behalf.

Verse 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart.* Near in friendship to accept and console. Broken hearts think God far away, when he is really most near them; their eyes are holden so that they see not their best friend. Indeed, he is with them, and in them, but they know it not. They run hither and thither, seeking peace in their own works, or in experiences, or in proposals and resolutions, whereas the Lord is nigh them, and the simple act of faith will reveal him. *And saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* What a blessed token for good is a repentant, mourning heart! Just when the sinner condemns himself, the Lord graciously absolves him. If we chasten our own spirits the Lord will spare us. He never breaks with the rod of judgment those who are already sore with the rod of conviction. Salvation is linked with contrition.

Verse 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous.* Thus are they made like Jesus their covenant Head. Scripture does not flatter us like the story books with the idea that goodness will secure us from trouble; on the contrary, we are again and again warned to expect tribulation while we are in this body. Our afflictions come from all points of the compass, and are as many and as tormenting as the mosquitoes of the tropics. It is the earthly portion of the elect to find thorns and briars growing in their pathway, yea, to lie down among them, finding their rest broken and disturbed by sorrow. BUT, blessed but, how it takes the sting out of the previous sentence! *But the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* Through troops of ills Jehovah shall lead his redeemed scatheless and triumphant. There is an end to the believer's affliction, and a joyful end too. None of his trials can hurt so much as a hair of his head, neither can the furnace hold him for a moment after the Lord bids him come forth of it. Hard would be the lot of the righteous if this promise, like a bundle of camphire, were not bound up in it, but this sweetens all. The same Lord who sends the afflictions will also recall them when his design is accomplished, but he will never allow the fiercest of them to rend and devour his beloved.
Verse 20. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. David had come off with kicks and cuffs, but no broken bones. No substantial injury occurs to the saints. Eternity will heal all their wounds. Their real self is safe; they may have flesh wounds, but no part of the essential fabric of their being shall be broken. This verse may refer to frequent providential protections vouchsafed to the saints; but as good men have had broken limbs as well as others, it cannot absolutely be applied to bodily preservations; but must, it seems to me, be spiritually applied to great injuries of soul, which are for ever prevented by divine love. Not a bone of the mystical body of Christ shall be broken, even as his corporeal frame was preserved intact. Divine love watches over every believer as it did over Jesus; no fatal injury shall happen to us, we shall neither be halt or maimed in the kingdom, but shall be presented after life's trials are over without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, being preserved in Christ Jesus, and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Verse 21. Evil shall slay the wicked. Their adversaries shall be killing; they are not medicine, but poison. Ungodly men only need rope enough and they will hang themselves; their own iniquities shall be their punishment. Hell itself is but evil fully developed, torturing those in whom it dwells. Oh! happy they who have fled to Jesus to find refuge from their former sins, such, and such only will escape. And they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. They hated the best of company, and they shall have none; they shall be forsaken, despoiled, wretched, despairing. God makes the viper poison itself. What desolation of heart do the damned feel, and how richly have they deserved it!

Verse 22. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants—with price and with power, with blood and with water. All providential helps are a part of the redemption by power, hence the Lord is said still to redeem. All thus ransomed belong to him who bought them—this is the law of justice and the verdict of gratitude. Joyfully will we serve him who so graciously purchases us with his blood, and delivers us by his power. And none of them that trust in him shall be desolate. Faith is the mark of the ransomed, and wherever it is seen, though in the least and meanest of the saints, it ensures eternal salvation. Believer, thou shalt never be deserted, forsaken, given up to ruin. God, even thy God, is thy guardian and friend, and bliss is thine.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Title. Abimelech was king of Gath, the same with Achish, 1Sa 21:20: who either had two names, or this of Abimelech, as it should seem, was a common name to all the kings of the Philistines (see Ge 20:2 26:8); as Pharaoh was to
the Egyptian kings and Caesar to the Roman emperors: the name signifies a father king, or my father king, or a royal father; as kings should be the fathers of their country: before him David changed his behaviour, his taste, sense, or reason; he imitated a madman. John Gill.

Whole Psalm. (This Psalm is alphabetical.) The Alphabetical Psalms, the psalmi abcedarii, as the Latin fathers called them, are nine in number; and I cannot help thinking it is a pity that, except in the single instance of the hundred and nineteenth, no hint of their existence should have been suffered to appear in our authorised version. I will not take it upon me to affirm, with Ewald, that no version is faithful in which the acrostic is suppressed; but I do think that the existence of such a remarkable style of composition ought to be indicated in one way or another, and that some useful purposes are served by its being actually reproduced in the translation. No doubt there are difficulties in the way. The Hebrew alphabet differs widely from any of those now employed in Europe. Besides differences of a more fundamental kind, the Hebrew has only twenty-two letters, for our twenty-six; and of the twenty-two, a considerable number have no fellows in ours. An exact reproduction of a Hebrew acrostic in English version is therefore impossible. William Binnie, D.D.

Whole Psalm. Mr. Hapstone has endeavoured to imitate the alphabetical character of this Psalm in his metrical version. The letter answering to F is wanting, and the last stanza begins with the letter answering to R. One verse of his translation may suffice—

"At all times bless Jehovah's name will I; His praise shall in my mouth be constantly: Boast in Jehovah shall my soul henceforth; Hear it, ye meek ones, and exult with mirth."

Verse 1. I will bless the Lord at all times. Mr. Bradford, martyr, speaking of Queen Mary, at whose cruel mercy he then lay, said, If the queen be pleased to release me, I will thank her; if she will imprison me, I will thank her; if she will burn me, I will thank her, etc. So saith a believing soul: Let God do with me what he will, I will be thankful. Samuel Clarks's "Mirror."

Verse 1. Should the whole frame of nature be unhinged, and all outward friends and supporters prove false and deceitful, our worldly hopes and schemes be disappointed, and possessions torn from us, and the floods of sickness, poverty, and disgrace overwhelm our soul with an impetuous tide of trouble; the sincere lover of God, finding that none of these affects his portion
and the object of his panting desires, retires from them all to God his refuge and
hiding place, and there feels his Saviour incomparably better, and more than
equivalent to what the whole of the universe can ever offer, or rob him of; and
his tender mercies, unexhausted fulness, and great faithfulness, yield him
consolation and rest; and enable him, what time he is afraid, to put his trust in
him. Thus we find the holy psalmist expressing himself: *I will bless the Lord at
all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* William Dunlop.

**Verse 1.** S. Basil tells us that the praise of God, once rightly impressed as a seal
on the mind, though it may not always be carried out into action, yet in real
truth causes us perpetually to praise God. *J. M. Neal's Commentary.*

**Verse 2.** *My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.* Not like the boasting of the
Pharisee, so hateful in the eyes of God, so offensive in the ears of the humble;
for *the humble can hear this boasting and be glad,* which they would never do
if it were not conformable to the rules of humility. Can any boasting be greater
than to say, "I can do all things"? Yet in this boasting there is humility when I
add, "In him that strengtheneth me." For though God likes not of boasting, yet
he likes of this boasting, which arrogates nothing to ourselves, but ascribes all
to him. *Sir Richard Baker.*

**Verses 2-6.** There is somewhat very striking and pleasing in the sudden
transitions, and the change of persons, that is observable in these few verses.
"*My soul shall boast; " *"The humble shall hear; "* "I sought the Lord; " *"They
looked to him; "* "This poor man cried." There is a force and elegance in the
very unconnectedness of the expressions, which, had they been more closely
tied by the proper particles, would have been in a great measure lost. Things
thus separated from each other, and yet accelerated, discover, as Longinus
observes, the earnestness and the vehemency of the inward working of the
mind; and though it may seem to interrupt, or disturb the sentence, yet quickens
and enforces it. *Samuel Chandler, D.D.*

**Verse 3.** Venema remarks that after the affair with Achish, we are told in 1Sa
22:1, "His brethren, and all his father's house went down to the cave Adullam
unto him," and these, together with those who were in debt, and discontented
with Saul's government, formed a band of four hundred men. To these his
friends and comrades, he relates the story of his escape, and bids them with
united hearts and voices extol the Lord. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 4.** *I sought the Lord, and he heard me.* God expects to hear from you
before you can expect to hear from him. If you restrain prayer, it is no wonder
the mercy promised is retained. Meditation is like the lawyer's studying the
case in order to his pleading at the bar; when, therefore, thou hast viewed the promise, and affected thy heart with the riches of it, then fly thee to the throne of grace, and spread it before the Lord. William Gurnall.

Verse 4. He delivered me from all my fears. To have delivered me from all my troubles had been a great favour, but a far greater to deliver me from all my fears; for where that would but have freed me from present evil, this secures me from evil to come; that now I enjoy not only tranquillity, but security, a privilege only of the godly. The wicked may be free from trouble, but can they be free from fear? No; God knows, though they be not in trouble like other men, yet they live in more fear than other men. Guiltiness of mind, or mind of the world, never suffers them to be secure: though they be free sometimes from the fit of an ague, yet they are never without a grudging; and (if I may use the expression of poets) though they feel not always the whip of Tysipphone, yet they feel always her terrors; and, seeing the Lord hath done this for me, hath delivered me from all my fears, have I not cause, just cause, to magnify him, and exalt his name? Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 5. They looked unto him. The more we can think upon our Lord, and the less upon ourselves, the better. Looking to him, as he is seated upon the right hand of the throne of God, will keep our heads, and especially our hearts, steady when going through the deep waters of affliction. Often have I thought of this when crossing the water opposite the old place of Langholm. I found, when I looked down on the water, I got dizzy; I therefore fixed my eyes upon a steady object on the other side, and got comfortably through. David Smith, 1792-1867.

Verse 6. This poor man cried. The reasons of crying are 1. Want cannot blush. The pinching necessity of the saints is not tied to the law of modesty. Hunger cannot be ashamed. "I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise, "saith David Ps 55:2; and Hezekiah, "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove" Isa 38:14. "I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation" Job 30:28. 2. Though God hear prayer only as prayer offered in Christ, not because very fervent; yet fervour is a heavenly ingredient in prayer. An arrow drawn with full strength hath a speedier issue; therefore, the prayers of the saints are expressed by crying in Scripture. "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not" Ps 22:2. "At noon, will I pray, and cry aloud" Ps 55:17. "In my distress I cried to the Lord" Ps 18:6. "Unto thee have I cried, O Lord" Ps 88:13. "Out of the depths have I cried" Ps 130:1. "Out of the belly of hell cried I" Jon 2:2. "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock" Ps 28:1. Yea, it goeth to somewhat more than crying: "I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard" Job 19:7. "Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer" La 3:8.
He who may teach us all to pray, sweet Jesus, "In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" Heb 5:7; he prayed with war shouts. 3. And these prayers are so prevalent, that God answereth them: *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his fears* Ps 34:6. "My cry came before him, even into his ears" Ps 18:6. The cry addeth wings to the prayer, as a speedy post sent to court upon life and death: "Our fathers cried unto thee, and were delivered" Ps 22:5. *"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth"* Ps 34:17. Samuel Rutherford.

**Verse 7. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.** I will not rub the questions, whether these angels can contract themselves, and whether they can subsist in a point, and so stand together the better in so great a number, neither will I trouble myself to examine whether they are in such and such a place in their substance, or only in their virtue and operation. But this the godly man may assure himself of, that whencesoever he shall want their help, in spite of doors, and locks, and bars, he may have it in a moment's warning. For there is no impediment, either for want of power because they are spirits, or from want of good will, both because it is their duty, and because they bear an affection to him; not only rejoicing at his first conversion Lu 15:10, but, I dare confidently affirm, always disposed with abundance of cheerfulness to do anything for him. I cannot let pass some words I remember of Origen's to this purpose, as I have them from his interpreter. He brings in the angels speaking after this manner:—"If he (meaning the Son of God) went down, and went down into a body, and was clothed with flesh, and endured its infirmities and died for men, what do we stand still for? Come, let's all down from heaven together." Zachary Bogan.

**Verse 7. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.** This is the first time that, in the psalter, we read of the ministrations of angels. But many fathers rather take this passage of the "Angel of the Great Counsel," and gloriously to him it applies. J. M. Neale.

**Verse 7. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, etc.** By whom may be meant, either the uncreated Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of God's presence, or of the covenant, the Captain of salvation, the Leader and Commander of the people; and whose salvation is as walls and bulwarks about them, or as an army surrounding them; or a created angel may be intended, even a single one, which is sufficient to guard a multitude of saints, since one could destroy at once such a vast number of enemies, as in 2Ki 19:35; or one may be put for more, since they are an innumerable company that are on the side of the Lord's people, and to whom they are joined; and these may be said to encamp about them, because they are an host or army (see Ge
32:1-2 Lu 2:13); and are the guardians of the saints, that stand up for them and protect them, as well as minister to them. *John Gill.*

**Verse 7.** The *angel of the Lord* is represented in his twofold character in this pair of Psalms, as an angel of mercy, and also as an angel of judgment, Ps 35:6. This pair of Psalms (the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth), may in this respect be compared with the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where the angel of the Lord is displayed as encamping about St. Peter, and delivering him, and also as smiting the persecutor, Herod Agrippa. *Christopher Wordsworth, D.D.*

**Verse 7.** *Round about.* In illustration of this it may be observed, that according to D'Arvieux, it is the practice of the Arabs to pitch their tents in a circular form; the prince being in the middle, and the Arabs about him, but so as to leave a respectful distance between them. And Thevenot, describing a Turkish encampment near Cairo, having particularly noticed the spaciousness, decorations, and conveniences of the Bashaw's tent, or pavilion, adds, "Round the pale of his tent, within a pistol shot, were above two hundred tents, pitched in such a manner that the doors of them all looked towards the Bashaw's tent; and it ever is so, that they may have their eye always upon their master's lodging, and be in readiness to assist him if he be attacked." *Richard Mant.*

**Verse 8.** *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* Our senses help our understandings; we cannot by the most rational discourse perceive what the sweetness of honey is; *taste* it and you shall perceive it. "His fruit was sweet to my *taste.*" Dwell in the light of the Lord, and let thy soul be always ravished with his love. Get out the marrow and the fatness that thy portion yields thee. Let fools learn by beholding thy face how dim their blazes are to the brightness of thy day. *Richard Alleine, in "Heaven Opened," 1665.*

**Verse 8.** *O taste and see,* etc. It is not enough for thee to see it afar off, and not have it, as Dives did; or to have it in thee, and not to taste it, as Samson's lion had great store of honey in him, but tasted no sweetness of it; but thou must as well have it as see it, and as well taste it as have it. *O taste and see,* says he, "how sweet the Lord is;" "for so indeed Christ giveth his church not only a *sight* but also *a taste* of his sweetness. A *sight* is where he saith thus: "We will rise up early, and go into the vineyard, and see whether the vine have budded forth the small grapes, and whether the pomegranates flourish; "there is a *sight* of the vine. A *taste* is where he says thus, "I will bring thee into the wine cellar, and cause thee to drink spice wine, and new wine of the pomegranates; "there is a *taste* of the wine. The church not only goes into the vineyard and *sees* the wine, but also goes into the wine cellar, and *tastes* the wine. *Thomas Playfere.***
Verse 8. *Taste and see.* There are some things, especially in the depths of the religious life, which can only be understood by being experienced, and which even then are incapable of being adequately embodied in words. *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* The enjoyment must come before the illumination; or rather the enjoyment is the illumination. There are things that must be loved before we can know them to be worthy of our love; things to be believed before we can understand them to be worthy of belief. And even after this—after we are conscious of a distinct apprehension of some spiritual truth, we can only, perhaps, answer, if required to explain it, in the words of the philosopher to who the question was put, "What is God?" "I know, if I am not asked." Thomas Binney's "Sermons," 1869.

Verse 8. *Taste and see.* Be unwilling that all the good gifts of God should be swallowed without taste, or maliciously forgotten, but use your palate, know them, and consider them. D. H. Mollerus.

Verse 8. Heaven and earth are replete with the goodness of God. We omit to open our mouths and eyes, on which account the psalmist desires us to *taste and see.* Agustus F. Tholuck.

Verse 8. The *taste and see* invite, as it were, to a sumptuous feast, which has long been ready; to a rich sight openly exposed to view. The imperatives are in reality not oratory but persuasive. E. W. Hengstenberg.

Verse 8. All that the believer can attain of spiritual consolation in this life is but a taste. David Dickson.

Verse 8.

O taste the Lord, and see how sweet He is,  
The man that trusts in him lives still in bliss.  
—Sir John Davies, 1569-1626.

Verses 8-10. All these verses are beautiful representations of the fulness, suitableness, completeness, and all sufficiency of God in Christ to answer all the wants of his people. And is there not a vast elegance in the comparison taken from the hunger and rapacity of the lion, even the impetuousness of the young lion, to that of the patience and silent waiting of the faithful believer? A life of faith will find food in everything, because it is all founded in Christ. The young lions may, and will lack, because nothing will supply their voracious appetites but that which is carnal. Robert Hawker.
Verse 10. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger. The old lions will have it for them, if it be to be had. But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. As they would feel no evil thing within, so they shall want no good thing without. He that freely opens the upper, will never wholly close the nether springs. There shall be no silver lacking in Benjamin's sack, while Joseph has it to throw in. Grace is not such a beggarly visitant, as will not pay its own way. When the best of beings is adored, the best of blessings are enjoyed. William Secker.

Verse 10. People are apt to fancy that a wild beast's life must be happy—in a brute's sense—and that the carnivorous and graminivorous creatures which have never come under the dominion of mankind are better off than the domesticated quadrupeds which buy their quieter and safer lives at the price of ministering to the luxuries or necessities of their human lords. But the contrary is the case: the career of a flesh eating animal must be wretched, even from the tiger's or leopard's point of view. They must often suffer pangs of long continued hunger, and when they find and kill food they frequently have to wage desperate war for the enjoyment of their victim. The cry of almost every wild beast is so melancholy and forlorn, that it impresses the traveller with sadness more even than with fear. If the opportunity occurs for watching them in the chase, they are seen to sneak and sniff about, far less like "kings of the forest," than poor, dejected, starving wretches, desperate upon the subject of their next meal. They suffer horribly from diseases induced by foul diet and long abstinence; and very few are found without scars in their hide—the tokens of terrible combats. If they live to old age their lot is piteous: their teeth are worn down, their claws are blunt, and in this state numbers of them perish by starvation. Not one half of the wild animals die a natural death; and their life, so far as can be observed, is a series of stern privations, with desperate and bloody fights among themselves. Clipping from "Daily Telegraph."

Verse 10. They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. There shall be no want to such, and such shall want no good thing: so that he must be such an one to whom the promise is made; and he must also be sure that it is good for him which is promised. But oftentimes it is not good for a man to abound with earthly blessings; as strong drink is not good for weak brains. Yea, if anything be wanting to a good man, he may be sure it is not good for him; and then better that he doth want it, than that he did enjoy it; and what wise man will complain of the want of that, which if he had, would prove more gainful than hurtful to him? As a sword to a madman, a knife to a child, drink to them that have a fever or the dropsy. "No good thing will God withhold," etc., and therefore, not wants themselves, which to many are also good, yea, very good
things, as I could reckon up many. Want sanctified is a notable means to bring to repentance, to work in us amendment of life, it stirs up prayer, it weans from the love of the world, it keeps us always prepared for the spiritual combat, discovers whether we be true believers or hypocrites, prevents greater evils of sin and punishment to come; it makes us humble, conformed to Christ our Head, increaseth our faith, our joy, and thankfulness, our spiritual wisdom, and likewise our patience, as I have largely shown in another treatise. Richard Young, in the "Poor's Advocate," 1653.

Verse 10. I remember as I came through the country, that there was a poor widow woman, whose husband fell at Bothwell: the bloody soldiers came to plunder her house, telling her they would take all she had. "We will leave thee nothing," said they, "either to put in thee, or on thee." "I care not," said she, "I will not want as long as God is in the heavens." That was a believer indeed. Alexander Peden's Sermon, 1682.

Verse 10. Take a survey of heaven and earth and all things therein, and whatsoever upon sure ground appears good, ask it confidently of Christ; his love will not deny it. If it were good for you that there were no sin, no devil, no affliction, no destruction, the love of Christ would instantly abolish these. Nay, if the possession of all the kingdoms of the world were absolutely good for any saint, the love of Christ would instantly crown him monarch of them. David Clarkson.

Verse 10. (last clause). Part of his last afternoon was spent by Columba, in transcribing the Psalms of David. Having come to that passage in the thirty-fourth Psalm, where it is said, They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing, he said, "I have come to the end of a page, and I will stop here, for the following Ps 34:11, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord," will better suit my successor to transcribe than me. I will leave it, therefore, to Baithen." As usual the bell was rung at midnight for prayers. Columba was the first to hasten to church. On entering it soon after, Dermid found him on his knees in prayer, but evidently dying. Raising him up in his arms, he supported his head on his bosom. The brethren now entered. When they saw Columba in this dying condition they wept aloud. Columba heard them. He opened his eyes and attempted to speak, but his voice failed. He lifted up his hands as if to bless them, immediately after which he breathed out his spirit. His countenance retained in death the expression it wore in life, so that it seemed as if he had only fallen asleep. "Story of Columba and his successors, "in the Christian Treasury for 1848."
Verse 11. *Come, ye children.* Venema in substance remarks that David in addressing his friends in the cave, called them his sons or children, because he was about to be their teacher, and they his disciples; and again, because they were young men in the flower of their age, and as sons, would be the builders up of his house; and still more, because as their leader to whose discipline and command they were subject, he had a right to address them as his children. C. H. S.

Verse 11. *Come, ye children,* etc. You know your earthly parents, aye, but labour to know your heavenly. You know the fathers of your flesh, aye, but strive to know the Father of your spirits. You are expert it may be in Horace's Odes, Virgil's Eclogues, Cicero's Orations; oh! but strive to get understanding in David's Psalms, Solomon's Proverbs, and the other plain books of Holy Writ. Manna was to be gathered in the morning. The orient pearl is generated of the morning dew; *aurora musis amica,* the morning is a friend to the muses. O "remember thy Creator," "know him in the morning of thy childhood. When God had created the heavens and the earth, the first thing he did was to adorn the world with light, and separate it from the darkness. Happy is that child on whom the light of saving knowledge begins to dawn early. God, in the law, required the firstborn, and the first fruits, so he doth still our first days, to be offered to him. They are wisdom's words, "They that seek me early shall find me." Pr 8:17. Where a rabbin observeth a (n is added to the verb more than usual, which in numbering goeth for fifty. With this note, that early seeking hath not only twenty, or thirty, but fifty, nay, indeed, an hundred fold recompense attending on it. *Nathaneal Hardy.*

Verse 11. *Come, ye children.* David in this latter part of the Psalm undertakes to teach children; though a man of war and anointed to be king, he did not think it below him: though now he had his head so full of cares, and his hands of business, yet he could find heart and time to give good counsel to young people from his own experience. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 11. Observe. I. What he expects from them, *Hearken unto me,* leave your play, lay by your toys, and hear what I have to say to you; not only give me the hearing, but observe and obey me. II. What he undertakes to teach them, *The fear of the Lord,* inclusive of all the duties of religion. David was a famous musician, a statesman, a soldier, but he doth not say to his children, I will teach you to play upon the harp, or to handle the sword or spear, or draw the bow, or I will teach you the maxims of state policy, but I will teach you the *fear of the Lord,* which is better than all arts and sciences, better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. That is it which we should be solicitous both to learn ourselves, and to teach our children. *Matthew Henry.*
Verse 11. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. I shall introduce the translation and paraphrase from my old Psalter; and the rather because I believe there is a reference to that very improper and unholy method of teaching youth the system of heathen mythology before they are taught one sound lesson of true divinity, till at last their minds are imbued with heathenism and the vicious conduct of gods, goddesses, and heroes (here very properly called tyrants), becomes the model of their own; and they are as heathenish without as they are heathenish within. Translation. Cummes sones lere me: dreed of Lard I sal you lere. Paraphrase. "Cummes, with trauth and luf: sones, qwam I gette in haly lere: beres me. With eres of hert. I sal lere you, noght the fabyls of poets; na the storys of tryauntz; bot the dreed of oure Larde, that wyl bring you til the felaghschippe of aungels; and thar in is lyfe." I need not paraphrase this paraphrase, as it is plain enough. Adam Clarke.

Verse 11. The fear of the Lord. The Master of Sentences dwells, from this verse, on the four kinds of fear: mundane, servile, initial, filial. Mundane, when we fear to commit sin, simply lest we should lose some worldly advantage or incur some worldly inconvenience. Servile, when we fear to commit sin simply because of hell torments due to it. Initial, when we fear to commit it, lest we should lose the happiness of heaven. Filial, when we fear, only, and entirely because we dread to offend that God whom we love with all our hearts. I will teach. Whence notice, that this fear is not a thing to be learnt all at once; it needs careful study and a good master. S. Chrysostom compares the Psalmist's school here with the resort of heathen students to the academy; and S. Ephraem, referring to this passage, calls the fear of God itself the school of the mind. As if he proclaimed, "says S. Lawrence Justiniani, "I will teach you, not the courses of the stars, not the nature of things, not the secrets of the heavens, but the fear of the Lord." The knowledge of such matters, without fear, puffs up; but the fear of the Lord, without any such knowledge, can save." "Here, "says Cassiodorus, "is not fear to be feared, but to be loved. Human fear is full of bitterness; divine fear of sweetness: the one drives to slavery, the other allures to liberty; the one dreads the prison of Gehenna, the other opens the kingdom of heaven." J. M. Neale.

Verse 11. The fear of the Lord. Let this, therefore, good children, be your principal care and study: for what shall it avail you to be cunning in Tully, Virgil, Homer, and other profane writers, if you be unskilful in God's book? to have learned Greek and Latin, if you learn not withal the language of Canaan? to have your speech agreeable to the rules of Priscian, of Lily, if your lives and courses be not consonant to the rules and laws of Christianity? to have knowledge of the creatures when you are ignorant of the Creator? to have
learned that whereby you may live a while here, and neglect that whereby you may live eternally hereafter? Learn to fear God, to serve God, and then God will bless you; for "He will bless them that fear him, both small and great." Ps 115:13. Thomas Gataker's "David's Instructor," 1637.

**Verse 12.** It is no great matter to live long, or always, but to live happily. That loyal prayer, "Let the king live" (in every language) imports a prosperous state. When the psalmist saith, "Who is the man that would see life?" he explains himself presently after by "good days." *Vivere* among the Latins is sometimes as much as *valere*, to live is as much as to be well; and upon this account it is that, on the one hand, the Scripture calls the state of the damned an eternal death, because their life is only a continuance in misery; so on the other hand the state of the blessed is an eternal life, because it is a perpetual abode in felicity. Nathanael Hardy.

**Verse 12.** The benefit of life is not in the length, but in the use of it. He sometimes lives the least that lives the longest. *Seneca*.

**Verse 13.** *Keep thy tongue from evil*, etc. Ficinus, after his tracts, *De sanitate tuae*, of keeping good health; and another, of recovering health; and a third, of prolonging life; because all will not do, wisely addeth a fourth, of laying hold on eternal life; which cannot be done but by mortifying this earthly member, a loose and lewd tongue. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," saith the Judge himself. Mt 12:37. Compare Ge 49:21, with De 33:23, and it will appear that good words ingratiate with God and man. *John Trapp*.

**Verse 13.** *And thy lips from speaking guile.* Perhaps David is warning us that we speak no guile, reflects upon his own sin in changing his behaviour. They that truly repent of what they have done amiss, will warn others to take heed in doing likewise. *Matthew Henry*.

**Verse 14.** *Depart from evil*, etc. This denotes that evil is near to men; it keeps close to them, and should be declined and shunned: and it regards all sorts of evil; evil men and their evil company; evil things, evil words and works, and all appearance of evil; and the fear of the Lord shows itself in a hatred of it, and a departure from it. Pr 8:13 16:6. *John Gill*.

**Verse 14.** *Depart from evil.* The other precepts are the duty of works, and they are four, where the precepts of words were but two; because we must be more in works than in words; and they are all affirmative, for it is against the nature of a work to be in the negative; for so working should be no better than
idleness: the two former are general, as general as good and evil; that if we meet with anything that is evil, our part is to depart, for there is no demurring upon evil. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 14. Do good. Negative goodness is not sufficient to entitle us to heaven. There are some in the world whose religion runs all upon negatives; they are not drunkards, they are not swearers, and for this they do bless themselves. See how the Pharisee vapours Lu 18:11, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, "etc. Alas! the not being scandalous will no more make a Christian than a cypher will make a sum. We are bid, not only to cease from evil, but to do good. It will be a poor plea at last—Lord, I kept myself from being spotted with gross sin: I did no hurt. But what good is there in thee? It is not enough for the servant of the vineyard that he doth no hurt there, he doth not break the trees, or destroy the hedges; if he doth not work in the vineyard he loseth his pay. It is not enough for us to say at the last day, we have done no hurt, we have lived in no gross sin; but what good have we done in the vineyard? Where is the grace we have gotten? If we cannot show this, we shall lose our pay, and miss of salvation. Thomas Watson.

Verse 14. Seek peace, and pursue it. Yea, do well, and thou shalt not need to pursue it; peace will find thee without seeking. Augustine says, Fiat justitia, et habebis pacem—Live righteously, and live peaceably. Quietness shall find out righteousness wheresoever he lodgeth. But she abhorreth the house of evil. Peace will not dine where grace hath not first broken her fast. Let us embrace godliness, and "the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, shall preserve our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ." Php 4:7. Thomas Adams.

Verse 14. See peace and pursue it. The most desirable things are not the easiest to be obtained. What is more lovely to the imagination than the tranquillity of peace? But this great blessing does not voluntarily present itself: it must be sought. Even when sought it often eludes the grasp: it flies away, and must be pursued.

1. The man of a peaceable carriage must be cautious not to give offence when needless, or, when it may innocently be spared.

2. Another part of the peaceable man's character is, not to take offence; especially in small matters, which are hardly worth a wise man's notice. If any needless offence has been either given or taken, we must endeavour to put a stop to it as soon as may be. If a difference is already begun, stifle it in the birth, and suffer it not to proceed farther. Condensed from Dr. Waterland's Sermon, in J. R. Pitman's Course of Sermons on the Psalms, 1846.
Verse 15. His ears are open unto their cry. The word "open" is not in the original, but the meaning is that the ear of God is propense, and in a leaning kind of posture, towards the cries of the righteous; the word may here be taken emphatically, as many times in Scripture it is, for some worthy, choice, and excellent strain of righteousness. Those who are worthy and righteous indeed, the ear of God, I say, is propense, and leans and hangs towards them and their prayers, according to that of So 2:14, "Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice." There is a kind of naturalness and pleasantness between the ear of God and the prayers, and petitions, and cries of such a righteous man. Joh 15:7. John Goodwin.

Verse 15. His ears are open unto their cry. Hebrew, Are to their cry, or as St. Peter hath it, His ears are into their prayers 1Pe 3:12; to show that though their prayers are so faint and feeble that they cannot enter into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, yet that he will bow down and incline his ears unto, nay, into their prayers, their breathings. La 3:56. John Trapp.

Verses 15-17. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. Strangers may howl, and we take little notice what they ail—it is a venture whether we relieve them or no; but if our children cry, being in great distress, we hasten to their help. Our relation to God may well strengthen our hope that our desires shall be heard. He that can cry, Abba, Father, may be confident of the success of his suit, and that God will deal with him as a son. George Swinnock.

Verse 18. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. God is nigh unto them (with reverence be it spoken), God takes so much complacency in the company of such, that he cannot endure to have them far from him; he must have them always under his eyes; as for these broken ones, he will be sure not to leave them long, nor go far from them, but will be ready at hand to set their bones, to bind up their wounds to keep them from festering. It may be he may put them to much pain before he brings the cure to perfection, but it is to prevent future aches. He is a foolish cruel chirurgeon, who, for fear of putting his patient to some pain, never searcheth the wound, but skins it over presently; and a wise man will not think him unmerciful that puts him to exquisite pain, so he may make a thorough cure of it. Thus God doth by his patients sometimes, when the nature of their distemper calls for it. But, however, he will be sure not to be out of the way when they want him most. It is possible that they may look upon themselves as forgotten by God, they may not know their Physician when he is by them, and they may take their Friend for an enemy; they may think God far off when he is near; but when their eyes are opened and their distemper is pretty well worn off, they will, with shame and thankfulness, acknowledge
their error; nay, they do from their souls confess, that they do not deserve the least look of kindness from God, but to be counted strangers and enemies; but God will let them know that he loves to act like himself, that is, like a God of love, mercy, and goodness; and that they are the persons that he hath set his heart upon; he will have them in his bosom, never leave them nor forsake them; and though these contrite ones many times look upon themselves as lost, yet God will save them, and they shall sing a song of thankfulness amongst his delivered ones. James Janeway.

Verse 18. The Lord is nigh unto them, etc. Consider the ADVANTAGES of this broken heart; as I. A broken heart is acceptable and well-pleasing to God, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise." Ps 51:17. II. It makes up many defects in your service and duties, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." Ps 51:17. III. It makes the soul a fit receptacle for God to dwell in, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa 57:15. IV. It brings God near to men, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Ps 34:18. And V. It lays you open to Christ's sweet healing, "I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." Eze 34:16. And, oh, who would not be broken that they might find Christ's soft hand healing them, and find the proof of that sweet word, "For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord." Jer 30:17. Yea, VI. It puts you in the right road to heaven, where all your wounds and bruises will be cured; for there is a tree Re 22:2 the leaves whereof are for the healing of the nations; there is no complaining there of wounds or bruises, but all are perfectly healed. John Spalding, in "Synaxis Sacra, or a Collection of Sermons," etc., 1703.

Verse 18. "The Lord is nigh unto them, "etc. We are apt to overlook men, in proportion as they are humbled beneath us; God regards them in that proportion. Vessels of honour are made of that clay which is "broken" into the smallest parts. George Horne.

Verse 18. Broken heart...contrite spirit. Oh, this is the misery of all miseries which ministers have most cause to complain of, that men are not fitted enough for Jesus Christ, they are not lost enough in themselves for a Saviour. "In thee the fatherless findeth mercy." Ho 14:3. Were we more hopeless, helpless, and fatherless, we should find more mercy from the hand of Jesus Christ. O that God would awaken and shake some sin sleeping soul this day! O that this doctrine thus opened might be as a thunderbolt to let some of you see the inside
of yourselves! O poor sinner, thou hast an unsupportable burden of sin and guilt lying on thy soul, ready to press thee down to hell, and yet you feel it not; thou hast the wrath of God hanging over thy head by the twined thread of a short life, which it may be thou mayest not be free from one year, nay, perhaps not one month, but thou seest it not; if thou didst but see it, then thou wouldest cry out as he did in Bosworth field, "A horse! a horse! a kingdom for a horse!" So thou wouldest cry out, None but Christ! nothing but Christ! ten thousand worlds for Christ! James Nalton, 1664.

**Verse 18.** *A contrite spirit.* (xwr-yakd), dakkeey ruach, "the beaten out spirit." In both words the hammer is necessarily implied; in breaking to pieces the ore first, and then plating out the metal when it has been separated from the ore. This will call to the reader's remembrance Jer 23:29, "Is not my word like as a fire?" saith the Lord: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? The breaking to shivers, and the beating out are metaphorical expressions: so are the hammer and the rock. What the large hammer struck on a rock by a powerful hand would do, so does the word of the Lord when struck on the sinner's heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. The broken heart, and the contrite spirit, are two essential characteristics of true repentance. Adam Clarke.

**Verse 19.** Many are the afflictions of the righteous, etc. Be our troubles many in number, strange in nature, heavy in measure; yet God's mercies are more numerous, his wisdom more wondrous, his power more miraculous; he will deliver us out of all. Thomas Adams.

**Verse 19.** Many are the afflictions of the righteous, etc. When David did behold his trouble, like the host of the Aramites 2Ki 6:16, he looked back unto God like Elisha, and spied one with him stronger than all against him. Therefore, respecting his afflictions he crieth, Many are the troubles of the righteous; respecting the promise he says, The Lord delivereth him out of all. Thus, by his own foot, David measures the condition of the righteous, and saith, Many are the troubles of the righteous; and then, by his own cure, he showeth how they should be healed, saying, The Lord will deliver him out of them all. ...The lawyer can deliver his client but from strife, the physician can deliver his patient but from sickness, the master can deliver his servant but from bondage, but the Lord delivereth us from all. As when Moses came to deliver the Israelites, he would not leave a hoof behind him, so when the Lord cometh to deliver the righteous he will not leave a trouble behind him. He who saith, "I put away all thine iniquities," will also say, "I put away all thine infirmities." Henry Smith.
Verse 20. *He keepeth all his bones*, which were very many. Perhaps (saith Abenezra here), David had been scourged by the Philistines, but his bones were not broken, nor were our Saviour's. Joh 19:36. *John Trapp.*

Verse 20. *All his bones.* Muis observes, "It says not his body, for this he permits to be afflicted; but it signifies that the evils of the godly are light, and scarcely penetrate to the bone; "but Geier observes, "This is too subtle, rather the bone reminds us of the essential parts of the body, by whose injury the whole frame is endangered. It is a proverbial form of speech like that in Mt 10:30, 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered,' expressing the remarkable defence afforded to the righteous." Genebrard says, "The bones are put by synecdoche for all the members." *From Poli Synopsis.*

Verse 20. The passover lamb, of which not a bone was broken, prefigured Jesus as one, "not a bone of whose body should be broken; " and yet, at the same time, it prefigured the complete keeping and safety of Christ's body, the church; as it is written, *He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.* *Andrew A. Bonar's Commentary on Leviticus.*

Verse 20. Christ's bones were in themselves breakable, but could not actually be broken by all the violence in the world, because God had fore decreed, *a bone of him shall not be broken.* So we confess God's children mortal; but all the power of devil or man may not, must not, cannot, kill them before their conversion, according to God's election of them to life, which must be fully accomplished. *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 20. Observe as a point of resemblance between this and the following Psalm, the mention of the bones here and in Ps 35:10. *C. Wordsworth.*

Verse 21. *Evil.* Afflictions though in the plural, prove not ruinous to the righteous, for the Lord delivers him out of them all, whereas *evil in the singular* slays the wicked, to signify the difference of God's economy towards righteous and wicked men. The former is permitted to fall into many pressures, the latter is not so frequently exercised with them, yet the many that befall the one do no hurt, but work good for him, whereas the few that befall the wicked, or perhaps the *one singular affliction* of his life is the utter ruin of him. *Henry Hammond.*

Verse 21. Conscience self the culprit tortures, gnawing him with pangs unknown; For that now amendment's season is for ever past and gone, And that late repentance findeth pardon none for all her moan. *S. Peter Damiano, 988-1072.*
Verse 21. Shall be desolate. In the margin it is, shall be guilty. And this is the proper meaning of the original word, (wmvay). They are guilty, and liable to punishment. Thus the word is frequently rendered in our version (see Le 4:13,22); and generally includes it in the idea of guilt, and the punishment incurred by it. Samuel Chandler, D.D.

Verse 22. The promises of God to his church, and his threatenings of sin recorded in the living book of his word, are not antiquate; no age shall ever superannuate them, or put them out of full force and virtue. What if good persons and good causes do suffer oppression? The poet is a divine in that case—

Informes hiemes reducit
Jupiter; idem
Summovet. Non si male nunc, et olim
Sic erit.

After foul weather comes fair; though it be ill with us now, it will not be always. What if enemies of religion and moths of commonwealth do flourish and prosper, and have all things at will, let it not trouble David and Job; both of them saw as fair a sunshine shut up in a dark cloud, and a world of foul weather following. Edward Marbury.

Verse 22. Satan cannot tempt longer than God shall give him leave; and he will never suffer thee to be tempted above measure, but will give a good issue unto the temptation. Thou art called to fight under the banner of Christ Jesus, and in the name of the Lord thou shalt be enabled to do valiantly and overcome. If Satan continue his assaults, "God's grace is sufficient for thee." 2Co 12:9. If thy strength be clean gone, God's power shall be magnified the more in thee, and he hath brought thee low that thou mayest not trust in thyself, but in the living Lord, and that the whole praise of the victory might be ascribed unto him. If thy strength did remain, it was not to be leaned unto; and now it is decayed and gone, there is no cause of fear, for the Lord will be thy stay. In the most difficult assaults and tedious encounters, we are exhorted to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Be of good courage, and God will grant thee an easy, a joyful victory. Satan's drift in tempting is to turmoil, dishearten, and perplex with fears, and drive into despair; and if thou take heart to rest quietly upon God's grace, and fly unto his name, thou shalt put him to flight, thou hast already got the day. Wait but awhile, and these dark mists and terrible storms shall be dispersed. By these temptations the Lord hath taught thee to see by weakness, and the malice of Satan; to deny thine own wisdom and prize his favour, lightly to esteem all things here below, and highly to value mercy
reaching to the pardon of sin, and heavenly communion and fellowship with God. And if this bitter potion hath wrought so kindly for thy spiritual good, why shouldest thou be dismayed? Trust in the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thee. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate, John Ball.

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HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER


**Verse 1.** Direction for making a heaven below.

**Verse 2.** The commendable boaster and his gratified audience. We may boast of the Lord, in himself, his manifestations of himself, his relationship to us, our interest in him, our expectations from him, etc. The duty of believers to relate their experience for the benefit of others.

**Verse 3.** Invitation to united praise.

**Verse 3.** *Magnifying*—or making great the work of God, a noble exercise.

**Verse 4.** *Confessions of a ransomed soul.* Simple, honouring to God, exclude merit, and encourage others to seek also.

**Verse 4.** *Four stages,* "fears," "sought," "heard," "delivered."

**Verse 5.** The power of a faith look.

**Verse 6.**

1. The poor man's heritage, "troubles."
2. The poor man's friend.
3. The poor man's cry.
4. The poor man's salvation.

**Verse 6.** The poor man's wealth.

The position of prayer in the economy of grace, or the natural history of mercy in the soul.
Verse 7. *Castra angelorum, salvatio bonorum.*

Verse 7. The ministry of angels. In what sense Jesus is "The angel of the Lord."

Verse 8. Experience the only true test of religious truth.

Verse 8. *Taste.* The sanctified palate, the *recherche* provision, the gratified verdict, the celestial host.


1. Description of a true Christian, "seek the Lord."
2. The promise set forth by a contract.
3. The promise fulfilled.

Verse 10. What is a good thing?

Verse 11. A royal teacher, his youthful disciples, his mode of instruction, "Come; "his choice subject.

Verse 11. Sunday school work.

Verses 12-14. How to make the best of both worlds.

Verse 13. Sins of the tongue—their mischief, their cause, and their cure.

Verse 14. *(first clause).* The relation between the negative and positive virtues.

Verse 14. *(second clause).* *The royal hunt.* The game, the difficulties of the chase, the hunters, their methods, and their rewards.

Verse 15. Our observant God. Eyes and ears both set on us.


Verse 17. *Afflictions and their threefold blessing.*

1. They make us pray.
2. They bring us the Lord's hearing ear.

3. They afford room for joyful experience of deliverance.

Verse 18. The nearness of God to broken hearts, and the certainty of their salvation.

Verse 19. Black and white, or bane and antidote. Special people, special trials, special deliverances, special faith as a duty.

Verse 20. The real safety of a believer when in great perils. His soul, his spiritual life, his faith, hope, love, etc.; his interest in Jesus, his adoption, justification, these all kept.

Verse 21. Wickedness, its own executioner, illustrated by scriptural cases, by history, by the lost in hell. Lessons from the solemn fact. The forlorn condition of a man of malicious spirit.

Verses 21-22. Who shall and who shall not be desolate.

Verse 22. Redemption in its various meanings; faith in its universal preservation; the Lord in his unrivalled glory in the work of grace.

WORK UPON THE THIRTY-FOURTH PSALM

Meditations upon the XXXIV. Psalme, in Sir RICHARD BAKER'S Works.
Psalm 35

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

TITLE. A Psalm of David. Here is all we know concerning this Psalm, but internal evidence seems to fix the date of its composition in those troublous times when Saul hunted David over hill and dale, and when those who fawned upon the cruel king, slandered the innocent object of his wrath, or it may be referred to the unquiet days of frequent insurrections in David's old age. The whole Psalm is the appeal to heaven of a bold heart and a clear conscience, irritated beyond measure by oppression and malice. Beyond a doubt David's Lord may be seen here by the spiritual eye.

DIVISION. The most natural mode of dividing this Psalm is to note its triple character. Its complaint, prayer, and promise of praise are repeated with remarkable parallelism three times, even as our Lord in the Garden prayed three times, using the same words. The first portion occupies from Ps 35:1-10, the second from Ps 35:11-18, and the last from Ps 35:19-28; each section ending with a note of grateful song.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me. Plead against those who plead against me; strive with my strivers; contend with my contenders. If they urge their suit in the law court, Lord, meet them there, and beat them at their own weapons. Every saint of God shall have this privilege: the accuser of the brethren shall be met by the Advocate of the saints. Fight against them that fight against me. If my advisers try force as well as fraud, be a match for them; oppose thy strength to their strength. Jesus does this for all his beloved—for them he is both intercessor and champion; whatever aid they need they shall receive from him, and in whatever manner they are assaulted they shall be effectually defended. Let us not fail to leave our case into the Lord's hand. Vain is the help of man, but ever effectual is the interposition of heaven. What is here asked for as a boon, may be regarded as a promise to all the saints; in judgment they shall have a divine advocate, in warfare a divine protection.

Verse 2. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help. In vivid metaphor the Lord is pictured as coming forth armed for battle, and interposing himself between his servant and his enemies. The greater and lesser protections of providence may be here intended by the two defensive weapons, and by the Lord's standing up is meant his active and zealous preservation of his servant in the perilous hour. This poetic imagery shows how the psalmist realised the
existence and power of God; and thought of him as a real and actual personage, truly working for his afflicted.

**Verse 3.** Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me. Before the enemy comes to close quarters the Lord can push them off as with a long spear. To stave off trouble is no mean act of lovingkindness. As when some valiant warrior with his lance blocks up a defile, and keeps back a host until his weaker brethren have made good their escape, so does the Lord often hold the believer's foes at bay until the good man had taken breath, or clean fled from his foes. He often gives the foes of Zion some other work to do, and so gives rest to his church. What a glorious idea is this of Jehovah blocking the way of persecutors, holding them at the pike's end, and giving time for the hunted saint to elude the pursuit! Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Besides holding off the enemy, the Lord can also calm the mind of his servant by express assurance from his own mouth, that he is, and shall be, safe under the Almighty wing. An inward persuasion of security in God is of all things the most precious in the furnace of persecution. One word from the Lord quiets all our fears.

**Verse 4.** Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul. There is nothing malicious here, the slandered man simply craves for justice, and the petition is natural and justifiable. Guided by God's good spirit the psalmist foretells the everlasting confusion of all the haters of the righteous. Shameful disappointment shall be the portion of the enemies of the gospel, nor would the most tender hearted Christian have it otherwise: viewing sinners as men, we love them and seek their good, but regarding them as enemies of God, we cannot think of them with anything but detestation, and a loyal desire for the confusion of their devices. No loyal subject can wish well to rebels. Squeamish sentimentality may object to the strong language here used, but in their hearts all good men wish confusion to mischief makers.

**Verse 6.** Let their way be dark and slippery. What terrors are gathered Here! No light, no foothold, and a fierce avenger at their heels! What a doom is appointed for the enemies of God! They may rage and rave today, but how altered will be their plight ere long! And let the angel of the Lord persecute them. He will follow them hot foot, as we say, never turning aside, but like a trusty pursuivant serving the writ of vengeance upon them, and arresting them in the name of unflinching justice. Woe, woe, woe, unto those who touch the people of God; their destruction is both swift and sure.

**Verse 7.** In this verse the psalmist brings forward the gravamen of his charge against the servants of the devil. For without cause—without my having
injured, assailed, or provoked them; out of their own spontaneous malice *have they hid for me their net in a pit*, even as men hunt for their game with cunning and deception. Innocent persons have often been ruined by traps set for them, into which they have fallen as guilelessly as beasts which stumble into concealed pits, and are taken as in a net. It is no little thing to be able to feel that the enmity which assails us is undeserved—not caused by any wilful offence on our part. Twice does David assert in one verse that his adversaries plotted against him *without cause*. Net making and pit digging require time and labour, and both of these the wicked will expend cheerfully if they may but overthrow the people of God. Fair warfare belongs to honourable men, but the assailants of God's church prefer mean, ungenerous schemes, and so prove their nature and their origin. We must all of us be on our guard, for gins and pitfalls are still the favourite weapons of the powers of evil.

**Verse 8.** Let destruction come upon him at unawares. This tremendous imprecation is frequently fulfilled. God's judgments are often sudden and signal. Death enters the persecutor's house without pausing to knock at the door. The thunderbolt of judgment leaps from its hiding place, and in one crash the wicked are broken for ever. *And let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.* There is a *lex talionis* with God which often works most wonderfully. Men set traps and catch their own fingers. They throw up stones, and they fall upon their own heads. How often Satan outwits himself, and burns his fingers with his own coals! This will doubtless be one of the aggravations of hell, that men will torment themselves with what was once the fond devices of their rebellious minds. They curse and are cursed; they kick the pricks and tear themselves; they pour forth floods of fire, and it burns within and without.

**Verse 9.** And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord. Thus rescued, David ascribes all the honour to the Judge of the right; to his own valorous arm he offers no sacrifice of boasting. He turns away from his adversaries to his God, and finds a deep unbroken joy in Jehovah, and in that joy his spirit revels. *It shall rejoice in his salvation.* We do not triumph in the destruction of others, but in the salvation given to us of God. Prayer heard should always suggest praise. It were well if we were more demonstrative in our holy rejoicing. We rob God by suppressing grateful emotions.

**Verse 10.** As the tongue were not enough to bless God with, David makes every limb vocal—*All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?* His whole anatomy he would make resonant with gratitude. Those bones which were to have been broken by my enemies shall now praise God; every one of them shall bring its tribute, ascribing unrivalled excellence to Jehovah the
Saviour of his people. Even if worn to skin and bone, yet my very skeleton shall magnify the Lord, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him. God is the champion, the true knight errant of all oppressed ones. Where there is so much condescension, justice, kindness, power, and compassion, the loftiest songs should be rendered. Come, dear reader, have you not been delivered from sin, Satan, and death, and will not you bless the Redeemer? You were poor and weak, but in due time Christ sought you, and set you free. O magnify the Lord today, and speak well of his name.

Verse 11. False witnesses did rise up. This is the old device of the ungodly, and we must not wonder if it be used against us as against our Master. To please Saul, there were always men to be found mean enough to impeach David. They laid to my charge things that I knew not. He had not even a thought of sedition; he was loyal even to excess; yet they accused him of conspiring against the Lord's anointed. He was not only innocent, but ignorant of the fault alleged. It is well when our hands are so clean that no trace of dirt is upon them.

Verse 12. They rewarded me evil for good. This is devilish; but men have learned the lesson well of the old Destroyer, and practise it most perfectly. To the spoiling of my soul. They robbed him of comfort, and even would have taken his life had it not been for special rescues from the hand of God. The wicked would strip the righteous naked to their very soul: they know no pity. There are only such limits to human malice as God himself may see fit to place.

Verse 13. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. David had been a man of sympathy; he had mourned when Saul was in ill health, putting on the weeds of sorrow for him as though he were a near and dear friend. His heart went into mourning for his sick master. Humbled my soul with fasting. He prayed for his enemy, and made the sick man's case his own, pleading and confessing as if his own personal sin had brought on the evil. This showed a noble spirit in David, and greatly aggravated the baseness of those who now so cruelly persecuted him. And my prayer returned into mine own bosom. Prayer is never lost: if it bless not those for whom intercession is made, it shall bless the intercessors. Clouds do not always descend in showers upon the same spot from which the vapours ascended, but they come down somewhere; and even so do supplications in some place or other yield their showers of mercy. If our dove find no rest for the sole of her foot among our enemies, it shall fly into our bosoms and bring an olive branch of peace in its mouth. How sharp is the contrast all through this Psalm between the righteous and his enemies! We must be earnest to keep the line of demarcation broad and clear.
Verse 14. I behaved myself as though he has been my friend or brother: I waited upon him assiduously, comforted him affectionately, and sympathised with him deeply. This may refer to those days when David played on the harp, and chased away the evil spirit from Saul. I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother. He bowed his head as mourners do. The strongest natural grief was such as he felt when they were in trouble. The mother usually wins the deepest love, and her loss is most keenly felt: such was David's grief. How few professors in these days have such bowels of compassion; and yet under the gospel there should be far more tender love than under the law. Had we more hearty love to manhood, and care for its innumerable ills, we might be far more useful; certainly we should be infinitely more Christ like. "He prayeth best that loveth best."

Verse 15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced. In my halting they were delighted. My lameness was sport to them. Danger was near, and they sang songs over my expected defeat. How glad are the wicked to see a good man limp! "Now, "say they, "he will meet with his downfall." And gathered themselves together, like kites and vultures around a dying sheep. They found a common joy in my ruin, and a recreation in my sorrow, and therefore met together to keep the feast. They laid their heads together to devise, and their tongues to deceive. Yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me. Those who deserved horsewhipping, fellows the soles of whose feet were needing the bastinado, came together to plot, and held hole and corner meetings. Like curs around a sick lion, the mean wretches taunted and insulted one whose name had been their terror. The very cripples hobbled out to join the malicious crew. How unanimous are the powers of evil; how heartily do men serve the devil; and none decline his service because they are not endowed with great abilities! I knew it not. It was all done behind my back. What a fluster the world may be in, and the cause of it all may not even know that he has given offence. They did tear me, and ceased not. It is such dainty work to tear to pieces a good man's character, that when slanderers have their hand in they are loath to leave off. A pack of dogs tearing their prey is nothing compared with a set of malicious gossips mauling the reputation of a worthy man. That lovers of the gospel are not at this time rent and torn as in the old days of Mary, is to be attributed to the providence of God rather than to the gentleness of men.

Verse 16. With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth. Like professional buffoons who grin around the banquet to make sport, so they made a business of jeering at the good man; not, however, out of mirth, but from violent, insatiable hatred. Like cake scoffers, or men who will jeer for a bit of bread, these hireling miscreants persecuted David in order to get a
bellyful for themselves from Saul's table: having moreover an inward grudge against the son of Jesse because he was a better man than themselves. Very forcibly might our Lord have used the words of these verses! Let us not forget to see the Despised and Rejected of men here painted to the life. Calvary and the ribald crew around the cross seem brought before our eyes.

Verse 17. Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Why be a mere spectator? Why so neglectful of thy servant? Art thou indifferent? Carest thou not that we perish? We may thus reason with the Lord. He permits us this familiarity. There is a time for our salvation, but to our impatience it often seems to be very slow in coming; yet wisdom has ordained the hour, and nothing shall delay it. Rescue my soul from their destructions. From their many devices; their multiplied assaults, be pleased to set me free. ["My darling,"] my lovely, only, precious soul, do thou rescue ["from the lions."] His enemies were fierce, cunning, and strong as young lions; God only could deliver him from their jaws, to God he therefore addresses himself. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 159.

Verse 20. "For they speak not peace." They love it not; how can they speak it? They are such troublers themselves that they cannot judge others to be peaceable. Out of the mouth comes what is in the heart. Riotous men charge others with sedition. "They devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land." David would fain have been an orderly citizen, but they laboured to make him a rebel. He could do nothing aright, all his dealings were misrepresented. This is an old trick of the enemy to brand good men with S.S. on their cheeks, as sowers of sedition, though they have ever been a harmless race, like sheep among wolves. When mischief is meant, mischief is soon made. Unscrupulous partisans could even charge Jesus with seeking to overturn Caesar, much more will they thus accuse his household. At this very hour, those who stand up for the crown rights of King Jesus are called enemies of the church, favourers of Popery, friends of Atheists, levellers, red republicans, and it were hard to say what besides. Billingsgate and Babylon are inleague. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 160.

Verse 21. "Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me." As if they would swallow him. Uttering great lies which needed wide mouths. They set no bounds to their infamous charges, but poured out wholesale abuse, trusting that if all did not stick, some of it would. "And said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it." Glad to find out a fault or a misfortune, or to swear they had seen evil where there was none. Malice has but one eye; it is blind to all virtue in its enemy. Eyes can generally see what hearts wish. A man with a mote in his eye sees a
spot in the sun. How like a man is to an ass when he brays over another's misfortunes! how like to a devil when he laughs a hyæna-laugh over a good man's slip! Malice is folly, and when it holds a festival its tones and gestures far exceed all the freaks and mummeries of the lord of misrule. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Pages 160, 161.

Verse 22. "This thou hast seen, O Lord." Here is comfort. Our heavenly Father knows all our sorrow. Omniscience is the saint's candle which never goes out. A father will not long endure to see his child abused. Shall not God avenge his own elect? "Keep not silence." Rebuke thine enemies and mine, O Lord. A word will do it. Clear my character, comfort my heart. "O Lord, be not far from me." Walk the furnace with me. Stand in the pillory at my side. The sweet presence of God is the divine cordial of the persecuted; his painful absence would be their seepest misery. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 23. "Stir up thyself." Be upon thy mettle. Prove that thou art no indifferent witness to all this infamy. "Awake to my judgement." Take the sceptre and summon the great assize; vindicate justice, avenge oppression. Do not tarry as men do who sleep. "Even unto my cause, my God and my Lord." He claims a nearness to his God, he holds him with both hands; he leaves his case with the righteous Judge. He begs that the suit may be brought on, heard, tried, and verdict given. Well is it for a man when his conscience is so clear that he dares to make such an appeal. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 24. The appeal is here repeated; the plaintiff feels that the joy of his accusers will be shortlived as soon as impartial justice rules. The oppressors' wrong, the proud man's contumely, the fool's grimace—all, all will cease when the righteous Lord sits down upon the judgment seat. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 25. "Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up." Disappoint them of their prey when their mouths are ready to swallow it. Saints are too dear a morsel for the powers of evil; God will not give his sheep over to the wolfish jaws of persecutors. Just when they are tuning their pipes to celebrate their victory, they shall be made to laugh on the other side of their mouths. They are all too sure, and too boastful; they reckon without their host: little do they dream of the end which will be put to their scheming. Their bird shall be flown, and they themselves shall be in the
The prayer of this text is a promise. Even before the lips of the wicked can frame a speech of exultation, they shall be disappointed; their heart-speech shall be forestalled, their wishes frustrated, their knavish tricks exposed.


Verse 26. Here is the eternal result of all the laborious and crafty devices of the Lord's enemies. God will make little of them, though they "magnified themselves;" he will shame them for shaming his people, bring them to confusion for making confusion, pull off their fine apparel and give them a beggardedly suit of dishonour, and turn all their rejoicing into weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Truly, the saints can afford to wait. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 27. "Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause." Even those who could not render him active aid, but in their hearts favoured him, David would have the Lord reward most abundantly. Men of tender heart set great store by the good wishes and prayers of the Lord's people. Jesus also prizes those whose hearts are with his cause. The day is coming when shouts of victory shall be raised by all who are on Christ's side, for the battle will turn, and the foes of truth shall be routed. "Yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified." He would have their gladness contributory to the divine glory; they are not to shout to David's praise, but for the honour of Jehovah. Such acclamations may fitly be continued throughout time and eternity. "Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant." They recognised David as the Lord's servant, and saw with pleasure the Lord's favour to him. We can have no nobler title than "servant of God," and no greater reward than for our Master to delight in our prosperity. What true prosperity may be we are not always best able to judge. We must leave that in Jesus' hand; he will not fail to rule all things for our highest good. "For by his saints it stands confessed, That what he does is always best." Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 28. Unceasing praise is here vowed to the just and gracious God. From morning till evening the grateful tongue would talk and sing, and glorify the Lord. O for such a resolve carried out by us all! Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 162.
PSALM 35

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. Bonar entitles this Psalm, "The awful utterance of the Righteous One regarding those that hate him without cause," and he makes the following remarks thereupon:—"Throughout the endless day of eternity the Lord Jesus shall himself speak the Father's 'praise,' and shall put marked emphasis on his 'righteousness'—that righteousness which shall have been exhibited, both in the doom of those who hated the offered Redeemer, and in the salvation of those who received him. There is nothing in all this wherein his own may not fully join, especially on that day when their views of justice shall be far clearer and fuller than now. On that day we shall be able to understand how Samuel could hew Agag in pieces, and the godly hosts of Israel slay utterly in Canaan man and woman and child, at God's command. We shall be able, not only fully agree in the doom, 'Let them be confounded,' etc., but even to sing, 'Amen, Hallelujah,' over the smoke of torment. Re 19:1-2. We should in some measure now be able to see every verse of this Psalm in the spirit in which the Judge speaks it, we feeling ourselves his assessors in judging the world. 1Co 6:2. We shall, at all events, be able to use it on that day when what is written here shall be all accomplished." Andrew A. Bonar.

Verse 1. Plead my cause, O God, with them that strive with me. 1. Doth the world condemn thee for thy zeal in the service of God? Reproachfully scorn thee for thy care to maintain good works? not blush to traduce thee with imputations of preciseness, conceited singularity, pharisaical hypocrisy? Oh, but if thy conscience condemn thee not all this while, if that be rectified by the sacred word of God, if thou aim at his glory in pursuing thine own salvation, and side not with the disturbers of the church, go on, good Christian, in the practice of piety, discourage not thyself in thy laudable endeavours, but recount with comfort that the Lord is thy judge 1Co 4:4, with a scio cui crediderim, "I know whom I have believed." 2Ti 1:12.

2. Art thou wrongfully adjudged in the erroneous courts of men? are truth and righteousness gone aside from their proper places? Is equity neglected, and poverty overlaid? Well, have patience awhile, cheer up thy fainting spirits, there is a God that beholdeth the innocency of thy cause, unto whom thou hast liberty to make thy last appeal: Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. Or,

3. Art thou otherwise injured by the hands of malicious men? and doth a penurious estate disable thee to sue for amends? Doth a Nimrod oppress thee? A Laban defraud thee? A covetous landlord gripe thee? Well, yet take not the matter into thine own hands by attempting unlawful courses; presume not to be
judge in thine own cause, for default of a present redress; but often remember what the apostle taught his Thessalonians: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you." *Isaac Craven's Sermon at Paul's Cross*, 1630.

**Verse 1.** Plead, etc. More literally, *litigate, O Lord, with them* that litigate against me, contend against them that contend with me; *i.e.*, avenge me of mine adversaries. *Daniel Cresswell, D.D., F.R.S., in 'The Psalms of David according to the Book of Common Prayer: with Critical and Explanatory Notes,'* 1843.

**Verse 2.** Shield and buckler. The word rendered *shield* is in the Hebrew text *(Nm)*, *magen*, which was a short buckler intended merely for defence. The word rendered *buckler* is *(hn)*, *tsinnah*; it was double the weight of the magen, and was carried by the infantry; the magen, being lighter and more manageable, was used by the calvary. The *tsinnah* answered to the *scutum*, and the magen to the *clypeus*, among the Romans. The word *tsinnah*, means that kind of shield from the middle of which there arose a large boss, surmounted by a dagger, and which was highly useful both as a defensive and an offensive weapon in ancient warfare. *James Anderson, note to Calvin in loc.*

**Verse 3.** Draw out the spear, and stop the way. The spear in the days of Saul and David was a favourite weapon. (See 1Ch 11:1-47). A valiant man bravely defending a narrow pass might singly with his lance keep back a pursuing host, and give time for his friends to escape. Very remarkable were the feats of valour of this sort performed in Oriental warfare. David would have his God become his heroic defender, making his enemies pause. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 3.** Draw out; or, as the Hebrew phrase is, *empty*, that is, *unsheath*; the like is of the *sword*. Ex 15:9 Le 26:33. *Henry Ainsworth.*

**Verse 3.** Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Observe, 1. That salvation may be made sure to a man. David would never pray for that which could not be. Nor would Peter charge us with a duty which stood not in possibility to be performed. 2Pe 1:10. "Make your election sure." And to stop the bawling throats of all cavilling adversaries, Paul directly proves it: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2Co 13:5. We may then know that Christ is in us. If Christ be in us, we are in Christ; if we be in Christ, we cannot be condemned, for Ro 8:1, "There is no damnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." But I leave this point that it may be sure, as granted; and come to ourselves, that we may make it sure. The Papists deny this, and teach the contrary, that salvation cannot be made sure; much good do it them, with their sorry and heartless doctrine! If they make that
impossible to any which God hath made easy for many, "into their secret let not my soul come." Ge 49:6. Observe, 2. That the best saints have desired to make their salvation sure. David that knew it, yet entreats to know it more. "I know thou favourest me" Ps 41:11; yet here, still, dic animae, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." A man can never be too sure of his going to heaven. Thomas Adams.

Verse 3. Say unto my soul. God may speak with his own voice; and thus he gave assurance to Abraham, "Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Ge 15:

1. If God speak comfort, let hell roar horror.

2. He may speak by his works: actual mercies to us demonstrate that we are in his favour, and shall not be condemned. "By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me."

3. He may speak by his Son. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Mt 11:28.

4. He may speak by his Scripture; this is God's epistle to us, and his letters patent, wherein are granted to us all the privileges of salvation. A universal si quis; "Whosoever believes, and is baptised, shall be saved."

5. He may speak by his ministers, to whom he hath given "the ministry of reconciliation." 2Co 5:19.

6. He doth speak this by his Spirit: he "sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Ga 4:6. By all these voices God says to his elect, I am your salvation. ...My. There is no vexation to the vexation of the soul; so no consolation to the consolation of the soul. ...Let this teach us to make much of this My. Luther says there is great divinity in pronouns. The assurance that God will save some is a faith incident to devils. The very reprobates may believe that there is a book of election; but God never told them that their names were written there. The hungry beggar at the feast house gate smells good cheer, but the master doth not say, "This is provided for thee." It is small comfort to the harbourless wretch to pass through a goodly city, and see many glorious buildings, when he cannot say, Haec mea domus, I have a place here. The beauty of that excellent city Jerusalem, built with sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, and such precious stones, the foundation and walls whereof are perfect gold Re 21:1-27, affords a
soul no comfort, unless he can say, *Mea cibitas*, I have a mansion in it. The all sufficient merits of Christ do thee no good, unless, *tua pars et portio*, he be thy Saviour. Happy soul that can say with the psalmist, "O Lord, thou art my portion!" Let us all have oil in our lamps, lest if be then to buy, beg, or borrow, we be shut out of doors like the fools, not worthy of entrance. Pray, *Lord, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.* ...Who? What? To whom? When? WHO? *The Lord!* To the Lord David prays. He hath made a good choice, for there is salvation in none other. "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." Ho 13:9. The world fails, the flesh fails, the devil kills. Only the Lord saves. WHAT? Salvation. A special good thing; every man's desire. I will give thee a lordship, saith God to Esau. I will give thee a kingdom, saith God to Saul. I will give thee an apostleship, saith God to Judas. But, I will be thy salvation, he says to David, and to none but saints. TO WHOM? *My salvation.* Not others only, but "thine." A man and a Christian are two creatures. He may be a man that hath reason and outward blessings; he is only a Christian that hath faith, and part in the salvation of Christ. God is plentiful salvation, but it is not ordinary to find a *cui*—to whom. Much of heaven is lost for lack of a hand to apprehend it. WHEN? In the present, "*I am.*" *Sum, non sufficit quod ero.* It is comfort to Israel in captivity that God says, *Ero tua redemptio,* I will redeem thee; but the assurance that quiets the conscience is this, *I am thy salvation.* As God said to Abraham, "*Fear not, I am with thee.*" Deferred hope faints the heart. Whatsoever God forbears to assure us of, oh, pray we him not to delay this, "*Lord, say to our soul, I am thy salvation.*" Condensed from Thomas Adams.

**Verse 4.** Let them be confounded and put to shame. Here David begins his imprecations, which yet, saith Theodoret, he doth not utter as cursing, but as prophesying rather. If we shall at any time take upon us thus to imprecate (as we may in some cases), we must see to it, first, that our cause be good; secondly, that we do it not out of private revenge, but merely for the glory of God; thirdly, that we utter not a syllable this way, but by the guidance of God's good Spirit. *John Trapp. Verses 4-8, 26.* How are we to account for such prayers for vengeance? We find them chiefly in four Psalms, the seventh, thirty-fifth, sixty-ninth, and one hundred and ninth, and the imprecations in these form a terrible climax. In the last no less than thirty anathemas have been counted. Are these the mere outbursts of passionate and unsanctified feeling, or are they the legitimate expression of a righteous indignation? Are they to be excused as being animated by the "spirit of Elias"? a spirit not unholy indeed, but far removed from the meekness and gentleness of Christ; or are they the stereotyped forms in which the spirit of devotion may utter itself? Are they Jewish only, or may they be Christian also? An uninstructed fastidiousness, as
it is well known, has made many persons recoil from reading these Psalms at all. Many have found their lips falter when they have been called to join in using them in the congregation, and have either uttered them with bated breath and doubting heart, or have interpreted them in a sense widely at variance with the letter. Some have tried to reconcile them with a more enlightened conscience, by regarding such words not as the expression of a wish, but as the utterance of a prediction; but the Hebrew optative which is distinct enough from the simple future, absolutely forbids this expedient. Others again would see in them expressions which may lawfully be used in the soul's wrestling against spiritual enemies. And finally, some would defend them as utterances of righteous zeal for God's honour, and remind us that if we do not sympathise with such zeal, it may be not because our religion is more pure, but because our hearts are colder.

Now the real source of the difficulty lies in our not observing and bearing in mind the essential difference between the Old Testament and the New. The older dispensation was in every sense a sterner one than the new. The spirit of Elias, though not an evil spirit, was not the spirit of Christ. "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Lu 9:56. And through him his disciples are made partakers of the same spirit. But this was not the spirit of the older economy. The Jewish nation had been trained in a sterner school. It had been steeled and hardened by the discipline which had pledged it to a war of extermination with idolaters; and however necessary such a discipline might be, it would not tend to foster the gentler virtues; it is conceivable how even a righteous man, under it, feeling it to be his bounden duty to root out evil wherever he saw it, and identifying, as he did, his own enemies with the enemies of Jehovah, might use language which to us appears unnecessarily vindictive. To men so trained and taught, what we call "religious toleration, "was a thing not only wrong, but absolutely inconceivable. It may be quite true that we find revenge forbidden as directly in the Old Testament as in the New, as, for instance, in Le 19:18, "Thou shalt not avenge, "etc., though even there is a limitation, "against the children of thy people." And it may be no less true that we find instances of imprecation in the New; as when St. Paul says 2Ti 4:14, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works, "or when he exclaims Ac 23:3, "God will smite thee, thou whitened wall; "or, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."

But even these expressions are very different from the varied, deliberate, carefully constructed, detailed anathemas of the Psalms. And our Lord's denunciations, to which Hengstenberg refers, are in no way parallel. They are
not curses upon individuals, but in fact solemn utterances of the great truth, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But after all, whatever may be said of particular passages, the general tone which runs through the two covenants, is unquestionably different. To deny this is not to honour Moses, but to dishonour Christ. Mt 5:43 19:8. On the other hand, we must not forget that these imprecations are not the passionate longings for personal revenge. The singer undoubtedly sees in his enemies the enemies of God and his church. They that are not with him are against God. And because the zeal of God's house even consumes him, he prays that all the doers of iniquity may be rooted out. The indignation therefore is righteous, though it may appear to us wrongly directed, or excessive in its utterance. Once more, the very fact that a dark cloud hid God's judgment in the world to come from the view of the Old Testament saints, may be alleged in excuse of this their desire to see him take vengeance on his enemies here. How deeply this problem of God's righteousness exercised their minds is abundantly evident from numerous places in the Psalms. They longed to see that righteousness manifested. It could be manifested, they thought, only in the evident exaltation of the righteous, and the evident destruction of the wicked here. Hence, with their eye always fixed on temporal recompense, they could even wish and pray for the destruction of the ungodly. The awful things of the world to come were to a great extent hid from their eyes. Could they have seen these, then surely their prayer would have been not, "Let the angel of the Lord persecute them," "Blot them out of thy book;" but rather with him who hung upon the cross; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." J. J. Stewart Perowne.

Verses 4, 8, 26. David was about as devoid of vindictiveness as any public character who can well be named. His conduct in relation to Saul, from first to last displayed a singularly noble spirit, far removed from anything like the lust of vengeance; and the meekness with which he endured the bitter reproaches of Shimei, bore witness to the same spirit after his accession to the throne. ...When David's whole career is intelligently and fairly reviewed, it leaves on the mind the impression of a man possessed of as meek and placable a temper as was ever associated with so great strength of will, and such strong passions. Even in the heats of sudden resentment, he was not apt to be hurried into deeds of revenge. Such being the case, it would certainly have been a strange and unaccountable thing if he had shown himself less the master of his own spirit in poems composed in seasons of retirement and communion with God, especially since these very poems express a keen sense of the heinousness of the sin that has been laid to his charge. He can affirm regarding his implacable enemies, "As for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved
myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." Ps 35:13-14. "O Lord, my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy): let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth." Ps 7:3-5. Surely one ought to think twice before putting on the imprecations an interpretation which would make them utterly incongruous with these appeals, uttered almost in the same breath. William Binnie, D.D.

**Verse 5.** As chaff. Literally, "As the thistledown." John Morison.

**Verse 6.** Let their way be dark and slippery. A horrible way! Darkness alone who feareth not? A slippery way alone who avoids not? In a dark and slippery way, how shalt thou go? where set foot? These two ills are the great punishments of men: darkness, ignorance; a slippery way, luxury. Let their way be darkness and slipping; and let the angel of the Lord persecute them, that they be not able to stand. For anyone in a dark and slippery way, when he seeth that if he move his foot he will fall, and there is no light before his feet, haply resolves to wait until light come; but here is the angel of the Lord persecuting them. Augustine.

**Verse 6.** Slippery. Margin, as in Hebrew, slipperiness. This is a circumstance which adds increased terror to the image. It is not only a dark road, but a road made slippery by rains; a road where they are in danger every moment of sliding down a precipice where they will be destroyed. Albert Barnes.

**Verse 7.** They hid for me their net in a pit. As if David had said that they had dug a pit, and covered and hid its mouth with a net, that I might pass upon it and fall into it. Kimchi.

**Verse 8.** Let destruction come upon him at unawares. Or a storm, such as is caused in the Eastern countries by a south wind, very sudden, violent, and destructive. John Gill.

**Verse 8.** Let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall. By giving Ahithophel rope enough, the Lord preserved David from perishing. Who will not admire that Goliath should be slain with his own sword, and that proud Haman should hold Mordecai's stirrup, and be the herald of his honour? The wicked shall be undone by their own doings; all the arrows that they shoot at the righteous shall fall upon their own pates. Maxentius built a false bridge to drown Constantine, but was drowned himself. Henry the Third
of France was stabbed in the very same chamber where he had helped to contrive the cruel massacre of the French Protestants. And his brother, Charles the Ninth, who delighted in the blood of the saints, had blood given him to drink, for he was worthy. It is usual with God to take persecutors in the snares and pits that they have laid for his people, many thousands in this nation have experienced; and though Rome and her confederates are this day laying snares and traps and digging pits for the righteous, who will rather burn than bow to their Baal, yet do but wait and weep, and weep and wait a little, and you shall see that the Lord will take them in the very snares and pits that they have laid and digged for his people. Condensed from Thomas Brooks.

Verse 8. Let the net that he hath hid catch himself. Thou fool, who opposest thy counsels to those of the Most High. He who devises evil for another, falls at last into his own pit, and the most cunning finds himself caught by what he had prepared for another. But virtue without guile, erect like the lofty palm, rises with greater vigour when it is oppressed. Pietro Metastasio, 1698-1782.

Verse 9. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord, etc. While some ascribe to fortune, and others to their own skill, the praise of their deliverance from danger, and few, if any, yield the whole praise of it to God, David here, declares that he will not forget the favour which God had bestowed upon him. My soul, says he, shall rejoice, not in a deliverance of the author of which it is ignorant, but in the salvation of God. To place the matter in a still stronger light, he assigns to his very bones the office of declaring the divine glory. As if not content that his tongue should be employed in this, he applies all the members of his body to the work of setting forth the praises of God. The style if speaking which he employs is hyperbolical, but in this way he shows unfeignedly that his love to God was so strong that he desired to spend his sinews and bones in declaring the reality and truth of his devotion. John Calvin.

Verse 10. All my bones, etc. These words contain the most vivid description of the highest delight which by the whole soul and body should be experienced and openly manifested. He mentions his soul Ps 35:9 and all his bones as about to take part in the joy, to indicate that he most heartily and with his whole body was about to rejoice, and that the joy which he would manifest would not be of an ordinary character, but of the highest order, so that each several bone should sing forth the praises of God. Herman Venema, 1697-1787.

Verse 10. All my bones. In the Scriptures emotions are generally ascribed to the viscera, the bones are usually regarded as passive; in this place and Ps 51:8, and in these two places only, exulting joy is attributed to the bones. Ordinary experience shows us that the intestines have sympathy with our passionate
excitements, but we have no consciousness of the bones becoming sympathetically sensitive. The expression therefore is highly poetical, and indicates that they joy intended would be far beyond ordinary and common delight; it would be so profound that even the most callous part of the human frame would partake of it. Doubtless the poetry has a basis of truth in it, for though we may not perceive it, there is most assuredly a true and real sympathy with our mental states in every particle of bone and muscle, as well as in those tender organs which are more apparently affected. *C. H. S. Thoughts suggested by a passage in "Biblical Psychology," by Franz Delitzsch.*

**Verse 10.** All my bones. That is, whatsoever strength and vigour is in me shall be spent in celebrating thy praises. Or, although I have nothing left me but skin and bones so poor am I grown, yet I will not be wanting to the work. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 10.** My bones are riving through my skin, and yet all my bones are praising him. "I said, I am cast out of thy sight, but I will look again towards thy holy temple." *Thomas Halyburton. 1674-1711.*

**Verse 11.** They laid to my charge things that I knew not. You will say, Why does God permit wicked people to lay to the charge of the godly such things as they are clear of: God if he pleased could prevent it, and stop the mouths of the wicked, that they should not be able to speak against his children? Answer—As all things work for the best to them that love God, so this works for the good of God's people. God doth permit it for the good of his people, and thus he frustrates the hopes of the wicked: they intend evil against the godly, and God disposes of it for good. As Joseph said to his brethren, "You intended evil against me, and God disposed of it for good; "so we may say to such as falsely slander God's people, You intended evil against the people of God, but God disposes of it for good. There is fivefold good that God brings out of it to his people. *First,* God doth by this means humble them, and brings them to examine what is amiss: so that though they be clear of that crime laid to their charge, yet they will then examine whether there be nothing else amiss betwixt God and them; they will search their hearts, and walk more humbly, and cleave more close to the Lord.

*Secondly,* God doth by this means bring them oftener upon their knees, to seek unto him, to plead their cause, and to clear their innocency. How oft did the prophet speak unto God when the wicked did falsely accuse him; how did he make his moan at the throne of grace unto God, beseeching him to plead his cause, and to keep him close in his way, that the wicked might not rejoice at his downfall! So when God's people see that it is that which the wicked would
have, that which is their joy, to see the godly fall into such and such a sin; then
the godly will pray more earnestly with David, Lord, lead me in a right path
because of my observers; then they will be earnest with God to keep them from
falling into that sin that the wicked desire they might fall into; and this is a
second good that comes of it.

Thirdly, God doth us the reproach of the wicked as a preventing medicine
against that crime which the wicked lay to their charge. The godly have
unrenewed nature as well as renewed, and if God should leave them never so
little to themselves, they are not their own keepers, they might fall into that sin
which the wicked lay to their charge: and every godly man and woman may say
when they are falsely accused, It is God's mercy that I did not fall into that sin
they lay to my charge. God doth use wicked people's tongues as a warning
against such a sin, that when they see how the wicked joy at a brat of their own
hatching, then they consider, if the wicked thus joy without a cause, what
would they do if they had just cause? Well, by the help of God this shall be a
warning to me for ever to watch against that sin: for the time to come I will
pray more against that particular sin than I have done, and watch more against
that sin than I have done; through God's help they shall never have occasion to
rejoice over me in that kind. Truly, I verily believe many a child of God can say
by experience, I never should have prayed and watched against such a sin so
much, had not God used the tongues of the wicked as preventing physic: I
know not my own heart, but that I might have fallen into such and such a sin
had not God by this means hedged up my way with thorns; and this is the third
good comes of it.

Fourthly, God doth by this means exercise the graces of his people by letting
them undergo bad report as well as good report: he tries whether they will
cleave close to him in all conditions, as Ps 94:15-17.

Fifthly, God doth by this means teach them how to judge of others when they
are falsely accused. For the time to come they will not receive a false report
against their neighbour; they will know the truth of a thing before they believe
it, and they know how to comfort others in the like condition; and thus God
disposes of it for good, and thus God makes the wicked the servant of his
people in that very thing which the wicked think to wrong them most in; for he
uses the wicked as the rod and wisp, to scour off the rust of their graces and to
correct their security; and when the rod hath done its office then it is thrown
into the fire; and thus you see how God disposes of the wicked's false
accusations of his people for good. Zephaniah Smyth's Sermon, "The
Malignant's Plot," 1647.
Psalm 35

Verse 12. They rewarded me evil for good. For the good David did in killing Goliath, and slaying his ten thousands of Philistines, and thereby saving his king and country, Saul and his courtiers envied him, and sought to slay him: so our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the good he did to the Jews, by healing their bodies of diseases, and preaching the gospel to them for the benefit of their souls, was rewarded with reproaches and persecutions, and at last with the shameful death of the cross; and in like manner are his people used, but this is an evil that shall not go unpunished: see Pr 17:13. John Gill.

Verse 12. To the spoiling of my soul. They robbed not his body of goods but his soul of consolation. They bereaved his soul (that is the word), like a widow who loses her children in whom she delighted and found succour. They were not content with injuring his estate, but they were for ruining the man himself by their undeserved malice, they attacked him in name and reputation, which were as dear to him as his sons and daughters, or even as his soul. It is evermore an injury to the soul to be attacked with slander, it puts a man into a warring attitude, endangers his peace of mind, imperils his enjoyment of quiet contemplation, and tends to interrupt his communion with God. Thus the spiritual nature is despoiled and suffers bereavement. C. H. S.

Verse 13. My prayer returned into, or was directed to, my bosom. Of the many interpretations that are given of this passage, that appears to me the most probable which derives it from the posture of the worshipper; who standing with his head inclined downward toward his bosom, turned away his attention from all external objects, and uttered his mournful and earnest requests, as if they were directed to his own bosom. Such a posture of devotion is in use both among Jews and Mohammedans. Koeler in Repertor. Lit. Orient.; and Reland de Relig. Mohammedica, quoted by Walford in loc.

Verse 13. (last clause). We may read it thus: Let my prayer return into my bosom; that is, I wished no worse to them than to myself: let me receive of God such good as I prayed for them. See Ps 79:12. Henry Ainsworth.

Verse 14. For his mother. On account of the plurality of wives in an Eastern household, the sons are usually far more attached to their mother than their father. Their father they share with a numerous band of half brothers, who are envious of them, or of whom they are jealous, but their mother is all their own, with her they are brought up in childhood; she takes their part in youth, in the numerous battles of the harem; and on their part when they are grown up, they love her intensely, and hence their mourning at her decease is of the bitterest kind. C. H. S.
Verse 14. His mother. Mahomet was once asked what relation had the strongest claim upon our affection and respect; when he instantly replied, "The mother, the mother, the mother."

Verse 14. (last clause). Bewaileth his mother: mourneth at her funeral. In this case the affections are most strong. Therefore the priests were permitted to mourn for such. Le 21:1-3. Henry Ainsworth.

Verse 15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced. etc. Do not glory in your neighbour's ruins. The firefly leaps and dances in the fire, and so do many wicked men rejoice in the sufferings of others. Such as rejoice in the sufferings of others are sick of the devil's disease; but from that disease the Lord deliver all your souls. It is sad to insult over those whom God hath humbled; it is high wickedness to triumph over those to whom God hath given a cup of astonishment to drink. Such as make the desolations of their neighbours to be the matter either of their secret repast, or open exultation, such may fear that the very dregs of divine wrath are reserved for them. It is bad playing upon the harp because others have been put to hang their harps upon the willows. We must not pray with him in the tragedy, that it may rain calamities; nor with Clemens' Gnostic, Give me calamities that I may glory in them. There cannot be a greater evidence of a wicked heart, than for a man to be merry because others are in misery. "He that is glad at calamities (that is, at the calamities of others) shall not be unpunished" Pr 17:5. If God be God, such as congratulate our miseries instead of condoling them, shall be sure to be punished with the worst of punishments; for such do not only sin against the law of grace, but also against the very law of nature; the law of nature teaching men to sympathise with those that are in misery, and not to rejoice over them because of their miseries. O sirs, do not make other's mourning your music, do not make other's tears your wine; as you would not be made drunk at last with the wine of astonishment. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, etc. Marvellous prophecy of the cross! second only, if indeed second, to that in the twenty-second Psalm. Still closer to the history if we take the Vulgate: the scourges were gathered together upon me. Even so, O Lord Jesus, the ploughers ploughed upon thy back, and made long furrows: precious furrows for us, where are sown patience for the present life, and glory in the next; where are sown hope that maketh not ashamed, and love that many waters cannot quench. "The very abjects." Even those worst of abjects, who said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are; "who had set the poor sinner before the Lord, with their "Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned." "Making mouths at me." And is it not wonderful that, well knowing the prophecy, yet the chief priests and scribes
Verse 15. In mine adversity they rejoiced. Now, as men often relent at seeing the misfortunes of their enemies, so that they cease to hate or persecute those who are already miserably wretched, it was an evidence of the very cruel and fierce spirit by which David's former friends were actuated against him, when, upon seeing him cast down and afflicted, they were rather by this incited furiously and insolently to assail him. John Calvin.

Verse 15. The abjects. The very abjects (Prayer Book Version). The Hebrew word Nechim, thus translated, comes from a verb signifying to be smitten. Hence, in the Septuagint it is rendered scourges. But it may also be rendered, with Jerome, smiters, and may mean smiting with the tongue. Compare Jer 18:18. Another of its meanings is, according to Buxtorf, the wry legged, the lame; and so it is used in 2Sa 4:4 9:3 whence the epithet of Necho was given to one of the Pharaohs who halted in his gait. Our translators seem to have understood the word in this last sense, as a term of contempt. Daniel Cresswell.

Verse 15. David, having showed how compassionate he was to his enemies in their affliction Ps 35:14, he presently shows Ps 35:15, how uncompassionate, or barbarously cruel rather, his enemies were to him in his. Abjects are vile persons, men smitten in their estates and credits; yea, often as slaves or ill servants smitten with cudgels or whips. So a learned translator renders the Psalm, The smitten gathered against me; that is, vile men who deserve to be beaten and cudgelled. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 16. With hypocritical mockers in feasts. Some cannot be merry, but it must be with Scripture; if they want a little diversion, the saints must be the subject of their discourse! they can vent their profane jests upon the word of God; this is their pastime over their cups upon the ale bench. How ready they are with their contumelious reflections; they have learnt their father's dialect, they are accusers of the brethren, their speech betrays them to be Hellians. You know that in ordinary, we can tell what countryman a person is by his speech, every country having almost a peculiar idiom; so it is here, these scoffers at religion by speaking the language of hell, let us understand whence they are. They have, it may be, a little wit, which they set off with a sort of an air in rhetorical raillery, and oh, how quick and sharp when they are upon this subject! These scoffing Ishmaelites are seated in the devil's chair, somewhat above their brethren in iniquity, as most deserving the place; and there is less ground to hope that such persons will be savingly wrought upon who arrive to
such a height is sin as to make a mock of it, and to sport with holiness, than of others. Persons are got a great way towards hell when they mock at what is serious, and that with delight. This the Lord will visit for in his due time; for he knows who they are that so dishonour him by reproaching them that are his. *Oliver Heywood.*

**Verse 16.** Hypocritical mockers in feasts. (gwam ygal ypnhb) Very difficult. The word (gwum), in 1Ki 17:12, the only other passage where it occurs, means "a cake." Hence (gwam ygal) is interpreted by Gesenius and others to mean, hangers on at the table of the rich (literally "cake mockers"), whose business it was, by witticisms and buffoonery to make entertainment for the guests, and who got their dinner in return, like the qwisokolakez, knisololakes, and the Medieval Lat. *buccellarii.* Then the words would mean, "Amongst the most profane." *J. J. Stewart Perowne.* (Would not our word *loafers* be somewhat analogous to these cake eaters of antiquity!) *C. H. S.*

**Verse 16.** Hypocritical mockers. David aggravates the sin of those jeering companions who made him their table talk, and could not taste their cheer except seasoned with some salt jest quibbled out at him, with this, that they were *hypocritical mockers*; they did it slyly, and wrapped up their scoffs, it is like in such language as might make some think, who did not well observe them, that they applauded him. There is a way of commending which some have learned to use when they mean to cast the greatest scorn upon those they hate bitterly, and these hypocritical mockers deserve the chair to be given them from all other scorners. *William Gurnall.*

**Verse 16.** Mockers in feasts. If it were known at a feast that there was any one present or absent, whom the host disliked, it was customary for the guests to "make fun of them," and use sarcastic language respecting them. These are the *hypocritical mockers in feasts.* *John Gadsby.* **Verse 17.** Satan no sooner spies our wanderings, but he presently runs with a complaint to God, filing bills against us in the star-chamber of heaven, where the matter would go hard with us, but for the Great Lord Chancellor of peace, our Advocate Jesus Christ. As God keeps all our tears in a bottle, and registereth the very groans of our holy passion in a book, so Satan keeps a record of our sins, and solicits justice against us. Were God like man, subject to passions, or incensable by the suggestions of the common barrator, woe were us. But he will hear one son of truth before ten thousand fathers of lying. No matter what the plaintiff libelleth, when the judge acquitteth. We have forfeited our estates by treason, and the busy devil begs us; but there is one that steps in, and pleads a former grant, and that both by promise and purchase. ["Lord, rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions."] Lord Jesus, challenge thy own; let not
Satan enter upon by force or fraud, what thou hast bought with thine own blood. [Thomas Adams.]

**Verse 17.** "*My darling.*" In Poole's Synopsis the critics explain this name for the soul, as my only one, my solitary one, desolate, deserted, and destitute of human hope. Such is the soul under sore affliction. See Psalm 22:21. ["From the lions."] Daniel in the den was literally where David was spiritually. Shut in amongst fierce, cruel, and angry creatures, and himself defenceless, having no weapon but prayer, no helper but the Lord. The people of God may be exposed to the lions of hell, and their roarings may grievously affright them; but the soul which is their "darling" is also God's dear one, and therefore they shall be rescued. [C. H. S.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 171.

**Verse 19.** "*Wink with the eye.*" Showing pleasure in their eyes because of my evil. [Francis Vatablus,] 1545

**Verse 19.** "*Wink the eye.*" This was a sign which malicious persons made to each other when the object of their malice was gained, scornfully twisting their eyes together. The Hebrew word here has no sufficiently expressive substitute in English. [Benjamin Weiss.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 171.

**Verse 21.** "*Our eye hath seen.*" [Eye] for [eyes], unless we would say that all the wicked are so conjoined, that they may seem to have but one eye, heart, head. [John Trapp.]

**Verse 21.** Yet, O ye saints, divulge not these things to wicked men; whisper them softly one to another, with fear and trembling, lest some profane wretch or other overhear you, and take that for encouragement that was only meant for caution. What is more common than for the vilest sinners to plead for their excuse, or warrant rather, the foul miscarriages of God's dearest saints? Thus the drunkard looks upon holy Noah as a pot-companion, whereby he discovers his nakedness in a worse sense than ever Cham did; and thus the unclean sensualist quotes David, and calls him in to be the patron of his debauchery. Certainly, if their be any grief that can overcast the perfect joys of the saints in heaven, it is that their names and examples should, to the great dishonour of God, be produced by wicked and sinful men, to countenance their grossest sins and wickednesses. But let such know, that God hath set up these in his church to be monuments of his mercy, to declare to humble and penitent sinners how great sins he can pardon; yet if any hereupon embolden themselves in sin,
instead of being set up as monuments of mercy, God will set them up as pillars of salt. [Ezekiel Hopkins (Bishop).]

Verse 21. He who rejoices in another's fall rejoices in the devil's victory. [Ambrose, quoted in Nichol's Proverbs.]


Verse 23. "My God and my Lord." The cry of Thomas when he saw the wounds of Jesus. If he did not count our Lord to be divine, neither does David here ascribe Deity to Jehovah, for there is no difference except in the order of the words and the tongue in which they were spoken, the meaning is identical. What words they are, with their two eyes seeing Jehovah in two aspects yet as one, grasping him with two hands in the double "my" to one heart for the word is but one, bowing before him on both knees to worship him in lowliest reverence. Well might Nouet, in his exposition of the words as used by Thomas, exclaim, "Oh, sweet word, I will say it all my life long; I will say it in the hour of death; I will say it in eternity." [C. H. S.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 172.

Verse 24. "O Lord my God." O Jehovah my God; here is another precious word. He takes Jehovah to be his God, in opposition to those who make idols, or riches, or their own lusts their God. He claims a full possession of all that is in the great I AM. Even though he views him as a judge he lays the hand of faith upon his God, and flinches not even before the blaze of his righteousness. It is a noble word, a grand utterance of faith; he who can pronounce that word "my" from his inmost soul in such a connection may well laugh to scorn all his enemies. [C. H. S.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 172.

Verse 25. "Let them not say we have swallowed him up." And even if they could, like Jonah's whale;e, they would soon be sickened of their feast. A living child of God were more easily swallowed than digested by the malice of hell. [C. H. S.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 172.
Verses 4-8, 26. How are we to account for such prayers for vengeance? We find them chiefly in four Psalms, the seventh, thirty-fifth, sixty-ninth, and one-hundred and ninth, and the imprecatory verses in these form a terrible climax. In the last no less than thirty anathemas have been counted. Are these the mere outbursts of passionate and unsanctified feeling, or are they the legitimate expression of a righteous indignation? Are they to be excused as being animated by the "spirit of Elias"? a spirit not unholy indeed, but far removed from the meekness and gentleness of Christ; or are they the stereotyped forms in which the spirit of devotion may utter itself? Are they Jewish only, or may they be Christian also? An uninstructed fastidiousness, as it is well known, has made many persons recoil from reading these Psalms at all. Many have found their lips falter when they have been called to join in using them in the congregation, and have either uttered them with bated breath and doubting heart, or have interpreted them in a sense widely at variance with the letter. Some have tried to reconcile them with a more enlightened conscience, by regarding such words not as the expression of a wish, but as the utterance of a prediction; but the Hebrew optative which is distinct enough from the simple future, absolutely forbids this expedient. Others again would see in them expressions which may lawfully be used in the soul's wrestling against spiritual enemies. And finally, some would defend them as utterances of righteous zeal for God's honour, and remind us that if we do not sympathise with such zeal, it may be not because our religion is more pure, but because our hearts are colder. Now the real source of the difficulty lies in our not observing and bearing in mind the essential difference between the Old Testament and the New. The older dispensation was in every sense a sterner one than the new. The spirit of Elias, though not an evil spirit, was not the spirit of Christ. "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:56. And through him his disciples are made partakers of the same spirit. But this was not the spirit of the older economy. The Jewish nation had been trained in a sterner school. It had been steeled and hardened by the discipline which had pledged it to a war of extermination with idolaters; and however necessary such a discipline might be, it would not tend to foster the gentler virtues; it is conceivable how even a righteous man, under it, feeling it to be his bounden duty to root out evil wherever he saw it, and identifying, as he did, his own enemies with the enemies of Jehovah, might use language which to us appears unnecessarily vindictive. To men so trained and taught, what we call "religious toleration," was a thing not only wrong, but absolutely inconceivable. It may be quite true that we find revenge forbidden as directly in the Old Testament as in the New, as, for instance, in Leviticus 19:18, "Thou shalt not avenge," etc., though even there is a limitation, "against the children of thy people." And it may be no less true that we find instances of imprecation in the New; as when St. Paul says (2
Psalm 35

Timothy 4:14), "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works," or when he exclaims (Acts 23:3), "God will smite thee, thou whited wall:" or, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." But even these expressions are very different from the varied, deliberate, carefully constructed, detailed anathemas of the Psalms. And our Lord's denunciations, to which Hengstenberg refers, are in no way parallel. They are not curses upon individuals, but in fact solemn utterances of the great truth, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But after all, whatever may be said of particular passages, the general tone which runs through the two covenants, is unquestionably different. To deny this is not to honour Moses, but to dishonour Christ. Matthew 5:43; 19:8. On the other hand, we must not forget that these imprecations are not the passionate longings for personal revenge. The singer undoubtedly sees in his enemies the enemies of God and his church. They that are not with him are against God. And because the zeal of God's house even consumes him, he prays that all the doers of iniquity may be rooted out. The indignation therefore is righteous, though it may appear to us wrongly directed, or excessive in its utterance. Once more, the very fact that a dark cloud hid God's judgment in the world to come from the view of the Old Testament saints, may be alleged in excuse of this their desire to see him take vengeance on his enemies here. How deeply this problem of God's righteousness exercised their minds is abundantly evident from numerous places in the Psalms. They longed to see that righteousness manifested. It could be manifested, they thought, only in the evident exaltation of the righteous, and the evident destruction of the wicked here. Hence, with their eye always fixed on temporal recompense, they could even wish and pray for the destruction of the ungodly. The awful things of the world to come were to a great extent hid from their eyes. Could they have seen these, then surely their prayer would have been not, "Let the angel of the Lord persecute them," "Blot them out of thy book;" but rather with him who hung upon the cross; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." [J. J. Stewart Perowne.]

Verses 4, 8, 26. David was about as devoid of vindictiveness as any public character who can well be named. His conduct in relation to Saul, from first to last displayed a singularly noble spirit, far removed from anything like the lust of vengeance; and the meekness with which he endured the bitter reproaches of Shimei, bore witness to the same spirit after his accession to the throne. . . . When David's whole career is intelligently and fairly reviewed, it leaves on the mind the impression of a man possessed of as meek and placable a temper as was ever associated with so great strength of will, and such strong passions. Even in the heats of sudden resentment, he was not apt to be hurried into deeds of revenge. Such being the case, it would certainly have been a strange and
unaccountable thing if he had shown himself less the master of his own spirit in poems composed in seasons of retirement and communion with God, especially since these very poems express a keen sense of the heinousness of the sin that has been laid to his charge. He can affirm regarding his implacable enemies, "As for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." Psalm 35:13, 14. "O Lord, my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy): let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth." Psalm 7:3 - 5. Surely one ought to think twice before putting on the imprecations an interpretation which would make them utterly incongruous with these appeals, uttered almost in the same breath. [William Binnie, D.D.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Pages 164 - 166.

Verse 27. See how the hearts of the saints have been drawn out against their persecutors. Prayers are the arms that in times of persecution the saints have still had recourse to. The Romans being in great distress were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temple of their gods to fight with their enemies, and so they overcame them: so when the people of God have been hard put to it by reason of afflictions and persecutions, the weapons that they have fled to have been prayers and tears, and with these they have overcome their persecutors. [Thomas Brooks.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Pages 172, 173.

Verse 28. "My tongue shall speak of thy righteousnesses and of thy praise all the day long." See now I have made a discourse something longer; ye are wearied. Who endureth to praise God all the day long? I will suggest a remedy whereby thou mayest praise God all the day long if thou wilt. Whatever thou dost, do well, and thou hast praised God. When thou singest a hymn, thou praisest God, but what doth thy tongue, unless thy heart also praise him? Hast thou ceased from singing hymns, and departed that thou mayest refresh thyself? Be not drunken, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou go away to sleep? Rise not to do evil, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou transact business? Do no wrong, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou till thy field? Raise not strife, and thou hast praised God. In the innocency of thy works prepare thyself to praise God all the day long. [Augustine.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by
HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Verse 1.** Jesus our Advocate and Champion; our friend in the courts of heaven and the battles of earth.

**Verse 2.** Jesus armed as the defender of the faithful.

**Verse 3.** Enemies kept at arm's length. How the Lord does this, and the blessedness of it to us.

**Verse 3. (last clause).** Full assurance. An assurance positive, personal, spiritual, present, divine, complete, coming by a word from God.

**Verse 3. (last clause).** Heaven made sure. *Thomas Adams' Sermon.*

**Verse 4.** The everlasting confusion of the devil.

**Verse 5.** Let them be as chaff before the wind. They were swift enough to attack, let them be as swift to flee. Let their own fears and the alarms of their consciences unman them so that the least breeze of trouble shall carry them hither and thither. Ungodly men are worthless in character, and light in their behaviour, being destitute of solidity and fixedness; it is but just that those that make themselves chaff should be treated as such. When this imprecation is fulfilled in graceless men, they will find it an awful thing to be for ever without rest, without peace of mind, or stay of soul, hurried from fear to fear, and from misery to misery. *And let the angel of the Lord chase them.* Fallen angels shall haunt them, good angels shall afflict them. To be pursued by avenging spirits will be the lot of those who delight in persecution. Observe the whole scene as the psalmist sketches it: the furious foe is first held at bay, then turned back, then driven to headlong flight, and chased by fiery messengers from whom there is no escape, while his pathway becomes dark and dangerous, and his destruction overwhelming.

**Verse 6.** The horrible pilgrimage of the ungodly.

**Verse 6.** The trinity of dangers in the pathway of the wicked, their way dark with ignorance, and slippery with temptation, while behind them is the avenger.
Verse 8. Destruction at unawares, an awful topic.


Verse 10. A matchless God, and his matchless grace—these are the themes. An experienced heart, thoroughly quickened—this is the songster; and from this cometh matchless music. The music of a shattered harp.

Verse 11. The meanness, cruelty, sinfulness, and commonness of slander.

Verse 12. How a soul may be robbed.

Verse 13. Christian sympathy even for the froward.

Verse 13. (last clause). Personal benefit of intercessory prayer.


Verse 15. The shameful conspiracy of men against our Lord Jesus at his passion.


Verse 18. "I will give thee thanks in the great congregation." Notable deliverances must be recorded, and their fame emblazoned. All the saints should be informed of the Lord's goodness. The theme is worthy of the largest assembly, the experience of a believer is a subject fit for an assembled universe to hear of. Most men publish their griefs, good men should proclaim their mercies. ["I will praise thee among much people."] Among friends and foes will I glorify the God of my salvation. Praise—personal praise, public praise, perpetual praise—should be the daily revenue of the King of heaven. Thus, for the second time, David's prayer ends in praise, as indeed all prayers should. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 159.

Verse 19. He earnestly prays that as they have no cause for their enmity, they may have no cause for triumph either in his folly, sin, or overthrow. ["Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause."] The winking of the eye was the low-bred sign of congratulation at the ruin of their victim, and it may also have been one of their scornful gestures as they gazed upon him whom they despised. To cause hatred is the mark of the wicked, to suffer it causelessly is the lot of the righteous. God is the natural Protector of all who are wronged, and he is the enemy of all oppressors. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 160.


Verse 28. A blessed theme, a fitting tongue, an endless speech.
Psalm 36

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. To the Chief Musician, He who had the leadership of the Temple service was charged with the use of this song in public worship. What is everybody's business is never done. It was well to have one person specially to attend to the service of song in the house of the Lord. Of David the servant of the Lord. This would seem to indicate that the Psalm peculiarly befits one who esteems it an honour to be called Jehovah's servant. It is THE SONG OF HAPPY SERVICE; such a one as all may join in who bear the easy yoke of Jesus. The wicked are contrasted with the righteous, and the great Lord of devout men is heartily extolled; thus obedience to so good a Master is indirectly insisted on, and rebellion against him is plainly condemned.

DIVISION. From Ps 36:1-4 David describes the rebellious: in Ps 36:5-9 he extols the various attributes of the Lord; in Ps 36:10-11 he addresses the Lord in prayer, and in the last verse his faith sees in vision the overthrow of all the workers of iniquity.

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EXPOSITION

Verse 1. The transgression of the wicked. His daring and wanton sin; his breaking the bounds of law and justice. Saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. Men's sins have a voice to godly ears. They are the outer index of an inner evil. It is clear that men who dare to sin constantly and presumptuously cannot respect the great Judge of all. Despite the professions of unrighteous men, when we see their unhallowed actions our heart is driven to the conclusion that they have no religion whatever. Unholiness is clear evidence of ungodliness. Wickedness is the fruit of an atheistic root. This may be made clear to the candid head by cogent reasoning, but it is clear already and intuitively to the pious heart. If God be everywhere, and I fear him, how can I dare to break his laws in his very presence? He must be a desperate traitor who will rebel in the monarch's own halls. Whatever theoretical opinions bad men may avow, they can only be classed with atheists, since they are such practically. Those eyes which have no fear of God before them now, shall have the terrors of hell before them for ever.

Verse 2. For. Here is the argument to prove the proposition laid down in the former verse. David here runs over the process of reasoning by which he had become convinced that wicked men have no proper idea of God or respect for him. God fearing men see their sins and bewail them, where the reverse is the case we may be sure there is no fear of God. He flattereth himself in his own eyes. He counts himself a fine fellow, worthy of great respect. He quiets his
conscience, and so deceives his own judgment as to reckon himself a pattern of excellence; if not for morality, yet for having sense enough not to be enslaved by rules which are bonds to others. He is the free thinker, the man of strong mind, the hater of cant, the philosopher; and the servants of God are, in his esteem, mean spirited and narrow minded. Of all flatteries this is the most absurd and dangerous. Even the silliest bird will not set traps for itself; the most pettifogging attorney will not cheat himself. To smooth over one's own conduct to one's conscience (which is the meaning of the Hebrew) is to smooth one's own path to hell. The descent to eternal ruin is easy enough, without making a glissade of it, as self flatters do. Until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

At length he is found out and detested, despite his self conceit. Rottenness smells sooner or later too strong to be concealed. There is a time when the leprosy cannot be hidden. At last the old house can no longer be propped up, and falls about the tenant's ears: so there is a limit to a man's self gratulation; he is found out amid general scorn, and can no longer keep up the farce which he played so well. If this happens not in this life, the hand of death will let light in upon the coveted character, and expose the sinner to shame and contempt. The self flattering process plainly proves the atheism of sinners, since the bare reflection that God sees them would render such self flatteries extremely difficult, if not impossible. Belief in God, like light reveals, and then our sin and evil are perceived; but wicked men are in the dark, for they cannot see what is so clearly within them and around them that it stares them in the face.

Verse 3. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit. This pair of hell dogs generally hunt together, and what one does not catch the other will; if iniquity cannot win by oppression, deceit will gain by chicanery. When the heart is so corrupt as to flatter itself, the tongue follows suit. The open sepulchre of the throat reveals the foulness of the inner nature. God fearing men make a conscience of their words, and if they sin through infirmity they do not invent excuses, or go about to boast of their wickedness: but because wicked men think little of evil and artful speeches, we may be clear that God rules not in their souls. The original by declaring that the words of the wicked are falsehood and deceit is peculiarly strong; as if they were not only false in quality, but actual falseness itself. He hath left off to be wise, and to do good. From the good way he has altogether gone aside. Men who fear God proceed from strength to strength in the right path, but godless men soon forsake what little good they once knew. How could men apostatise if they had respect unto the supreme Judge? Is it not because they grow more and more forgetful of God, that in due season they relinquish even that hypocritical reverence of him which in former days they maintained in order to flatter their souls?
Verse 4. *He deviseth mischief upon his bed.* His place of rest becomes the place for plotting. His bed is a hot bed for poisonous weeds. God fearing men meditate upon God and his service; but when men turn all their thoughts and inventive faculties towards evil, their godlessness is proved to a demonstration. He hath the devil for his bed fellow who lies abed and schemes how to sin. God is far from him. *He setteth himself in a way that is not good.* When he gets up he resolutely and persistently pursues the mischief which he planned. The worst of ways he prefers for his walking, for he has taught his heart to love filthiness, having accustomed himself to revel in it in imagination. *He abhorreth not evil.* So far from having a contempt and abhorrence for evil, he even rejoices in it, and patronises it. He never hates a wrong thing because it is wrong, but he meditates on it, defends it, and practises it. What a portrait of a graceless man these few verses afford us! His jauntness of conscience, his licentiousness of speech, his intentness upon wrong doing, his deliberate and continued preference of iniquity, and withal his atheistic heart, are all photographed to the life. Lord, save us from being such.

Verses 5-9. From the baseness of the wicked the psalmist turns his contemplation to the glory of God. Contrasts are impressive.

Verse 5. *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens.* Like the ethereal blue, it encompasses the whole sphere, smiling upon universal nature, acting as a canopy for all the creatures of earth, surmounting the loftiest peaks of human provocations, and rising high above the mists of mortal transgression. Clear sky is evermore above, and mercy calmly smiles above the din and smoke of this poor world. Darkness and clouds are but of earth's lower atmospheres: the heavens are evermore serene, and bright with innumerable stars. Divine mercy abides in its vastness of expanse, and matchless patience, all unaltered by the rebellions of man. When we can measure the heavens, then shall we bound the mercy of the Lord. Towards his own servants especially, in the salvation of the Lord Jesus, he has displayed grace higher than the heaven of heavens, and wider than the universe. O that there atheist could but see this, how earnestly would he long to become a servant of Jehovah! *Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.* Far, far above all comprehension is the truth and faithfulness of God. He never fails, nor forgets, nor falters, nor forfeits his word. Afflictions are like clouds, but the divine truthfulness is all around them. While we are under the cloud we are in the region of God's faithfulness; when we mount above it we shall not need such an assurance. To every word of threat, or promise, prophecy or covenant, the Lord has exactly adhered, for he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent.
Verse 6. *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains.* Firm and unmoved, lofty and sublime. As winds and hurricanes shake not an Alp, so the righteousness of God is never in any degree affected by circumstances; he is always just. Who can bribe the Judge of all the earth, or who can, by threatening, compel him to pervert judgment? Not even to save his elect would the Lord suffer his righteousness to be set aside. No awe inspired by mountain scenery can equal that which fills the soul when it beholds the Son of God slain as a victim to vindicate the justice of the Inflexible Lawgiver. Right across the path of every unholy man who dreams of heaven stand the towering Andes of divine righteousness, which no unregenerate sinner can ever climb. Among great mountains lie slumbering avalanches, and there the young lightnings try their callow wings until the storm rushes down amain from the awful peaks; so against the great day of the Lord's wrath the Lord has laid up in the mountains of his righteousness dreadful ammunition of war with which to overwhelm his adversaries. *Thy judgments are a great deep.* God's dealings with men are not to be fathomed by every boaster who demands to see a why for every wherefore. The Lord is not to be questioned by us as to why this and why that. He has reasons, but he does not choose to submit them to our foolish consideration. Far and wide, terrible and irresistible like the ocean are the providential dispensations of God: at one time they appear as peaceful as the unrippled sea of glass; at another tossed with tempest and whirlwind, but evermore most glorious and full of mystery. Who shall discover the springs of the sea? He who shall do this may hope to comprehend the providence of the Eternal.

"Undiscovered sea!
Into thy dark, unknown, mysterious caves,
And secret haunts unfathomably deep,
Beneath all visible retired, none went
And came again to tell the wonders there."

Yet as the deep mirrors the sky, so the mercy of the Lord is to be seen reflected in all the arrangements of his government on earth, and over the profound depth the covenant rainbow casts its arch of comfort, for the Lord is faithful in all that he doeth. *O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.* All the myriads of creatures, rational and irrational, are fed by Jehovah's hand. The countless beasts, the innumerable birds, the inconceivable abundance of fishes, the all but infinite armies of insects, all owe their continuance of life to the unceasing outgoings of the divine power. What a view of God this presents to us! What a debased creature must he be who sees no trace of such a God, and feels no awe of him!
Verse 7. *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God.* Here we enter into the Holy of Holies. Benevolence, and mercy, and justice, are everywhere, but the excellence of that mercy only those have known whose faith has lifted the veil and passed into the brighter presence of the Lord; these behold the excellency of the Lord's mercy. The word translated *excellent* may be rendered "precious; no gem or pearl can ever equal in value a sense of the Lord's love. This is such a brilliant as angels wear. King's regalia are a beggardly collection of worthless pebbles when compared with the tender mercies of Jehovah. David could not estimate it, and therefore, after putting a note of admiration, he left our hearts and imagination, and, better still, our experience, to fill up the rest. He writes *how excellent!* because he cannot tell us the half of it. *Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.* The best of reasons for the best of courses. The figure is very beautiful. The Lord overshadows his people as a hen protects her brood, or as an eagle covers its young; and we as the little ones run under the blessed shelter and feel at rest. To cower down under the wings of God is so sweet. Although the enemy be far too strong for us, we have no fear, for we nestle under the Lord's wing. O that more of Adam's race knew the excellency of the heavenly shelter! It made Jesus weep to see how they refused it: our tears may well lament the same evil.

Verse 8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.* Those who learn to put their trust in God shall be received into his house, and shall share in the provision laid up therein. The dwelling place of the Lord is not confined to any place, and hence reside where we may, we may regard our dwelling, if we be believers, as one room in the Lord's great house; and we shall, both in providence and grace, find a soul contenting store supplied to us as the result of living by faith in nearness to the Lord. If we regard the assembly of the saints as being peculiarly the house of God, believers shall, indeed, find in sacred worship the richest spiritual food. Happy is the soul that can drink in the sumptuous dainties of the gospel—nothing can so completely fill the soul. *And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* As they have the fruits of Eden to feed on, so shall they have the river of Paradise to drink from. God's everlasting love bears to us a constant and ample comfort, of which grace makes us to drink by faith, and then our pleasure is of the richest kind. The Lord not only brings us to this river, but makes us drink: herein we see the condescension of divine love. Heaven will, in the fullest sense, fulfil these words; but they who trust in the Lord enjoy the antepast even here. The happiness given to the faithful is that of God himself; purified spirits joy with the same joy as the Lord himself. "That my joy may be in you, that your joy may be full."
Verse 9. *For with thee is the fountain of life.* This verse is made of simple words, but like the first chapter of John's Gospel, it is very deep. From the Lord, as from an independent self sufficient spring, all creature life proceeds, by him is sustained, through him alone can it be perfected. Life is in the creature, but the fountain of it is only in the Creator. Of spiritual life, this is true in the most emphatic sense; "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," "and we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God." *In thy light shall we see light.* Light is the glory of life. Life in the dark is misery, and rather death than life. The Lord alone can give natural, intellectual, and spiritual life; he alone can make life bright and lustrous. In spiritual things the knowledge of God sheds a light on all other subjects. We need no candle to see the sun, we see it by its own radiance, and then see everything else by the same lustre. We never see Jesus by the light of self, but self in the light of Jesus. No inward intelligence of ours leads us to receive the Spirit's light, but the rather, it often helps to quench the sacred beam; purely and only by his own illumination, the Holy Ghost lights up the dark recesses of our heart's ungodliness. Vain are they who look to learning and human wit, one ray from the throne of God is better than the noonday splendour of created wisdom. Lord, give me the sun, and let those who will delight in the wax candles of superstition and the phosphorescence of corrupt philosophy. Faith derives both light and life from God, and hence she neither dies nor darkens.

Verse 10. *O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee.* We ask no more than a continuance of the past mercy. Lord, extend this grace of thine to all the days of all who have been taught to know thy faithful love, thy tenderness, thine immutability and omnipotence. As they have been taught of the Lord to know the Lord, so go on to instruct them and perfect them. This prayer is the heart of the believer asking precisely that which the heart of his God is prepared to grant. It is well when the petition is but the reflection of the promise. *And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.* As thou hast never failed the righteous, so abide thou in the same manner their defender and avenger. The worst thing to be feared by the man of God is to be forsaken of heaven, hence this prayer; but the fear is groundless, hence the peace which faith brings to us. Learn from this verse, that although a continuance of mercy is guaranteed in the covenant, we are yet to make it a matter of prayer. For this good thing will the Lord be enquired of.

Verse 11. *Let not the foot of pride come against me.* The general prayer is here turned into a particular and personal one for himself. Pride is the devil's sin. Good men may well be afraid of proud men, for the serpent's seed will never cease to bite the heel of the godly. Fain would proud scoffers spurn the saints or
trample them under foot: against their malice prayer lifts up her voice. No foot shall come upon us, no hand shall prevail against us, while Jehovah is on our side. Let not the hand of the wicked remove me. Suffer me not to be driven about as a fugitive, nor torn from my place like an uprooted tree. Violence with both hand and foot, with means fair and means foul, strove to overthrow the psalmist, but he resorts to his great Patron, and sings a song of triumph in anticipation of the defeat of his foes.

Verse 12. There are the workers of iniquity fallen. Faith sees them scattered on the plain. There! before our very eyes sin, death, and hell, lie prostrate. Behold the vanquished foes! They are cast down. Providence and grace have dashed them from their vantage ground. Jesus has already thrown all the foes of his people upon their faces, and in due time all sinners shall find it so. And shall not be able to rise. The defeat of the ungodly and of the powers of evil is final, total, irretrievable. Glory be to God, however high the powers of darkness may carry it at this present, the time hastens on when God shall defend the right, and give to evil such a fall as shall for ever crush the hopes of hell; while those who trust in the Lord shall eternally praise him and rejoice in his holy name.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

TITLE. To the Chief Musician, has given rise to many conjectures. In the Septuagint the Hebrew word is translated, eiz to telos, to the end; a meaning so utterly vague as to defy all reasonable conjecture. ...The meaning of the term appears to be this: the Psalms in which it occurs were given in charge by their inspired authors to the Chief Musician overseeing some specific band of music, whether harps, psalteries, or wind instruments. John Jebb, A.M., in "A Literal Translation of the Book of Psalms," 1846.

Title. The servant of the Lord. David only uses this title here and in Psalm eighteen. In both he describes the dealings of God both with the righteous and the wicked, and it is most fit that at the very outset he should take his place with the servants of the Lord. C. H. S.

Whole Psalm. First Part. A character of a wicked man Ps 36:1. 1. He calls evil good Ps 36:2. 2. He continues in it. 3. He is an hypocrite Ps 36:3. 4. He is obstinate. 5. He is studious in wickedness Ps 36:4. Second part. God's patience and mercy Ps 36:5-6. 1. To all, even all creatures. 2. But particularly to his people, which he admires. Upon which the faithful (1) trust, (2) are satisfied Ps 36:7-8. The Third part. He prays that this effect may light, 1. On God's people
Verse 1. In this Psalm we have a description of sin, especially as it appears in those who have openly broken God's bands. The introduction is very striking; *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.* How could the *transgression of the wicked* speak within the heart of him who in the inscription of the Psalm declares himself to be the *servant of JEHOVAH*? These words are generally understood as signifying that the outward conduct of the sinner, as often as he thought of it, naturally suggested this conclusion to his mind, that he was destitute of all fear of God. But they may perhaps admit of another meaning, equally agreeable to the literal reading; *wickedness, saith of the wicked, within my heart,* etc. According to this view, the psalmist meant that notwithstanding the external pretences of the wicked, and all their attempts to cover their iniquity, he was certain that they had no real sense of the presence of God, that they secretly renounced his authority. How was he assured of this? By a comparison of their conduct with the dictates of the heart. He could not indeed look into their hearts, but he could look into his own, and there he found corruption so strong, that were it not for the fear of God that was implanted within him, he would be as bad as they. *John Jamieson.*

Verse 1. It is not the imperfection or shortcoming in the fear of God, but the being destitute of it altogether, that proveth a wicked man: *There is no fear of God before his eyes.* *David Dickson.*

Verse 1. (*last clause*). *Not having the fear of God before his eyes,* has become inwoven into proceedings in criminal courts. When a man has no fear of God, he is prepared for any crime. Total depravity is not too strong a term to describe human wickedness. The sinner has *no fear of God.* Where that is wanting, how can there be any piety? And if there is no piety, there must be total want of right affections, and that is the very essence of depravity. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1. Durst any mock God with flourishes and formalities in religion, if they feared him? Durst any provoke God to his face by real and open wickedness, if they feared him? Durst any sin with the judgments of God fresh bleeding before their eyes, if they feared the Lord and his wrath? Durst they sin with heaps of precious mercy before their eyes, if they feared the Lord and his goodness? Durst any flatter either others or themselves with hopes of impunity in their sin, if they feared the Lord and his truth? Durst any slight their own promises, professions, protestations, oaths, or design the entangling of others by them, rather than the binding of themselves, did they fear the Lord and his
Psalm 36

faithfulness, even the Lord who keepeth covenant and promise for ever? All these and many more transgressions of the wicked (all these ways of transgression are found among the wicked, it were well if none of them were found among those who have a name of godliness; I say, all these transgressions of the wicked) say, *There is no fear of God before their eyes.* 

*Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 1.** The wicked man has no regard to the oracles of God: he had one in his own heart, which dictates nothing but rebellion. *Zachary Mudge.*

**Verse 2.** *For he flattereth himself in his own eyes.* The matter which this self flattery especially concerns is sin, as appears from the following clause. He deceives himself as to its nature and consequences, its evil and aggravations, and he continues to do so *until his iniquity be found to be hateful;* till it be fully discovered, and appear in its magnitude and atrocious circumstances both to himself and others, by some awful divine judgment, such as that mentioned in the last verse of the Psalm: "*There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.*" He adduces this self deceit and continuance in it, as illustrating the truth of that judgment he had formed of the state of such a person: *There is no fear of God before his eyes: for he flattereth himself in his own eyes.* And surely the proof is incontrovertible. For a man under the bondage of sin would never *flatter himself in his own eyes* were it not that God is not before them. The reason why he thinks so well of himself is, that *God is not in all his thoughts.* He hath cast off all fear about himself because he hath no fear of God. *John Jamieson.*

**Verse 2.** *He flattereth himself.* 1. Some flatter themselves with a secret hope, that there is no such thing as *another world.* 2. Some flatter themselves that *death* is a great way off, and that they shall hereafter have much opportunity to seek salvation. 3. Some flatter themselves that they lead *moral* and orderly lives, and therefore think that they shall not be damned. 4. Some make the *advantages* under which they live an occasion of self flattery. They flatter themselves that they live in a place where the gospel is powerfully preached, and among a religious people, where many have been converted; and they think it will be much easier for them to be saved on that account. 5. Some flatter themselves with their own *intentions.* They intend to give themselves liberty for a while longer, and *then* to reform. 6. There are some who flatter themselves that they *do,* and have *done,* a great deal for their salvation, and therefore hope they shall obtain it; when indeed they neither do what they ought to do, nor what they might do even in their present state of unregeneracy; nor are they in any likely way to be converted. 7. Some hope by their strivings to obtain salvation of *themselves.* They have a secret imagination that they shall, by
degrees, work in themselves sorrow and repentance of sin, and love towards
God and Jesus Christ. Their striving is not so much an earnest seeking to God,
as a striving to do themselves that which is the work of God. 8. Some sinners
flatter themselves that they are already converted. They sit down and rest in a
false hope, persuading themselves that all their sins are pardoned; that God
loves them; that they shall go to heaven when they die; and that they need
trouble themselves no more. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased
with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched,
and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Re 3:17. Condensed from
Jonathan Edwards.

Verse 2. In his own eyes. He had not God before his eyes in holy awe, therefore
he puts himself there in unholy admiration. He who makes little of God makes
much of himself. They who forget adoration fall into adulation. The eyes must
see something, and if they admire not God, they will flatter self. C. H. S.

Verse 2. Until his iniquity be found to be hateful; that is, until he finds by
experience that it is a more dreadful thing to sin against God, and break his

Verse 2. Hateful. Odious to himself, others, and to God. Gilbert Genebrard,
1537-1597.

Verse 3. He hath left off. That little light he once had, he hath lost, and cast off
such good practices as once in hypocrisy he performed; neither will he learn to
do better. John Trapp.

Verse 3. (last clause). Apostasy from God is really an undoing of all the good
which we have done. It is a wicked repentance quite contrary to the grace of
repentance; as that is a repentance from dead works, so this is a repentance
from works of a better sort: He hath left off to be wise, and to do good. It is a
perversion to evil after a seeming conversion from it. Timothy Cruso.

Verses 3-4.

Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock
Number the midnight watches, on his bed
Devising mischief more; and early rose,
And made most hellish meals of good men's names.
From door to door you might have seen him speed,
Or placed amid a group of gaping fools.
Peace fled the neighbourhood in which he made
His haunts; and, like a moral pestilence,
Before his breath the healthy shoots and blooms
Of social joy and happiness decayed.
Fools only in his company were seen,
And those forsaken of God, and to themselves
Given up. The prudent shunned him and his house
As one who had a deadly moral plague.
—Robert Pollock, 1799-1827.

Verse 4. He deviseth mischief upon his bed. As the man that fears God
communes with his heart upon his bed, that he may not sin, no, not in his heart; so the man that fears not God, devises how he may plot and perform sin willingly. David Dickson.

Verse 4. Upon his bed. Most diligently does Ayguan follow up the scriptural expressions concerning a bed, and tell us that there are six different beds of wickedness—that of luxury, that of avarice, of ambition, of greediness, of torpor, and of cruelty, and he illustrates them all by examples from Scripture. J. M. Neale.

Verse 4. He setteth himself in a way that is not good. To wait to sin is to sin deliberately, yea, to wait to sin resolvedly. That sin is exceedingly sinfully committed which we set and prepare ourselves to commit. David, describing a wicked man, saith, He setteth himself in a way that is not good; that is, in an evil way: he doth not only fall into sin (that may be the case of a good man), but he takes or chooseth an evil way, and then sets or settles himself in it, resolving not to leave it, no, nor to be beaten out of it. Sin may be said to wait for a godly man, that is, Satan waits and watches his season to tempt him unto sin; but a godly man doth not wait nor watch to sin. It is bad enough to be overtaken with sin, or with a fault (as the apostle speaks, Ga 6:1); but to be taken with sin, and so to wait for a season to take our fill of it, is as bad as bad can be. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 4. He setteth himself in a way that is not good. Proud sinners have strongest conceit that they go right, at least in the way of their choice. Satan blindeth them so, that they mistake both the end and the way: in their count they are running to heaven, when they are posting to hell: he serveth them kindly with fresh post horses. Sometimes he mounts them on drunkenness, and when they have run a stage on that beastliness, he can mount them on lechery. Again, he can refresh them with avarice; and if they be weary of that slow jade, he setteth them on lofty ambition, and to make them more spirited he can horse them on restless contention. Every one seeth not Satan's enquiry: there is no
complexion or disposition, but he hath a fit horse for it, and that of itself. Every man's predominant is a beast of Satan's saddling and providing to carry men to hell. The way is one, the post master is one, he is to be found at every stage, mounting his gallants, their horses are all of one kind though not of one colour. Happy is the man whom God dismounts in that evil way, and more happy is he who taketh with that stay, and turneth his course to heaven. William Struther.

**Verse 4.** *He abhorreth not.* i.e., is far enough from rejecting any instrument, however sinful, for attaining his purposes. J. J. Stewart Perowne.

**Verse 5.** *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens.* David considering the thoughts and deeds of impious men, and the mercy of God towards them, utters this exclamation. When men are so impudently, who does not admire the divine longsuffering! Sebastian Munster, 1489-1552.

**Verses 5-7.** This Psalm doth fitly set forth unto us the estate and condition of these times, wherein wickedness increaseth: and so in the former part of the Psalm is a discovery of wickedness, verse 3. And what should we do when there is such wickedness in the earth? In the fifth verse, *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.* God is gathering up all goodness, mercy, and peace from man to himself; and though there is cruelty, mischief, and wickedness in the world, in the earth, yet there is mercy, truth, and faithfulness in the clouds; and it's good that wisdom, goodness, truth, and righteousness leave the world, and cleave to God, that so we may follow it; and that what goodness, mercy, truth, and faithfulness we formerly enjoyed in man, we may enjoy it in God. And when wickedness increaseth, righteousness increaseth likewise: *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains:* when the world tears and breaks itself in pieces, then is the righteousness of God a great mountain. *Thy judgments are a great deep:* when the whole world is become one sea of confusion, then are the judgments of the Lord a great deep, where not only man, but beasts may rest safely. Thou preservest man and beast. And though this time is a time of growing and spreading wickedness in man, yet it is a time of sweetest admiration and love in God; and when men that sin do cry out, O woeful man! they that enjoy God, cry out, O happy man! And though men that live in the earth cry out, O miserable! what times are here? men that live in heaven cry out, *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God!* The Lord makes all things naked and bare, that we only may have him to be our safety. William Sedgwick (1600-1668). In "The Excellency of the love of God, "a sermon in a volume, entitled "Some Flashes of Lightnings of the Son of Man, "1648.

**Verses 5-9.**
Thy mercie Lord doth to the HEAUENS extend,
Thy faithfulness doth to the CLOUDES assend;
Thy justice stedfast as a MOUNTAINE is,
Thy JUDGEMENTS deepe as is the great Abisse;
Thy noble mercies saue all liueinge thinges,
The sonnes of men creepe underneath thy winges:
With thy great plenty they are fedd at will,
And of thy pleasure's streame they drinke their fill;
For euen the well of life remaines with thee,
And in thy glorious light wee light shall see.
—Sir John Davies.

Verse 6. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains. Literally mountains of God, which men have not planted, and which men cannot move. Christopher Wordsworth.

Verse 6. Thy judgments are a great deep. Men's sins are a great deep, and Satan's ways are called a depth; but God's judgments, his ways in the wheels, are the greatest deep of all, they are unsearchable. William Greenhill.

Verse 7. How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! etc. The expressions here which denote the abundance of divine blessings upon the righteous man, seems to be taken from the temple, from whence they were to issue. Under the covert of the temple, the wings of the cherubim, they were to be sheltered. The richness of the sacrifices, the streams of oil, wine, odours, etc., and the light of the golden candlestick, are all plainly referred to. Samuel Burder.

Verse 7. Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. The word signifies to fly, to betake one's self to a place of safety: as the chickens in danger to be seized on, fly under the wings of the hen. "Under whose wings thou art come to trust." Ru 2:12. The helpless bird pursued by the kite, in danger to be devoured, runs under the shadow of the dam. Thus it is with a sinner at the first working of faith, he apprehends himself pursued by wrath and judgment; he knows if they seize on him he must perish without remedy. Oh, the sad condition of such a soul! Oh, but he sees Christ spreading his wings ready to secure perishing sinners; he hears him inviting in the gospel to come under his shadow! Oh, how sweet is that voice to him (however, while senseless he rejected it)! He hears, obeys, and runs to Christ for shelter, and so he is safe. How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. David Clarkson.
Verse 7. *Thy wings.* A common figure in the Psalms, taken more immediately, in my opinion, from the wings of the cherubim overshadowing the mercyseat which covered the ark; but more remotely from the birds, which defend their young from the solar rays by overshadowing them with their wings. *Francis Hare (Bishop),* 1740.

Verse 7.

In lonesome cell, guarded and strong I lie,  
Bound by Christ's love, his truth to testify,  
Though walls be thick the door no hand unclose,  
God is my strength, my solace, and repose.

In a letter of Jeronius Segerson, written in the prison at Antwerp to his wife, named Lysken, who likewise lay a prisoner there, 1551.

Verse 9. *For with thee is the fountain of life.* These are some of the most wonderful words in the Old Testament. Their fulness of meaning no commentary can ever exhaust. They are, in fact, the kernel and the anticipation of much of the profoundest teaching of S. John. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 9. *In thy light shall we see light.* The object and matter of our eternal happiness is called light. It will not be a dazzling and confounding light as was the brightness of Moses' face at his coming down from the mount; the people could not behold him: it will not be an astonishing light, as that in the mount at our Lord's transfiguration; the disciples fell to the ground, their weak eyes could not behold those glimpses of glory that shined through the vail of flesh. But the light in our heaven of happiness will be a strengthening and comforting light; it will strengthen and confirm the eyes of our understanding to behold it. Then shall we be enabled as the young eagles, to behold the Sun of Righteousness in his brightness and glory. It was said by the Lord to Moses, "None can see my face and live." Ex 33:20. That glorious sight which Daniel saw took strength from him. Da 10:8. The object being without him, drew out all his spirits to behold and admire it and so weakened him; but in heaven our God, whom we shall see and know, will be within us to strengthen us; then shall we live because we see his face. It will be also a comforting light, like the light of the morning to the wearied watchman, who longed after it in the nighttime. *William Colville.*

Verse 9. *In thy light shall we see light.* It is but a kind of dim twilight comparatively, which we enjoy here in this world. While we are hid in this prison house we can see but little; but our Father's house above is full of light;
"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun," etc. Mt 13:43. If the Day star be risen in your hearts, live in the pleasant and cheerful expectation of perfect day. For we can ascend but a little way into the mysteries of the kingdom, as long as we are upon the footstool; and we shall know vastly and inconceivably more in the first moment after we come to heaven, than we are capable of attaining here throughout all our days. *Timothy Cruso.*

**Verse 9. In thy light shall we see light.** The light of nature is like a spark, the light of the gospel a lamp, the light of grace a star, but the light of glory the sun itself. The higher our ascent the greater our light; God dwelleth "in the light which no man can approach unto." 1Ti 6:16—no man, while he carries mortality and sin about him; but when those two corrupt and incapable qualities shall be put off, then shall we be brought to that light. We are now glad of the sun and stars over our heads, to give us light: what light and delight shall that be when these are under our feet! That light must needs go as far beyond their light as they now go beyond us. But alas! they are only able to discourse of that light, that do enjoy it, to whom that eternal day is risen; not we that live in the humble shade of mortality and natural dimness. I leave it therefore to your meditations: it is a glorious light which we do well often to consider, considering to admire, admiring to love, loving to desire, desiring to seek, and finding to enjoy for ever. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 9. In thy light shall we see light.** There is a great boast of light in the world, and there is some ground for it in natural things; but, as of old the world by wisdom knew not God, so of late. If ever we know God, it must be through he medium of his word. This I take to be the meaning of the passage. The term *light* in the last clause means the true knowledge of God; and, in the first, the true medium of attaining it, namely, divine revelation. The sum seems to amount to this: the word of God is the grand medium by which we can attain a true and saving knowledge of God. What the sun and stars are to the regions of matter, that revelation is to the mental region. Ge 1:13,17. ...There are many things of which you may entertain no doubt, concerning which there may be no manner of dispute; yet, make a point of seeing them in God's light. Many content themselves with seeing them in the light in which great and good men have placed them; but, though angels, they are not the true light: they all view things partially. If what they say be true, yet, if we receive it merely on their representation, our faith will stand in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. 1Co 2:5. That knowledge or faith which has not God's word for its ground will not stand in the day of trial. *Andrew Fuller.*

**Verse 9. In this communion of God what can we want? Why, God shall be all and in all unto us; he shall be beauty for the eye, music for the ear, honey for
the taste, the full content and satisfaction of our desires, and that immediately from himself. True it is God is all in all in this world, "In him we live, and move, and have our being; " but here he works by means of secondary causes; here he gives wine to make the heart glad, and oil, etc.; but there all intervening means between God and us is removed: with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light; not in the light of the sun, or the light of a candle; there is no need of them Re 22:5; but "in thy light, "the light of God himself; yea, the whole life of glory, together with all the concomitants of it, flows from him as the sole and original fountain of it. Oh, how sweet must that happiness be that is so derived! Edmund Pinchbeck, B.D., in "The Fountain of Life:" a Funeral Sermon, 1652.

Verse 9. Whatsoever can be found in the creature, even when God blesseth the use thereof to his own children, is but a drop from the ocean, is but a little water out of the well, in comparison of what a believer will see and feel to be in God reconciled through Christ, for with thee is the fountain of life. David Dickson.

Verse 10. Continue thy lovingkindness. When God begins once to let out mercy to his servants, he stints not presently, but proceeds. ...When Rachel had her first son, she called his name Joseph, which signifieth adding, or increase; for she said, "The Lord shall add to me another son." Ge 30:24. Now God hath begun to show kindness, he shall not only give me this, but he shall give me another son also. When the Lord hath bestowed one mercy on you, you may name it Joseph, increase, addition, for God will bestow another upon you. Abraham had many mercies from God, one after another; and Moses, a multitude of mercies; he converses with God face to face; he hears God speak; he has God's presence to go along with him; yea, he sees all God's goodness and glory to pass before him. When mercies come forth, God will not presently shut the door of mercy again. Continue thy lovingkindness. The Hebrew is, draw forth, or draw out thy lovingkindness: a metaphor either taken from vessels of wine, which being set abroach once, yield not only one cup, but many cups; so when God setteth abroach the wine of his mercy, he will not fill your cup once, but twice and seven times: or, taken from a mother, who hath her breasts full of milk, draws them out for her child, not once, but often; the child shall have the breast many times in the day, and many times in the night, so when God begins to show mercy to you, he will draw out his breasts of consolation, and will bestow mercy after mercy upon you; or, from a line which is extended, for so God being in a way of mercy, will extend the line of mercy, and measure out mercy after mercy for you. William Greenhill.
Verse 10. The true mark of a godly man standeth in the conjunction of faith in God, with sincere study of obedience to him, for, *He is the man that knoweth God*, and is upright in heart. *David Dickson.*

Verse 11. *Foot...Hand.* Both foot and hand are named because both used in waging war. *Simeon de Muis.*

Verse 12. *There are the workers of iniquity fallen.* This is said as if the psalmist pointed, when he said it, to a particular place with his finger; and the same mode of expression occurs in Ps 14:5; or, it may be rendered, *then* (i.e., when the just are satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house, being rewarded for sincerely worshipping thee in it), *shall they fall, all that work wickedness; they shall be cast down, and shall not be able to rise,* as is the case with persons who have been thrown with violence upon the hard ground. *Daniel Cresswell.*

**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

Verse 1. What is the fear of God? How does it operate? What is the effect of its absence? What should we learn from seeing such evil results? Or the atheism underlying transgression.

Verse 2. The arts, motives, assistances, results, and punishments of self flattery, and the discovery which concludes it.


Verse 2. On the deceitfulness of the heart, with regard to the commission of sin. *Two Sermons, in Jamieson's "Sermons on the Heart."*

Verse 3. Bad words. Two out of many kinds.

Verse 3. *(second clause).* The relation between true wisdom and practical goodness.


Verse 4. The sinner on his bed, in his conduct, in his heart; and to this, in his death, and in his doom.
Verse 4. (second clause). Ways which are not good.

Verse 4. (last clause). Neutrality condemned.

Verses 5-6. Four glorious similes of the mercy, faithfulness, and providence of God. The preacher has here a wealth of poetic imagery never surpassed.


Verse 6. (second clause). God's judgments are—

1. Often unfathomable—we cannot discover the foundation or cause, and spring of them.

2. They are safe sailing. Ships never strike on rocks out in the great deeps.

3. They conceal great treasure.

4. They work much good—the great deep, though ignorance thinks it to be all waste, a salt and barren wilderness, is one of the greatest blessings to this round world.

5. They become a highway of communion with God. The sea is today the great highway of the world.

Verse 6. (last clause). Kindness of God to the lower animals, as well as man.

Verse 7. The object, reasons, nature, and experience of faith.

Verses 7-8. Admiration! Confidence! Expectation! Realisation!

Verse 8. (first clause). The provisions of the Lord's house. What they are, their excellence and abundance, and for whom provided.

Verse 8. (second clause). The heavenly Hiddekel—Its source, its flood, the happy drinkers, how they came to drink.

Verse 9. (first clause). LIFE, natural, mental, spiritual, proceeds from God, is sustained, restored, purified, and perfected by him. In him it dwells with permanency, from him it flows freely, with freshness, abundance, and purity; to him it should be consecrated.
Verse 9. (second clause). LIGHT, what it is to see it. Divine light, what it is; how it is the medium by which we see other light. The experience here described, and the duty here hinted at.

Verse 10.

1. The character of the righteous—he knows God, and is upright in heart.

2. His privilege—lovingkindness and righteousness.

3. His prayer, continue, etc.

Verse 10. The need of daily supplies of grace.

Psalm 37

Exposition
Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings
Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. Of David. There is but this word to denote the authorship; whether it was a song or a meditation we are not told. It was written by David in his old age Ps 37:25, and is the more valuable as the record of so varied an experience.

SUBJECT. The great riddle of the prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the righteous, which has perplexed so many, is here dealt with in the light of the future; and fretfulness and repining are most impressively forbidden. It is a Psalm in which the Lord hushes most sweetly the too common repinings of his people, and calms their minds as to his present dealings with his own chosen flock, and the wolves by whom they are surrounded. It contains eight great precepts, is twice illustrated by autobiographical statements, and abounds in remarkable contrasts.

DIVISION. The Psalm can scarcely be divided into considerable sections. It resembles a chapter of the book of Proverbs, most of the verses being complete in themselves. It is an alphabetical Psalm: in somewhat broken order, the first letters of the verses follow the Hebrew alphabet. This may have been not only a poetical invention, but a help to memory. The reader is requested to read the Psalm through without comment before he turns to our exposition.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. The Psalm opens with the first precept. It is alas! too common for believers in their hours of adversity to think themselves harshly dealt with when they see persons utterly destitute of religion and honesty, rejoicing in abundant prosperity. Much needed is the command, Fret not thyself because of evildoers. To fret is to worry, to have the heartburn, to fume, to become vexed. Nature is very apt to kindle a fire of jealousy when it sees lawbreakers riding on horses, and obedient subjects walking in the mire: it is a lesson learned only in the school of grace, when one comes to view the most paradoxical providences with the devout complacency of one who is sure that the Lord is righteous in all his acts. It seems hard to carnal judgments that the best meat should go to the dogs, while loving children pine for want of it. Neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. The same advice under another shape. When one is poor, despised, and in deep trial, our old Adam naturally becomes envious of the rich and great; and when we are conscious that we have been more righteous than they, the devil is sure to be at hand with blasphemous reasonings. Stormy weather may curdle even the cream of humanity. Evil men instead of being envied, are to be viewed with horror and aversion; yet their loaded tables, and gilded trappings, are too apt to fascinate our poor half opened eyes. Who envies the fat bullock the ribbons and garlands which
decorate him as he is led to the shambles? Yet the case is a parallel one; for ungodly rich men are but as beasts fattened for the slaughter.

**Verse 2.** For they shall soon be cut down like the grass. The scythe of death is sharpening. Green grows the grass, but quick comes the scythe. The destruction of the ungodly will be speedy, sudden, sure, overwhelming, irretrievable. The grass cannot resist or escape the mower. And wither as the green herb. The beauty of the herb dries up at once in the heat of the sun, and so all the glory of the wicked shall disappear at the hour of death. Death kills the ungodly man like grass, and wrath withers him like hay; he dies, and his name rots. How complete an end is made of the man whose boasts had no end! Is it worth while to waste ourselves in fretting about the insect of an hour, an ephemeral which in the same day is born and dies? Within believers there is a living and incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever; why should they envy mere flesh, and the glory of it, which are but as grass, and the flower thereof?

**Verse 3.** Trust in the Lord. Here is the second precept, and one appropriate to the occasion. Faith cures fretting. Sight is cross-eyed, and views things only as they seem, hence her envy: faith has clearer optics to behold things as they really are, hence her peace. And do good. True faith is actively obedient. Doing good is a fine remedy for fretting. There is a joy in holy activity which drives away the rust of discontent. So shalt thou dwell in the land. In "the land" which floweth with milk and honey; the Canaan of the covenant. Thou shalt not wander in the wilderness of murmuring, but abide in the promised land of content and rest. "We which have believed do enter into rest." Very much of our outward depends upon the inward: where there is heaven in the heart there will be heaven in the house. And verily thou shalt be fed, or shepherded. To integrity and faith necessaries are guaranteed. The good shepherd will exercise his pastoral care over all believers. In truth they shall be fed, and fed on truth. The promise of God shall be their perpetual banquet; they shall neither lack in spirituals nor in temporals. Some read this as an exhortation, "Feed on truth; " certainly this is good cheer, and banishes for ever the hungry heart burnings of envy.

**Verse 4.** There is an ascent in this third precept. He who was first bidden not to fret, was then commanded actively to trust, and now is told with holy desire to delight in God. Delight thyself also in the Lord. Make Jehovah the joy and rejoicing of thy spirit. Bad men delight in carnal objects; do not envy them if they are allowed to take their fill in such vain idols; look thou to thy better delight, and fill thyself to the full with thy more sublime portion. In a certain sense imitate the wicked; they delight in their portion—take care to delight in yours, and so far from envying you will pity them. There is no room for fretting
if we remember that God is ours, but there is every incentive to sacred
enjoyment of the most elevated and ecstatic kind. Every name, attribute, word,
or deed of Jehovah, should be delightful to us, and in meditating thereon our
soul should be as glad as is the epicure who feeds delicately with a profound
relish for his dainties. And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. A
pleasant duty is here rewarded with another pleasure. Men who delight in God
desire or ask for nothing but what will please God; hence it is safe to give them
carte blanche. Their will is subdued to God's will, and now they may have
what they will. Our innermost desires are here meant, not our casual wishes;
there are many things which nature might desire which grace would never
permit us to ask for; these deep, prayerful, asking desires are those to which the
promise is made.

Verse 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord. Roll the whole burden of life upon the
Lord. Leave with Jehovah not thy present fretfulness merely, but all thy cares;
in fact, submit the whole tenor of thy way to him. Cast away anxiety, resign thy
will, submit thy judgment, leave all with the God of all. What a medicine is this
for expelling envy! What a high attainment does this fourth precept indicate!
How blessed must he be who lives every day in obedience to it! Trust also in
him; and he shall bring it to pass. Our destiny shall be joyfully accomplished if
we confidently entrust all to our Lord. We may serenely sing—

"Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be;
O lead me by thine own right hand,
Choose out the path for me."

"Smooth let it be or rough,
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it matters not,
It leads me to thy rest."

"I dare not choose my lot,
I would not if I might;
But choose Thou for me, O my God,
So shall I walk aright."

"Take thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill;
As ever best to thee may seem,
Choose thou my good and ill."
The ploughman sows and harrows, and then leaves the harvest to God. What can he do else? He cannot cover the heavens with clouds, or command the rain, or bring forth the sun or create the dew. He does well to leave the whole matter with God; and so to all of us it is truest wisdom, having obediently trusted in God, to leave results in his hands, and expect a blessed issue.

Verse 6. *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.* In the matter of personal reputation we may especially be content to be quiet, and leave our vindication with the Judge of all the earth. The more we fret in this case the worse for us. Our strength is to sit still. The Lord will clear the slandered. If we look to his honour, he will see to ours. It is wonderful how, when faith learns to endure calumny with composure, the filth does not defile her, but falls off like snowballs from a wall of granite. Even in the worst cases, where a good name is for awhile darkened, Providence will send a clearing like the dawning light, which shall increase until the man once censured shall be universally admired. *And thy judgment as the noonday.* No shade of reproach shall remain. The man shall be in his meridian of splendour. The darkness of his sorrow and his ill repute shall both flee away.

Verse 7. *Rest in the Lord.* This fifth is a most divine precept, and requires much grace to carry it out. To hush the spirit, to be silent before the Lord, to wait in holy patience the time for clearing up the difficulties of Providence—that is what every gracious heart should aim at. "Aaron held his peace:" "I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." A silent tongue in many cases not only shows a wise head, but a holy heart. *And wait patiently for him.* Time is nothing to him; let it be nothing to thee. God is worth waiting for. "He never is before his time, he never is too late." In a story we wait for the end to clear up the plot; we ought not to prejudge the great drama of life, but stay till the closing scene, and see to what a finis the whole arrives. *Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.* There is no good, but much evil, in worrying your heart about the present success of graceless plotters: be not enticed into premature judgments—they dishonour God, they weary yourself. Determine, let the wicked succeed as they may, that you will treat the matter with indifference, and never allow a question to be raised as to the righteousness and goodness of the Lord. What if wicked devices succeed and your own plans are defeated! there is more of the love of God in your defeats than in the successes of the wicked.

Verse 8. *Cease from anger and forsake wrath.* Especially anger against the arrangements of Providence, and jealousies of the temporary pleasures of those who are so soon to be banished from all comfort. Anger anywhere is madness, here it is aggravate insanity. Yet since anger will try to keep us company, we
must resolutely forsake it. Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. By no reasonings and under no circumstances be led into such a course. Fretfulness lies upon the verge of great sin. Many who have indulged a murmuring disposition have at last come to sin, in order to gain their fancied rights. Beware of carping at others, study to be yourself found in the right way; and as you would dread outward sin, tremble at inward repining.

Verse 9. For evil doers shall be cut off. Their death shall be a penal judgment; not a gentle removal to a better state, but an execution in which the axe of justice will be used. But those that wait upon the Lord—those who in patient faith expect their portion in another life—they shall inherit the earth. Even in this life they have the most of real enjoyment, and in the ages to come theirs shall be the glory and the triumph. Passion, according to Bunyan's parable, has his good things first, and they are soon over; Patience has his good things last, and they last for ever.

Verse 10. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be. When bad men reach to greatness, the judgments of God frequently sweep them away; their riches melt, their power decays, their happiness turns to wretchedness; they themselves cease any longer to be numbered with the living. The shortness of life makes us see that the glitter of the wicked great is not true gold. O wherefore, tried believer, dost thou envy one who in a little while will lie lower than the dust? Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. His house shall be empty, his chair of office vacant, his estate without an owner; he shall be utterly blotted out, perhaps cut off by his own debauchery, or brought to a deathbed of penury by his own extravagance. Gone like a passing cloud—forgotten as a dream—where are his boastings and hectorings, and where the pomp which made poor mortals think the sinner blest?

Verse 11. But the meek shall inherit the earth. Above all others they shall enjoy life. Even if they suffer, their consolations shall overtop their tribulations. By inheriting the land is meant obtaining covenant privileges and the salvation of God. Such as are truly humble shall take their lot with the rest of the heirs of grace, to whom all good things come by a sacred birthright. And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Peace they love and peace they shall have. If they find not abundance of gold, abundance of peace will serve their turn far better. Others find joy in strife, and thence arises their misery in due time, but peace leads on to peace, and the more a man loves it the more shall it come to him. In the halcyon period of the latter days, when universal peace shall make glad the earth, the full prophetic meaning of words like these will be made plain.
Verses 12-15. Here is the portrait of a proud oppressor armed to the teeth.

Verse 12. *The wicked plotteth against the just.* Why can he not let the good man alone? Because there is enmity between the serpent's seed and the seed of the woman. Why not attack him fairly? Why plot and scheme? Because it is according to the serpent's nature to be very subtle. Plain sailing does not suit those who are on board of "The Apollyon." *And gnashed upon him with his teeth.* The wicked show by their gestures what they would do if they could; if they cannot gnaw they will gnash; if they may not bite they will at least bark. This is precisely what the graceless world did with "that just One," the Prince of Peace. Yet he took no vengeance upon them, but like a silent lamb received injuries in patience.

Verse 13. *The Lord shall laugh at him.* The godly man needs not trouble himself, but leave well deserved vengeance to be dealt out by the Lord, who will utterly deride the malice of the good man's enemies. Let the proud scorners gnash his teeth and foam at the mouth; he has one to deal with who will look down upon him and his ravings with serene contempt. *For he seeth that his day is coming.* The evil man does not see how close his destruction is upon his heels; he boasts of crushing others when the foot of justice is already uplifted to trample him as the mire of the streets. Sinners, in the hand of an angry God, and yet plotting against his children! Poor souls, thus to run upon the point of Jehovahs's spear.

Verse 14. *The wicked have drawn out the sword.* They hold their weapon out of its sheath, and watch for a time to use it. *And have bent their bow.* One weapon is not enough, they carry another ready for action. They carry so strong a bow that they have trodden upon it to bend it—they will lose nothing for want of force or readiness. *To cast down the poor and needy.* These are their game, the objects of their accursed malice. These cowards attack not their equals, but seek out those excellent ones who, from the gentleness of their spirits and the poverty of their estates, are not able to defend themselves. Note how our meek and lowly Lord was beset by cruel foes, armed with all manner of weapons to slay him. *And to slay such as be of upright conversation.* Nothing short of the overthrow and death of the just will content the wicked. The sincere and straightforward are hated by the crafty schemers who delight in unrighteousness. See, then, the enemies of the godly doubly armed, and learn how true were our Lord's words, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you our of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
Verse 15. *Their sword shall enter into their own heart.* Like Haman they shall be hanged upon the gallows built by themselves for Mordecai. Hundreds of times has this been the case. Saul, who sought to slay David, fell on his own sword; and the bow, his favourite weapon, the use of which he taught the children of Israel, was not able to deliver him on Gilboa. *And their bows shall be broken.* Their inventions of evil shall be rendered useless. Malice outwits itself. It drinks the poisoned cup which it mixed for another, and burns itself in the fire which it kindled for its neighbour. Why need we fret at the prosperity of the wicked when they are so industriously ruining themselves while they fancy they are injuring the saints? The next nine verses mainly describe the character and blessedness of the godly, and the light is brought out with a few black touches descriptive of the wicked and their doom.

Verse 16. *A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.* This is a fine proverb. The little of one good man is contrasted with the riches of many wicked, and so the expression is rendered the more forcible. There is more happiness in the godly dinner of herbs than in the stalled ox of profane rioters. In the original there is an allusion to the noise of a multitude, as if to hint at the turmoil and hurly burly of riotous wealth, and to contrast it with the quiet of the humbler portion of the godly. We would sooner hunger with John than feast with Herod; better feed on scant fare with the prophets in Obadiah's cave than riot with the priests of Baal. A man's happiness consists not in the heaps of gold which he has in store. Content finds *multum in parvo,* while for a wicked heart the whole world is too little.

Verse 17. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken.* Their power to do mischief shall be effectually taken away, for the arms which they lifted up against God shall be crushed even to the bone. God often makes implacable men incapable men. What is a more contemptible sight than toothless malice, armless malevolence! But the Lord upholdeth the righteous. Their cause and course shall be safe, for they are in good keeping. The sword of two edges smites the wicked and defends the just.

Verse 18. *The Lord knoweth the days of the upright.* His foreknowledge made him laugh at the proud, but in the case of the upright he sees a brighter future, and treats them as heirs of salvation. Ever is this our comfort, that all events are known to our God, and that nothing in our future can take him at unawares. No arrow can pierce us by accident, no danger smite us by stealth; neither in time nor eternity can any unforeseen ill occur to us. Futurity shall be but a continual development of the good things which the Lord has laid up in store for us. *And their inheritance shall be for ever.* Their inheritance fades not away. It is entailed, so that none can deprive them of it, and preserved, so that none shall
destroy it. Eternity is the peculiar attribute of the believer's portion: what they have on earth is safe enough, but what they shall have in heaven is theirs without end.

**Verse 19.** *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time.* Calamities will come, but deliverances will come also. As the righteous never reckoned upon immunity from trouble, they will not be disappointed when they are called to take their share of it, but the rather they will cast themselves anew upon their God, and prove again his faithfulness and love. God is not a friend in the sunshine only, he is a friend indeed and a friend in need. *And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.* Their barrel of meal and cruse of oil shall last out the day of distress, and if ravens do not bring them bread and meat, the supply of their needs shall come in some other way, for their bread shall be given them. Our Lord stayed himself upon this when he hungered in the wilderness, and by faith he repelled the tempter; we too may be enabled not to fret ourselves in any wise to do evil by the same consideration. If God's providence is our inheritance, we need not worry about the price of wheat. Mildew, and smut, and bent, are all in the Lord's hands. Unbelief cannot save a single ear from being blasted, but faith, if it do not preserve the crop, can do what is better, namely, preserve our joy in the Lord.

**Verse 20.** *But the wicked shall perish.* Whatever phantom light may mock their present, their future is black with dark, substantial night. Judgment has been given against them, they are but reserved for execution. Let them flaunt their scarlet and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day; the sword of Damocles is above their heads, and if their wits were a little more awake, their mirth would turn to misery. *The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs.* As the sacrificial fat was all consumed upon the altar, so shall the ungodly utterly vanish from the place of their honour and pride. How can it be otherwise? If the stubble dares to contend with the flame, to what end can it hope to come? *They shall consume.* As dry wood, as heaps of leaves, as burning coals, they shall soon be gone, and gone altogether, for *into smoke shall they consume away.* *Sic transit gloria mundi.* A puff is the end of all their puffing. Their fuming ends in smoke. They made themselves fat, and perished in their own grease. Consumers of the good they tried to be, and consumed they shall be.

**Verse 21.** *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.* Partly because he will not, but mainly because he cannot. Want follows upon waste, and debt remains undischarged. Often are the wicked thus impoverished in this life. Their wanton extravagance brings them down to the usurer's door and to the bankrupt's suit. *But the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth,* Mercy has given to him, and therefore he gives in mercy. He is generous and prosperous. He is not a
borrower, but a giver. So far as the good man can do it, he lends an ear to the requests of need, and instead of being impoverished by what he imparts, he grows richer, and is able to do more. He does not give to encourage idleness, but in real mercy, which supposes real need. The text suggests to us how much better it generally is to give than to lend. Generally, lending comes to giving in the end, and it is as well to anticipate the fact, and by a little liberality forestall the inevitable. If these two sentences describe the wicked and the righteous, the writer of these lines has reason to know that in and about the city of London the wicked are very numerous.

Verse 22. For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth. God's benediction is true wealth after all. True happiness, such as the covenant secures to all the chosen of heaven, lies wrapped up in the divine favour. And they that be cursed of him shall be cut off. His frown is death; nay, more, It is hell.

Verse 23. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. All his course of life is graciously ordained, and in lovingkindness all is fixed, settled, and maintained. No reckless fate, no fickle chance rules us; our every step is the subject of divine decree. He delighteth in his way. As parents are pleased with the tottering footsteps of their babes. All that concerns a saint is interesting to his heavenly Father. God loves to view the holy strivings of a soul pressing forward to the skies. In the trials and the joys of the faithful, Jesus has fellowship with them, and delights to be their sympathising companion.

Verse 24. Though he fall. Disasters and reverses may lay him low; he may, like Job, be stripped of everything; like Joseph, be put in prison; like Jonah, be cast into the deep. He shall not be utterly cast down. He shall not be altogether prostrate. He shall be brought on his knees, but not on his face; or, if laid prone for a moment, he shall be up again ere long. No saint shall fall finally or fatally. Sorrow may bring us to the earth, and death may bring us to the grave, but lower we cannot sink, and out of the lowest of all we shall arise to the highest of all. For the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. Condescendingly, with his own hand, God upholds his saints; he does not leave them to mere delegated agency, he affords personal assistance. Even in our falls the Lord gives a measure of sustaining. Where grace does not keep from going down, it shall save from keeping down. Job had double wealth at last, Joseph reigned over Egypt, Jonah was safely landed. It is not that the saints are strong, or wise, or meritorious, that therefore they rise after every fall, but because God is their helper, and therefore none can prevail against them.
Verse 25. This was David's observation, *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* It is not *my* observation just as it stands, for I have relieved the children of undoubtedly good men, who have appealed to me as common mendicants. But this does not cast a doubt upon the observation of David. He lived under a dispensation more outward, and more of this world than the present rule of personal faith. Never are the righteous forsaken; that is a rule without exception. Seldom indeed do their seed beg bread; and although it does occasionally occur, through dissipation, idleness, or some other causes on the part of their sons, yet doubtless it is so rare a thing that there are many alive who never saw it. Go into the union house and see how few are the children of godly parents; enter the gaol and see how much rarer still is the case. Poor minster's sons often become rich. I am not old, but I have seen families of the poor godly become rich, and have seen the Lord reward the faithfulness of the father in the success of the son, so that I have often thought that the best way to endow one's seed with wealth is to become poor for Christ's sake. In the Indian mission of the "Baptist Missionary Society," this is abundantly illustrated.

Verse 26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth.* The righteous are constantly under generous impulses; they do not prosper through parsimony, but through bounty. Like the bounteous giver of all good, of whom they are the beloved sons, they delight in doing good. How stingy covetous professors can hope for salvation is a marvel to those who read such verses as this in the Bible. *And his seed is blessed.* God pays back with interest in the next generation. Where the children of the righteous are not godly, there must be some reason for it in parental neglect, or *some* other guilty cause. The friend of the father is the friend of the family. The God of Abraham is the God of Isaac and of Jacob.

Verses 27-29. Here we have the seventh precept, which takes a negative and positive form, and is the quintessence of the entire Psalm

Verse 27. *Depart from evil, and do good.* We must not envy the doers of evil, but depart altogether from their spirit and example. As Lot left Sodom without casting a look behind, so must we leave sin. No truce or parley is to be held with sin, we must turn away from it without hesitation, and set ourselves practically to work in the opposite direction. He who neglects to do good will soon fall into evil. *And dwell for evermore.* Obtain an abiding and quiet inheritance. Short lived are the gains and pleasures of evil, but eternal are the rewards of grace.

Verse 28. *For the Lord loveth judgment.* The awarding of honour to whom honour is due is God's delight, especially when the upright man has been
traduced by his fellow men. It must be a divine pleasure to right wrongs, and to defeat the machinations of the unjust. The great Arbiter of human destinies is sure to deal out righteous measure both to rich and poor, to good and evil, for such judgment is his delight. And forsaketh not his saints. This would not be right, and, therefore, shall never be done. God is as faithful to the objects of his love as he is just towards all mankind. They are preserved for ever. By covenant engagements their security is fixed, and by suretyship fulfilments that safety is accomplished; come what may, the saints are preserved in Christ Jesus, and because he lives, they shall live also. A king will not lose his jewels, nor will Jehovah lose his people. As the manna in the golden pot, which else had melted, was preserved in the ark of the covenant beneath the mercyseat, so shall the faithful be preserved in the covenant by the power of Jesus their propitiation. But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. Like the house of Jeroboam and Ahab, of which not a dog was left. Honour and wealth ill gotten seldom reach the third generation; the curse grows ripe before many years have passed, and falls upon the evil house. Among the legacies of wicked men the surest entail is a judgment on their family.

Verse 29. The righteous shall inherit the land. As heirs with Jesus Christ, the Canaan above, which is the antitype of "the land," shall be theirs with all covenant blessing. And dwell therein for ever. Tenures differ, but none can match the holding which believers have of heaven. Paradise is theirs for ever by inheritance, and they shall live for ever to enjoy it. Who would not be a saint on such terms? Who would fret concerning the fleeting treasures of the godless?

Verse 30. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom. Where the whole Psalm is dedicated to a description of the different fates of the just and the wicked, it was meet to give a test by which they could be known. A man's tongue is no ill index of his character. The mouth betrays the heart. Good men, as a rule, speak that which is to edifying, sound speech, religious conversation, consistent with the divine illumination which they have received. Righteousness is wisdom in action, hence all good men are practically wise men, and well may the speech be wise. His tongue talketh of judgment. He advocates justice, gives an honest verdict on things and men, and he foretells that God's judgments will come upon the wicked, as in the former days. His talk is neither foolish nor ribald, neither vapid nor profane. Our conversation is of far more consequence than some men imagine.

Verse 31. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. The best thing in the best place, producing the best results. Well might the man's talk be so admirable when his heart was so well stored. To love holiness, to have the motives and desires sanctified, to be in one's inmost nature obedient to
the Lord—this is the surest method of making the whole run of our life efficient for its great ends, and even for securing the details of it, our steps from any serious mistake. To keep the even tenor of one's way, in such times as these, is given only to those whose hearts are sound towards God, who can, as in the text, call God their God. Policy slips and trips, it twists and tacks, and after all is worsted in the long run, but sincerity plods on its plain pathway and reaches the goal.

Verse 32. The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him. If it were not for the laws of the land, we should soon see a massacre of the righteous. Jesus was watched by his enemies, who were thirsting for his blood: his disciples must not look for favour where their Master found hatred and death.

Verse 33. The Lord will not leave him in his hand. God often appears to deliver his servants, and when he does not do so in this life as to their bodies, he gives their souls such joy and peace that they triumphantly rise beyond their tormentors' power. We may be in the enemy's hand for awhile, as Job was, but we cannot be left there. Nor condemn him when he is judged. Time shall reverse the verdict of haste, or else eternity shall clear away the condemnation of time. In due season just men will be justified. Temporary injustices are tolerated, in the order of Providence, for purposes most wise; but the bitter shall not always be called sweet, nor light for ever be traduced as darkness; the right shall appear in due season; the fictitious and pretentious shall be unmasked, and the real and true shall be revealed. If we have done faithfully, we may appeal from the petty sessions of society to the solemn assize of the great day.

Verse 34. Wait on the Lord. We have here the eighth precept, and it is a lofty eminence to attain to. Tarry the Lord's leisure. Wait in obedience as a servant, in hope as an heir, in expectation as a believer. This little word "wait" is easy to say, but hard to carry out, yet faith must do it. And keep his way. Continue in the narrow path; let no haste for riches or ease cause unholy action. Let your motto be, "On, on, on." Never flag, or dream of turning aside. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land. Thou shalt have all of earthly good which is really good, and of heavenly good there shall be no stint. Exaltation shall be the lot of the excellent. When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. A sight how terrible and how instructive! What a rebuke for fretfulness! what an incentive to gratitude! My soul, be still, as you foresee the end, the awful end of the Lord's enemies.

Verse 35. A second time David turns to his diary, and this time in poetic imagery tells us of what he had observed. It were well if we too took notes of
Psalm 37

divine providences. *I have seen the wicked in great power.* The man was
terrible to others, ruling with much authority, and carrying things with a high
hand, a Caesar in might, a Croesus in wealth. *And spreading himself like a
green bay tree.* Adding house to house and field to field, rising higher and
higher in the state. He seemed to be ever verdant like a laurel, he grew as a tree
in its own native soil, from which it had never been transplanted. No particular
tree is here meant, a spreading beech or a wide expanding oak may serve us to
realize the picture; it is a thing of earth, whose roots are in the clay; its honours
are fading leaves; and though its shadow dwarfs the plants which are
condemned to pine beneath it, yet it is itself a dying things as the feller's axe
shall prove. In the noble tree, which claims to be king of the forest, behold the
grandeur of the ungodly today; wait awhile and wonder at the change, as the
timber is carried away, and the very root torn from the ground.

**Verse 36.** *Yet he passed away.* Tree and man both gone, the son of man as
surely as the child of the forest. What clean sweeps death makes! *And, lo, he
was not.* To the surprise of all men the great man was gone, his estates sold, his
business bankrupt, his house alienated, his name forgotten, and all in a few
months. *Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.* Moved by curiosity, if we
enquire for the ungodly, they have left no trace; like birds of ill omen none
desire to remember them. Some of the humblest of the godly are immortalized,
their names are imperishably fragrant in the church, while of the ablest of
infidels and blasphemers hardly their names are remembered beyond a few
years. Men who were in everybody's mouths but yesterday are forgotten
tomorrow, for only virtue is immortal.

**Verse 37.** *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.* After having watched
with surprise the downfall of the wicked, give your attention to the sincerely
godly man, and observe the blessed contrast. Good men are men of mark, and
are worth our study. Upright men are marvels of grace, and worth beholding.
*For the end of that man is peace.* The man of peace has an end of peace. Peace
without end comes in the end to the man of God. His way may be rough, but it
leads home. With believers it may rain in the morning, thunder at midday, and
pour in torrents in the afternoon, but it must clear up ere the sun goes down.
War may last till our last hour, but then we shall hear the last of it.

**Verse 38.** *But the transgressors shall be destroyed together.* A common ruin
awaits those who are joined in common rebellion. *The end of the wicked shall be cut off.* Their time shall be shortened, their happiness shall be ended, their
hopes for ever blasted, their execution hastened on. Their present is shortened
by their sins; they shall not live out half their days. They have no future worth
having, while the righteous count their future as their true heritage.
Verse 39. But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. Sound doctrine this. The very marrow of the gospel of free grace. By salvation is meant deliverance of every kind; not only the salvation which finally lands us in glory, but all the minor rescues of the way; these are all to be ascribed unto the Lord, and to him alone. Let him have glory from those to whom he grants salvation. He is their strength in the time of trouble. While trouble overthrows the wicked, it only drives the righteous to their strong Helper, who rejoices to uphold them.

Verse 40. And the Lord shall help them. In all future time Jehovah will stand up for his chosen. Our Great Ally will bring up his forces in the heat of the battle. He shall deliver them from the wicked. As he rescued Daniel from the lions, so will he preserve his beloved from their enemies; they need not therefore fret, nor be discouraged. And save them, because they trust in him. Faith shall ensure they safety of the elect. It is the mark of the sheep by which they shall be separated from the goats. Not their merit, but their believing, shall distinguish them. Who would not try the walk of faith? Whoever truly believes in God will be no longer fretful against the apparent irregularities of this present life, but will rest assured that what is mysterious is nevertheless just, and what seems hard, is, beyond a doubt, ordered in mercy. So the Psalm ends with a note which is the death knell of the unhallowed disquietude with which the Psalm commenced. Happy they who can thus sing themselves out of ill frames into gracious conditions.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. The righteous are preserved in Christ with a special preservation, and in a peculiar safety. In the thirty-seventh Psalm this point is excellently and largely handled, both by direct proof, and by answer to all the usual objections against their safety. That they shall be preserved is affirmed, Ps 37:3,17,23,25,32. The objections answered are many.

Objection 1. Wicked men flourish. Solution. A righteous man should never grieve at that, for "they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." Ps 37:2.

Objection 2. Righteous men are in distress. Solution—Ps 37:6. The night of their adversity will be turned into the light of prosperity; and as surely as they can believe when it is night that it shall be day, so surely may they be persuaded when crosses are upon them, that comfort and deliverance shall come.
Objection 3. But there are great plots laid against the righteous, and they are pursued with great malice, and their intended ruin is come almost to the very issue. Solution—Ps 37:12-15. The Lord sees all the plots of wicked men, and laughs at their spiteful and foolish malice; while they are busy to destroy the righteous, and hope to have a day against them, "The Lord seeth that their own day is coming upon them, even a day of destruction, a day of great judgment and eternal misery; "their bow shall be broken, and the sword that they have drawn shall enter into their own heart.

Objection 4. But the just have but small means. Solution—Ps 37:16-17. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous."

Objection 5. Heavy times are like to befall them. Solution—Ps 37:19. "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall have enough."

Objection 6. But the wicked wax fatter and fatter, and they prevail in vexing the righteous. Solution—Ps 37:20. Indeed the wicked are fat, but it is but "the fat of lambs, "their prosperity shall soon melt; and as they be like smoke in vexing the godly, so shall they be like smoke in vanishing away.

Objection 7. But the righteous do fall. Solution—Ps 37:24. Though he do fall, yet he falls not finally, nor totally, for he "is not utterly cast down; "and besides, there is an upholding providence of God in all the falls of the righteous.

Objection 8. We see some wicked men that do not so fall into adversity, but rather are in prosperity to their dying days. Solution—Ps 37:28. Though they do, yet, "their seed shall be cut off."

Objection 9. But some wicked men are strong yet, and in their seed spread also. Solution—Ps 37:35-36. Note also that these "spreading bay trees" many times "soon pass away; "and they and their houses are sometimes "utterly cut off."

Objection 10. But upright men are under many and long crosses. Solution—Ps 37:37. Yet "his end is peace."

Objection 11. But nobody stands for the godly when they come into question. Solution—Ps 37:39-40. "Their salvation is of the Lord; "he is their strength, he will help them and deliver them, etc.
But if we would be thus delivered, observe: 1. That we must not unthankfully fret at God's providence Ps 37:1. 2. We must "trust in the Lord and do good" Ps 37:3. 3. We must "delight ourselves in the Lord, "and not place our contentment on earthly things Ps 37:4. 4. We must "commit our ways to God" Ps 37:5. 5. We must get patience and humble affections Ps 37:7-11. 6. We must be of upright conversation Ps 37:14. 7. We must be merciful Ps 37:25-26. 8. We must "speak righteous things, "and get "the law into our hearts" Ps 37:30-31. 9. We must "keep our way, "and "wait on God" and not use ill means.

**Nicolas Byfield.**

**Whole Psalm.** This Psalm may well be styled, The good man's cordial in bad times; a sovereign plaister for the plague of discontent; or, a choice antidote against the poison of impatience. Nathaniel Hardy, *in a Funeral Sermon*, 1649.

**Whole Psalm.** This Psalm very much reminds one in its construction of the sententious and pithy conciseness of the Book of Proverbs. It does not contain any prayer, nor any direct allusion to David's own circumstances of persecution or distress. It is rather the utterance of sound practical wisdom and godliness from the lips of experience and age, such as we might suppose an elder of the church, or a father of a family, to let fall as he sat with his household gathered around him, and listening to his earnest and affectionate admonitions. Barton Bouchier.

**Whole Psalm.** The present Psalm is one of the alphabetical Psalms, it is called "Providentiae speculum, "by Tertullian; "Potio contra murmur, "by Isidore; "Vestis piorum, "by Luther. Christopher Wordsworth.

**Verse 1.** Fret, or, inflame not, burn not thyself with anger or grief. John Diodati.

**Verse 1.** Neither be thou envious, etc. Queen Elizabeth envied the milkmaid when she was in prison; but if she had known what a glorious reign she should have had afterwards for forty-four years, she would not have envied her. And as little needeth a godly man, though in misery, to envy a wicked man in the ruff of all his prosperity and jollity, considering what he hath in hand, much more what he hath in hope. John Trapp.

**Verse 1.** Would it not be accounted folly in a man that is heir to many thousands per annum that he should envy a stage player, clothed in the habit of a king, and yet not heir to one foot of land? who, though he have the form, respect, and apparel of a king or nobleman, yet he is, at the same time, a very beggar, and worth nothing? Thus, wicked men, though they are arrayed
gorgeously, and fare deliciously, wanting nothing, and having more that heart
can wish, yet they are but only possessors: the godly Christian is the heir. What
good doth all their prosperity do them? It does but hasten their ruin, not their
reward. The ox that is the labouring ox is the longer lived than the ox that is in
the pasture; the very putting of him there doth but hasten his slaughter; and
when God puts the wicked men into fat pastures, into places of honour and
power, it is but to hasten their ruin. Let no man, therefore, fret himself because
of evil doers, nor be envious at the prosperity of the wicked; for the candle of
the wicked shall be put into everlasting darkness; they shall soon be cut off, and
wither as a green herb. Ludovic de Carbone, quoted by John Spencer.

Verse 2. Cut down like the grass, with a scythe, and even at one blow. Thomas
Wilcocks.

Verse 2. Wither. O bitter word, which will make the ears of them that hear it to
tingle! O sentence intolerable, which deprives sinners of all good things, and
bringeth them to all woe! The Lord sometime accursed the fig tree, and
immediately, not only the leaves, but also the body and root were wholly
withered: even so, that fearful curse of the last day shall be no less effectual; for
on whomsoever it falleth is shall so scorch them, and shall so make them
destitute of God's grace, that they shall never more be able to do, to speak,
think, or to hope for any good thing. Thomas Tymme.

Verse 2. Green herb. We cannot gather riper fruit of patience from any tree
than is found upon the low shrubs of man's short life; for if that fretting canker
of envy at the prosperity of the wicked have overrun thy mind, a malady from
which the saints have no shelter to be freed, out of this apothecary's shop take
antidote; either thy time is short to behold it, or theirs shorter to enjoy is; "they
are set in slippery places, and are suddenly destroyed, "Ps 73:18; "They spend
their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave, " Job 21:13; They
shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Edmund

Verse 2. Sometimes the wicked, like the green herb, wither in their spring, they
fall in their rise, they perish in the beginnings of their mischievous designs; but
if they do come to a full growth, they grow but to harvest, the fit season of their
cutting off. Robert Mossom.

Verse 3. Note well the double precept trust and do. This is the true order, the
two must go together, the one produces, the other proves; the promise is to
both. C. H. S.
Verse 3. So shall thou dwell in the land, etc. Thou shalt have a settlement, a quiet settlement, and a maintenance, a comfortable maintenance: Verily thou shalt be fed; some read it, Thou shalt be fed by faith, as the just are said to live by faith, and it is good living, good feeding upon the promises. Verily thou shalt be fed, as Elijah in the famine, with what is needful for thee. God himself is a shepherd, a feeder to all those that trust in him, Ps 23:1. Matthew Henry.

Verse 3. So shalt thou dwell in the land, etc. The land of Canaan was considered as the sum of earthly, and the type of heavenly felicity: to be provided for in the Lord's land, and there to dwell under his protection, near his ordinances, and among his people, was all that the genuine Israelite could desire. Thomas Scott (1744-1821) in loc.

Verse 3. Thou shalt be fed. A manner of speech taken from cattle feeding securely, under the conduct and keeping of a good shepherd. Henry Ainsworth.


Verse 4. Note thy part and God's part. Do thou delight, and he will give. C. H. S.

Verse 4. How much grace and love breathes in these words, Delight thyself also in the Lord! Trust in him was recommended before, and now, this being added also, how plain is it that your ease and rest is the thing designed! Is it fit to receive so much kindness with neglect? Again, he delights in you; I speak to such of whom this may be supposed. And it is indefinitely said, "His delights were with the sons of men, "Pr 8:31. Think what he is, and what you are; and at once, both wonder and yield. And what else have you to delight in? what thing will you name that shall supply the place of GOD, or be to you in the stead of him? Moreover, who should delight in him but you—his friends, his sons, those of his own house? Think what life and vigour it will infuse into you, and that "the joy of the Lord will be your strength, "Ne 8:10. How pleasantly will you hold on your course, and discharge all the other duties of this your present state? You must serve him. Dare you think of throwing off his yoke? How desirable is it then to take delight in him whom I must serve; which only makes that service acceptable to him, and easy to myself! Further, this is a pleasure none can rob you of; a joy that cannot be taken from you. Other objects of your delight are vanishing daily. Neither men nor devils can ever hinder you delighting in God, if your hearts be so inclined. And were you never brought to take pleasure in any person or thing to which you had a former aversion? One
that had wronged you might yet possibly win you by after kindness. Give a reason why you should be more difficult towards the blessed God that never wronged you, and whose way towards you hath constantly imported so much good will! And consider that your condition on earth is such as exposes you to many sufferings and hardships, which, by your not delighting in him, you can never be sure to avoid (for they are things common to men), but which, by your delighting in him, you may be easily able to endure. Besides all this, seriously consider that you must die. You can make no shift to avoid that. How easily tolerable and pleasant will it be to think, then, of going to him with whom you have lived in a delightful communion before! And how dreadful to appear before him to whom your own heart shall accuse you to have been (against all his importunities and allurements) a disaffected stranger! John Howe's "Treatise of Delight in God."

Verse 4. We have in the former part extended the meaning of the words Delight thyself in the Lord, beyond what they seem at first sight literally to signify; so as not to understand them merely as requiring that very single act of delight to be immediately and directly terminated on God himself; but to take them as comprehending all the sum of all holy and religious converse with God, i.e., as it is delightful, or as it is seasoned (intermingled, and as it were besprinkled) with delight; and upon the same account, of all out other converse, so far as it is influenced by religion. And I doubt not, to such as shall attentively have considered what hath been said, it will be thought very reasonable to take them in that latitude; whereof the very letter of the text (as may be alleged for further justification hereof) is most fitly capable. For the particle which we read in the Lord, hath not that signification alone, but signifies also with, or by, or besides, or before, or in presence of, as if it had been said, "Come and sit down with God, retire thyself to him, and solace thyself in the delights which are to be found in his presence and converse, in walking with him, and transacting thy course as before him, and in his sight." As a man may be said to delight himself with a friend that puts himself under his roof, and, besides personal converse with himself, freely enjoys the pleasure of all the entertainments, accommodations, and provisions which he is freely willing to communicate with him, and hath the satisfaction which a sober person would take in observing the rules and order of a well governed house. John Howe.

Verse 4. He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. It shall be unto thee even as thou wilt. It is said of Luther that he could have what he would of Almighty God. What may not a favourite, who hath the royalty of his prince's care, obtain of him? John Trapp.
Verse 4. The desires of thine heart. All the desires of this spiritual seed are of the nature of this seed, namely, substantial, and shall meet with substance. All the desires of natural man, even after God, after Christ, after righteousness, shall burn and perish with him (for they are not the truth, nor do they come from the truth, nor can they reach to the truth;) but all the desires of this spirit shall live with the Spirit of God, in rest and satisfaction for ever. John Pennington, 1656.

Verse 4. The desires of God, and the desires of the righteous, agree in one; they are of one mind in their desires. John Bunyan.

Verse 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord, etc. When we bear the burden of our own affairs ourselves, and are chastised with anxiety and want of success, and with envying the ungodly who prosper better than we do, the best remedy is first to do our duty, as we are enabled in the use of the means, then cast the care of the success over on God, as the ploughman doth when he hath harrowed his land; and let the burden of it rest on God, and let us not take it off him again, but put our mind to rest, resolved to take the harvest in good part, as he shall send it. David Dickson.

Verse 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord, is rendered by the Vulgate, Revela viam Domino, reveal thy way; and by St. Ambrose, understood of revealing our sins to God. Indeed, since it is impossible to cover, why should we not discover our sins? Conceal not that which God knoweth already, and would have thee to make known. It is a very ill office to be the devil's secretary. Oh, break thy league with Satan be revealing his secrets, thy sins, to God. Nathaniel Hardy.

Verse 5. Commit thy way unto. Margin and Hebrew, Roll thy way upon—as one who lays upon the shoulder of one stronger than himself a burden which he is not able to bear. William De Burgh, D.D., in "A Commentary on the Book of Psalms. Dublin:" 1860.

Verse 5. Note the double again, Commit and trust. C. H. S.

Verse 5. He shall bring it to pass. When a hard piece of work is put into the hand of an apprentice for the first assay of his skill, the beholders are justly afraid of a miscarriage in his young and inexperienced hand; but when the worker is an old master of craft, none are afraid but his cunning hand can act again what so oft it hath wrought to the contentment of all the beholders. Were our God a novice in the great art of governing the world, and of the church in the bosom thereof; had he to this day never given any proof of his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, in turning about the most terrible accidents to
the welfare and joy of his saints; we might indeed be amazed whenever we feel ourselves sinking in the dangers wherein the practices of our enemies oft do plunge us over head and ears; but the Lord having given in times past so many documents of his uncontroverted skill and most certain will to bring about all human affairs, as to his own glory, so to the real good of all that love him, it would be in us an impious and unexcusable uncharitableness to suspect the end of any work which he hath begun. Robert Baylie's Sermon before the House of Commons, 1643.

Verses 5, 7.

To God thy way commending,  
Trust him whose arm of might,  
The heavenly circles bending,  
Guides every star aright:  
The winds, and clouds, and lightning,  
By his sure hand are led;  
And he will dark shades brightening.

Show thee what path to tread.  
Although to make God falter,  
The powers of hell combine,  
One jot they cannot alter  
Of his all wise design:  
All projects and volition  
Of his eternal mind,  
Despite all opposition,  
Their due fulfilment find.

No more, then, droop and languish,  
Thou sorrow stricken soul;  
Even from the depths of anguish,  
Whose billows over thee roll,  
Thy Father's hand shall draw thee:  
In hope and patience stay,  
And joy will soon shed over thee  
An ever brightening ray.

All faithless murmurs leaving,  
Bid them a last good night,  
No more thy vexed soul grieving,  
Because things seem not right;
Wisely his sceptre wielding,
God sits in regal state,
No power to mortals yielding,
Events to regulate.

Trust with a faith untiring
In thine Omniscient King,
And thou shalt see admiring
What he to light will bring.
Of all thy griefs, the reason
Shall at the last appear:
Why now denied a season,
Will shine in letters clear.

Then raise thine eyes to heaven,
Thou who canst trust his frown;
Thence shall thy meed be given,
The chaplet and the crown:
Thy God the palm victorious
In thy right hand shall plant,
Whilst thou, in accents glorious,
Melodious hymns shall chant.

—Paul Gerhard (1606-1676), translated by Frances Elizabeth Cox, in "Hymns from the German," 1864.

**Verse 6.** *He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light,* etc. If thou shouldest be accused as a man of evil designs, let not that trouble thee neither: for though thy fame may be obscured for a time by calumnies and slanders, as the sun is by mists and clouds, yet as that scatters them all at last, so shall thy integrity appear, and shine as bright as the sun at noonday. *Symon Patrick.*

**Verse 7.** *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* There are two words in the original, which express the privilege and the duty of resting on Christ: one implies such a state of acquiescence, as silences the clamours of conscience, and composes the perturbation of the spirit; the other signifies the refreshment and repose of a weary pilgrim, when he arrives at the end of his journey, and is settled for life in a secure, commodious, plentiful habitation. *James Hervey.*

**Verse 7.** *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* Take the case of one who, with a load above his strength, has been toiling some steep and broken path, when suddenly he finds it lifted off and transferred to another whose strength
he knows to be more than equal to the task, and in whose sympathy he can securely trust. What would his feeling be but one of perfect rest, and calm reliance, and joyous freedom, as they went on their way together? And such is the blessedness of rolling our care upon the Lord—in weakness we are resting on superior strength, in perplexity and doubt we are resting on superior wisdom, in all times of trial and hard service we can stay ourselves on the assurance of his perfect sympathy. The literal meaning of the word rest, is be silent towards the Lord. With the eye fixed on him let all unbelieving thoughts be stilled, such thoughts as rise and rankle in the querulous spirit when it sees only its troubles, and not God in them, when the mists of earth hide from its sight the eternal stars of heaven. Then like Jacob, it may say morosely, "All these things are against me; "or, like Elijah, despondently, "It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life; "or, like Jonah, fretfully, "I do well to be angry." In regard to all such dark and unbelieving suggestions, the heart is to keep silence, to be still and know that he is God; silent as to murmuring, but not silent as to prayer, for in that holy meditative stillness the heart turns to commune with him. What is "resting in God, "but the instinctive movement and upward glance of the spirit to him; the confiding all one's grievances and fears to him, and feeling strengthened, patient, hopeful in the act of doing so! It implies a willingness that he should choose for us, a conviction that the ordering of all that concerns us is safer in his hands than in our own.

A few practical remarks: 1. Our "resting patiently" in the Lord applies only to the trials which he sends, not to the troubles which even Christians often make for themselves. There is a difference in the burdens that come in the way of duty, and those that come through our wandering into other ways. We can roll the one upon the Lord, but with the other our punishment may be to be left to bear them long, and to be bruised in bearing them. 2. The duty here enjoined is to be carried through all our life. We all admit that patient waiting is needed for the great trials of life, but may not acknowledge so readily that it is needed as much for little, daily, commonplace vexations. But these are as much a test of Christian principle as the other. 3. This resting in God is a criterion of a man's spiritual state. It needs a special faculty of discernment, a new sense to be opened in the soul, before our fallen nature can understand or desire it. James D. Burns, M.A.

Verse 7. (first clause). Hold thee still (so it may be translated). And this is the hardest precept that is given to man; insomuch that the most difficult precept of action sinks into nothing when compared with this command to inaction. Jerome.
Verse 7. (first clause). The Hebrew word rendered silent is (owr), dom, from which the English word dumb appears to be derived. The silence here enjoined is opposed to murmuring or complaining. James Anderson, in Calvin's Commentary.

Verse 7. Note again the twin duties, rest and wait.

Verse 7. Bringeth wicked devices to pass. Observe the opposition between this and God's bringing to pass, in verse five. The ground for grief is that the ungodly appear to achieve their end, the reason for comfort is that our end shall be achieved also, and that in the best manner by God himself. C. H. S.

Verse 8. Forsake wrath; which is anger wrought up to a greater degree; and the rather to be shunned and avoided, as being very disagreeable to the character of a good man. Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil; evil may be done by fretting at the prosperity of wicked men, or by imitating them, doing as they do, in hope of being prosperous as they are. John Gill.

Verse 9. They shall inherit the earth. He means that they shall live in such a manner as that the blessing of God shall follow them, even to the grave. John Calvin.

Verse 10. Thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. To wit, because he shall be grubbed up by the roots. Arthur Jackson.

Verse 10. His place...shall not be. The very land he occupied as a home, and the title to which was unimpeachable, is no longer his place. It has passed into other hands. Nothing of all he had on earth is his. He is as poor as the most miserable object that subsisted on alms. William S. Plumer.

Verse 10. The peacock, a glorious fowl, when he beholds that comely fan and circle which he maketh of the beautiful feathers of his tail, he rejoiceth, he setteth, and beholdeth every part thereof: but when he looketh on his feet, which he perceiveth to be black and foul, he by and by, with great misliking, vails his top gallant, and seemeth to sorrow. In like manner, a great many know by experience, that when they see themselves to abound in riches and honours, they glory and are deeply conceited of themselves; they praise their fortune, and admire themselves; they make plots, and appoint much for themselves to perform in many years to come. This year, they say, we will bear this office, and the next year that; afterward we shall have the rule of such a province; then we will build a palace in such a city, whereunto we will adjoin such gardens of pleasure, and such vineyards: and thus they make a very large reckoning
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Verse 11. The meek shall inherit the earth. In the meantime, they, and they only, possess the present earth, as they go toward the kingdom of heaven, by being humble, and cheerful, and content with what their good God has allotted them. They have no turbulent, repining, vexatious thoughts that they deserve better; nor are vexed when they see others possessed of more honour, or more riches, than their wise God has allotted for their share. But they possess what they have with a meek and contented quietness; such a quietness as makes their very dreams pleasing, both to God and themselves. Isaak Walton (1593-1683), in "The Complete Angler."

Verse 11. The meek. What is thy Beloved more than any other beloved? It is spoken to the spouse. So what is meekness more than any other virtues? We may say, here is synecdoche speciei, one particular taken for the general, one virtue for all the rest. Or the effect is put for the cause; because meekness is one of the principal and chiefest parts of holiness. But if you will give me leave to conjecture, the Holy Ghost may seem in this promise at once to show the condition of the church, and to comfort her; and because being laid hard at on every side, she stands in need of this virtue more than any other, to fit and fashion the reward to the virtue, to cherish and exalt it in us with the promise of something beyond our expectation, even the inheritance of the earth. And indeed what fitter reward can there be of meekness? What more fit and just than that they who have been made the anvil for injuries to beat on, who have been viri perpessiti, as Seneca speaks of Socrates, men of great sufferance, who have suffered not only their goods to be torn from them by oppression and wrong, but their reputations to be wounded with the sharp razor of detraction, and have withstood the shock of all spectantibus similes, with the patience of a looker on, should be raised and comforted with a promise of that which their meekness gave up to the spoil; and that by the providence of God which loves to thwart the practice of the world, they should be made heirs even of those possessions which the hand of violence hath snatched from them. Anthony Farindon, B.D., 1596-1658.

Verse 11. Not the hot stirring spirits who bustle for the world shall have it, but the meek, who are thrust up and down from corner to corner, and hardly suffered to remain anywhere quietly in it. This earth, which they seem most deprived of, they only shall have and enjoy. When the Lord hath made it worth the having, then none shall have it but they. They shall inherit the earth. The
earth is the Lord's; these are the children of the Lord, and they shall inherit this earth. When the Lord taketh it into his own possession and enjoyment, they shall succeed him in the possession and enjoyment of it. It is their right, and shall descend unto them by right, by inheritance. It is the Lord's right, and by the Lord shall descend to them as their right. They cannot yet have it, for the Lord hath it not yet; but when the Lord hath it, it shall fairly descend to them. This accursed earth they shall never have, but when it is taken into the hands of the Lord, and blessed by the Lord, then it shall be theirs, then it shall be inherited by the children of blessing. John Pennington.

Verse 11. *And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.* Surely when the glory of the Lord covers the earth, and all the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Prince of Peace, and the wicked one is rooted out, we may well expect peace in rich abundance. W. Wilson.

Verses 12-13. Note how the gesture of the wicked in *gnashing their teeth* is returned to them in the Lord's scornful *laughter* at their devices. Their plotting, too, is countermined by that winding up of all plots, which the Lord knoweth, though they are wilfully ignorant of it. C. H. S.

Verse 13. *The Lord shall laugh at him,* etc. He seems to provide very coldly for our consolation under sorrow, for he represents God as merely *laughing.* But if God values highly our salvation, why does he not set himself to resist the fury of our enemies, and vigorously oppose them? We know that this, as has been said in Ps 2:4, is a proper trial of our patience when God does not come forth at once, armed for the discomfiture of the ungodly, but connives for a time, and withholds his hand. Lest the flesh should still murmur and complain, demanding why God should only laugh at the wicked, and not rather take vengeance upon them, the reason is added, that he sees the day of their destruction at hand. *For he seeth that his day is coming.* John Calvin.

Verse 13. *For he seeth that his day is coming.* He laughs at such poor worms, who make themselves so great upon the earth, and act so loftily in their impotence, seeing it must so soon be over with them. Berleb. Bible, quoted by E. W. Hengstenberg.

Verse 13. *For he seeth that his day is coming.* His dismal day, his death's day, which will also be his doom's day. John Trapp.

Verses 14-15. The tongue is a *sword* and a *bow,* which shooteth its arrows, even bitter words, against the humble and upright, Jesus and his disciples. But these are not the only weapons that have been drawn against them. How the
malice of the Jews returned upon their own heads no one is ignorant, though few lay it to heart, and consider them as set forth for an example. George Horne.

Verses 14-15. When the wicked are most near to do a mischief to the Lord's people, then is a mischief most near unto them. David Dickson.

Verse 16. A little that a righteous man hath, etc. To wit, 1. Because the wicked do often enrich themselves by unjust means, and so have much vexation and trouble with them, and likewise thereby do treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; whereas the righteous with a little, well gotten, have much peace of conscience, with hope of heaven hereafter. 2. Because the righteous use theirs well, and are the better for them; whereas the wicked abuse theirs many ways, and are in many respects the worse for them. 3. Because the righteous enjoy what they have from hand to mouth as the gifts of God, and the pledges of his fatherly love and care over them, and so it is to them as manna from heaven, and hereby they enjoy much sweet comfort, and are fully satisfied with what they have; whereas the wicked have none of this joy nor satisfaction by their wealth. 4. Because God by his blessing doth usually make that the righteous enjoy to be more effectual for their good than is the abundance of the wicked. A little coarse fare makes them more healthful and strong than the wicked are with all their plenty. And, 5. Because the wicked enjoys not his wealth long, as the righteous man doth; and this indeed agrees best with the following words. Arthur Jackson.

Verse 16. Strangers to Christ have the use of outward mercies, but cannot be properly said to have the enjoyment; they seem to be masters of them, but indeed they are servants to them; possessors as to outward use, but slaves as to their inward affections; they serve them while they seem to dispose of them; they do not dominari, but servire—have not the command of, but are enslaved. Nor is their use truly comfortable; they may fancy comfort, but their comfort is but a fancy; it flows from another fountain than can be dug in earth; true, solid comfort is the portion of those only who have the righteousness of Christ for their portion. These may look upon every temporal enjoyment as a token of everlasting love, as a pledge and earnest of eternal glory; and both these, because they may receive them as the purchase of the blood and righteousness of Christ; aye, here is the well spring of comfort, the fountain of that comfort which is better than life. Oh, what comfort is it to taste the sweetness of Christ's love in every enjoyment! When we can say, "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me, that I might enjoy these blessings," oh, how will this raise the value of every common mercy! Christ's righteousness which was performed, the highest expression of his love, purchased this for me! Upon this account is that of the
psalmist true, *A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.* He that hath but food and raiment hath in this respect more than he that hath the Turkish empire, or the gold of the Indies. He hath more ground of comfort in his little than they in all. *David Clarkson.*

**Verse 16.** If thine estate were but little, yet it would be perfumed with love, and that lump of sugar in thy cup would make the liquor sweet, be it never so small. As the waters which flow from the hills of some of the islands of Molucca taste of the cinnamon and cloves which grow there, so should thy gift, though it were but water, taste of the goodwill and special grace of the Giver. Thy little, with the fear of the Lord, would be *better than the riches of many wicked men.* As a little ring with a very costly diamond in it is far more worth than many great ones without it, so thy estate, though it were but a penny, should be joined with the precious jewel of that love which is better than life, and enjoyed by special promise, and thereby be infinitely more worth than the thousands and millions of others bestowed merely from common bounty, and enjoyed only by a general providence. *George Swinnock.*

**Verse 16.** It is as possible for a wicked man to fill his body with air and his chest with grace, as his mind with wealth. It is with them as with a ship; it may be overladen with silver and gold, even unto sinking, and yet have compass and sides to hold ten times more. So here, a covetous wretch, though he have enough to sink him, yet he shall never have enough to satisfy him. So that the conclusion which the psalmist delivers is most worthy to be observed: *A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked;* he doth not say of how many, because let us think of never so many, yea, all of them, the righteous man's little is better in very many respects than all their greatest treasures heaped together. The King of Spain although the greatest prince in Christendom by far, having his empire so far extended, that he may truly say, that the sun ever shines upon his dominions, yet gives this for his motto, *Totus non sufficit orbis,* The whole world is not sufficient. God by Solomon tells us that "In the house of the righteous is much treasure" Pr 15:6, although many times there is scarce a good bed to lie, or a seat to sit on. The time will certainly come, when the richest wicked men that ever lived will see clearly that their account would have been much narrower, and consequently their condition to all eternity less miserable, if they had been so poor as to have begged their bread from door to door all their lives long. It is with the blessings of this life as it is with perfumed gloves; when they are richly perfumed their perfume is much more valuable than the leather of which they are made: so, not so much earthly blessings considered in themselves, as their being perfumed with the sweet love of God in Christ, is that which maketh them blessings indeed, truly
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Verses 16-17. A little blest is better than a great deal curst; a little blest is better than a world enjoyed; a pound blest is better than a thousand curst; a black crust blest is better than a feast curst; the gleanings blest are better than the whole harvest curst; a drop of mercy blest is better than a sea of mercy curst; Lazarus crumbs blest was better than Dives' delicates curst; Jacob's little blest unto him was better than Esau's great estate that was curst unto him. It is always better to have scraps with a blessing, than to have manna and quails with a curse; a thin table with a blessing is better than a full table with a snare; a threadbare coat with a blessing is better than a purple robe curst; a hole, a cave, a den, a barn, a chimney corner with a blessing, is better than stately palaces with a curse; a woollen cap blest is better than a golden crown curst; and it may be that emperor understood as much, that said of his crown, when he looked on it with tears: "If you knew the cares that are under this crown you would never stoop to take it up." And therefore, why should not a Christian be contented with a little, seeing his little shall be blest unto him? Isaac tills the ground and sows his seed, and God blesses him with an hundredfold; and Cain tills the ground and sows his seed, but the earth is cursed to him and commanded not to yield to him his strength. Oh, therefore never let a Christian murmur because he hath but little, but rather let him be still blessing of that God that hath blest his little, and doth bless his little, and that will bless his little to him. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 17. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but he upholdeth (or underprops) the righteous. By the arms of the wicked, you are to understand their strength, their valour, their power, their wit, their wealth, their abundance, which is all the arms they have to support and bear up themselves in the world with. Now, these arms shall be broken, and when they are broken, then, even then, will God uphold the righteous, that is, God will be a continual overflowing fountain of good to his righteous ones; so that they shall never want, though all the springs of the wicked are dried up round about them. Thomas Brooks.

Verse 18. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright. Deposits their days, lays them up in safety for them: for such is the original idea of (edy). John Fry.
**Verse 18.** *The Lord knoweth the days of the upright,* and they cannot be cut short by the malice of man. *W. Wilson.*

**Verse 20.** *As the fat of lambs.* As the glory of fat sheep, which are at length slain. *Targum.*

**Verse 20.** *Fat of lambs.* As the fat of the sacrifices was consumed on the altar by the fire (which was a type of God's righteous vengeance upon sinners), till it vanished into smoke; so the wicked will be the sacrifices to God's justice, and be destroyed by the fire of his indignation. *Thomas Scott.*

**Verse 20.** *Into smoke shall they consume.* "What hath pride profited us? or what hath our boasting of riches given us?" Such are the things, they shall speak who are in hell and who have sinned. For, the hope of the ungodly is like a dry thistle down, by the wind carried away, or the thin foam spread upon the billows, or as a smoke floated hither and thither by the wind, or as the remembrance of a wayfaring man for a day. *Wouter of Stoelwyk,* 1541.

**Verse 21.** *Payeth not again;* i.e., has it not in his power, from his straitened circumstances, to repay what he has borrowed: compare De 28:12. A Jew thus circumstanced became the bond slave of his creditors: compare 2Ki 4:1. *Daniel Cresswell.*

**Verse 22.** God promises that the seed of his people shall inherit the earth. The child of such a tenant as paid his rent well, shall not be put out of his farm. *John Glascock.*

**Verse 23.** *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.* When this Pilot undertakes to steer their course, their vessel shall never split upon the rock, run upon the sands, or spring a leak, so as to sink in the seas. To be sure he will see them safe in their harbour. He was no Christian, yet I suppose none will deny but he spake good divinity, who said, "If a man will choose God for his Friend, he shall travel securely through a wilderness that hath many beasts of prey in it; he shall pass safely through this world; for he only is safe that hath God for his guide." (Ar. Epist. 27) Doth he not speak a little like David himself Ps 37:23, who never expected to come to glory except he were guided by his counsel? Now, if a poor heathen could say thus, and see good reason to trust God, and admire his faithfulness as he doth frequently (and so doth Seneca, justifying God's faithfulness in all his dealings with the best men in all their sufferings, and the prosperity of the wicked); what then shall the heavenly Christian say, who hath experienced so much of God's faithfulness in answering his prayers, in fulfilling his promises, and supplying all his exigencies? *James Janeway.*
Verse 23. He delighteth in his way. Note that in verse four, we are bidden to delight in the Lord, and here he delights in us, and as here our way is his delight, so in verse thirty-four we are to "keep his way." These antitheses are instructive. C. H. S.

Verses 23-24. Strange words to us! the very steps all ordered, and that by an Almighty One, who "delights" in the goodness of the good man's way. And yet the inference so distinctly to be drawn is that the good man may fall, and that his God and Guide may stand by and behold and permit! Let us add to the suggestion of these verses, one or two references which may help us to establish the principle in our hearts, that the child of God may fall and still remain the child of God; and also to explain somewhat of the reason why this is part of their lot, whether ordered, or only permitted, at all events, a step of the "right way, "by which God leads them to a "city of habitation." Ps 107:7. It is observed near the close of Hezekiah's good and prosperous life that, "in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon...God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart," 2Ch 32:31. And again, in Daniel's prophecy regarding the latter days, we find Da 11:35, "And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and make them white." In the two preceding verses, we have also some valuable details regarding such falls, such as the help with which God will uphold them, the flatteries with which the world will still beset, and hinder them from rising again; the outward troubles into which their fall shall lead them, as through a furnace; the high position (instructors of many) which yet shall not save them from their needed ordeal—the time appointed—and the end in view. So here. The acknowledgment of the possibility of the good man's fall is accompanied with the precious assurance that he shall not be utterly cast down. Mary B. M. Duncan, in "Under the Shadow, 1867."

Verse 24. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, etc. Thus the Spirit comforts and answers the secret thoughts which everyone might have, saying with himself, I have, however, seen it happen, that the righteous is oppressed, and his cause is trodden in the dust by the wicked. Nay, he replies, dear child, let it be so, that he falls; he still cannot remain lying thus and be cast away; he must be up again, although all the world doubts of it. For God catches him by the hand, and raises him again. Martin Luther.

Verse 24. Though he fall, namely, as one that were faint hearted, he shall not be cast off, namely, utterly, or for ever from God 2Co 4:9; "for the Lord putteth under his hand, "i.e., his power and might, namely, to uphold him from utter falling away, which we should quickly do if God were not with us. Thomas Wilcocks.
Verse 24. A man pardoned, and justified by faith in Christ, though he may, and sometimes doth, fall into foul sins, yet they never prevail so far as to reverse pardon, and reduce to a state of non-justification. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand! He speaks of a good man pardoned, justified; he may fall; but how far? from pardon, from justification? No, then he should utterly fall, be cast down beneath God's hand; but the text saith, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand; or, as Montanus renders the words, the Lord upholdeth his hands, and he will not let him sink into such a condition. If it were so, then sin should have dominion over him, but, Ro 6:14. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; "and Ro 8:2, justified ones are freed from the law of sin and death; and Ro 8:30, the predestinated, called, justified, and glorified ones, are so linked together, that there is no breaking their chain; if they do sin, they have an "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1Jo 2:1-2. William Greenhill.

Verse 25. I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken (he doth not say, In my experience I never saw the righteous afflicted, but, I never saw him left or forsaken in his affliction), and I never saw his seed begging their bread: he puts in that, because begging of bread, especially in the commonwealth of Israel, and in the state of the Jews, was a note of utter dereliction! for though God had told them that they should have the poor always with them, yet he had given an express law that there should be no beggar among them; therefore, saith he, I have not seen the righteous so forsaken, that they should be forced to live by begging. If any say, that David himself begged, he asked bread of Abimelech and of Nabal; I answer, it is a good rule, and it resolves the case; transitory cases, and sudden accidents, make no beggars: we must not say, David was a beggar, or begged his bread, because once he was in a strait and asked bread of Abimelech; and in a second strait sent to Nabal: in such sudden cases, the richest man in the world may be put to ask a piece of bread. A good man may fall into such wants, but good men are rarely, if ever or at all, left in them. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 25. Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. Perhaps it will be objected that there have been many righteous men poor: but the place speaketh of a righteous charitable man, for so the following verse showeth, which saith, "He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed." And who hath seen such a one or his seed to be brought to such poverty as to beg his bread? When our Saviour Christ had fed four thousand with seven loaves and a few fishes, all being filled, seven baskets full of fragments were gathered up: and it is Saint Austin's note upon it, crescit dum
impeditur victus, sic eleemosyna si indigentibus erogetur, the victuals in expending were augmented, and so is the alms which is given to the poor. Michael Jermin.

Verse 25. Yet have I not seen, etc. I believe this to be literally true in all cases. I am now grey headed myself; I have travelled in different countries, and have had many opportunities of seeing and conversing with religious people in all situations in life; and I have not, to my knowledge, seen one instance to the contrary. I have seen no righteous man forsaken, nor any children of the righteous begging their bread. God puts honour upon all that fear him; and thus careful is he of them, and of their posterity. Adam Clarke.

Verse 25. Begging bread. This is not meant of an occasional seeking relief in want (for so David himself desired bread of Abimelech, 1Sa 21:3, and he and his soldiers desired some supply of victuals from Nabal, 1Sa 25:8); but of living in a continual way of begging from door to door, which is denounced as a curse against the wicked Ps 109:10, "Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg." Nor doth it hence follow, that neither the righteous man, nor his seed, are ever brought to this sad degree of misery; but only that it doth so rarely happen, that David in all his time had never seen it. Arthur Jackson.

Verse 25. This observation of the psalmist will be found generally verified. We find indeed exceptions, as in the case of Eli's family. But this was the result of his defect of character as a righteous man. And we know that the promises must fail, if they neglect the means necessary to their accomplishment (see Ge 18:19). But some think that this verse admits of an explanatory supplement; and render the last clause thus, "Nor his seed (forsaken, though) begging bread." David Davidson, in "The Pocket Commentary, 1836."

Verse 25. These words must be taken as a general observation, not absolutely verified in every case; yet the strict fact is, I apprehend, that the immediate descendants of truly pious persons are very seldom, if ever, reduced to such extremities, unless by their own great imprudence, or their abandoned practices. William Walford.

Verse 25. Here he records an experiment of his (such as whereof Psalm 119 is mostly made up), and if other men's experiences agree not altogether with his, it is no wonder: kings use not to mind beggars. John Trapp.

Verses 25-26. Many persons are solicitously perplexed how their children shall do when they are dead; yet they consider not, how God provided for them when they were children. Is the Lord's arm shortened? Did he take thee from thy
mothers breasts; and when thy parents forsook thee (as the psalmist saith),
began thy Father? And cannot this experienced mercy to thee, persuade thee
that he will not forsake thine? Is not "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and
today, and for ever?" "I have been young, "saith David, "and now am old; yet
have I not seen the righteous forsaken, "that is granted, nay, "not his seed
begging bread."

Many distrustful fathers are so carking for their posterity, that while they live
they starve their bodies, and hazard their souls, to leave them rich. To such a
father it is said justly, Dives es haeredi, pauper inopsque tibi. Like an over kind
hen, he feeds his chickens, and famishes himself. If usury, circumvention,
oppression, extortion, can make them rich, they shall not be poor. Their folly is
ridiculous; they fear lest their children should be miserable, yet take the only
course to make them miserable; for they leave them not so much heirs to their
goods as to their evils. They do as certainly inherit their fathers' sins as their
lands: "God layeth his iniquity for his children: and his offspring shall want a
morsel of bread." Job 21:19.

On the contrary, the good man is merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.
What the worldling thinks shall make his posterity poor, God saith shall make
the good man's rich. The precept gives a promise of mercy to obedience, not
confined to the obedient man's self, but extended to his seed, and that even to a
thousand generations, Ex 20:6. Trust, then, Christ with thy children; when thy
friends shall fail, usury bear no date, oppression be condemned to hell, thyself
rotten to the dust, the world itself turned and burned into cinders, still "Jesus
Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever." Thomas Adams.

Verse 26. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. He, the
good man, is merciful to himself, for mercy, like charity, begins at home; he is
not afraid to eat a good meal because he hath children. And he is merciful to
others too; for he will lend and do good to whom he can, and then his seed
fares the better for it. Mark, that the more he gives and lends in doing works of
mercy, the better it is for his children; for those children are ever best provided
for whose parents bear this mind—they had rather trust God with their children,
than their children with riches; and have made this their hope, that though they
die, yet God lives. Did but one of those rich and wretched parents (who pinched
and pined himself to make his son a gentleman, forsooth), rise from the dead,
and see that proverb of Solomon fulfilled in himself, "He begetteth a son, and
in his hand is nothing; "I persuade myself, the rumination of this would afflict
him in his soul as much as any one pain of sense, even in hell itself. O consider
this, you that now live and see it in others; and remember withal, that if your
goods be either ill gotten, or worse kept, it may be your children's case when you are departed, and feel it, though you see it not. *Matthew Griffith.*

**Verse 28.** *For the Lord...forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever.* How? since they die as others do. Mark the antithesis, and that will explain it. *They are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.* They are preserved in their posterity: children are but the parents multiplied, and the parents continued; it is *nodosa aeternitas;* when the father's life is run out to the last, there is a knot tied, and the line is still continued by the child. I confess temporal blessings, such as long life, and the promise of an happy posterity, are more visible in the eye of that dispensation of the covenant; but yet God still taketh care for the children of his people, and many promises run that way that belong to the gospel administration, and still God's service is the surest way to establish a family, as sin is the ready way to root it out. And if it doth not always fall out accordingly, yet for the most part it doth; and we are no competent judges of God's dispensations in this kind, because we see providence by pieces, and have not the skill to set them together; but at the day of judgment, when the whole contexture of God's dealings is laid before us, we shall clearly understand how *the children of his servants continue, and their seed is established.* Ps 102:28. *Thomas Manton.*

**Verse 29.** *The righteous shall inherit the land,* or the earth. There is clearly an emphasis in the repetition of the same promise in the same terms which ought to have been uniformly rendered throughout Ps 37:9,11,22,29,34. And it cannot be doubted, that there is a reference to the new heavens and the new earth of Isa 56:17 2Pe 3:13. *W. Wilson.*

**Verse 29.** *The righteous shall inherit the land,* etc. Compare Mt 5:5. Consider well this Bible truth, of the future exclusive possession of the earth by the righteous. The millennial kingdom furnishes a fuller explanation. *T. C. Barth.*

**Verse 31.** *The law of his God is in his heart,* etc. The flock of sheep that's indisposed and unwilling to drive, start out of the way into every lane's end, one this way and another that; and just so is it with an unwilling heart; one thought starts this way, and another that, and it's a piece of skill to drive them through. But a willing heart, a heart prepared and ready to every good work, it flies quite up an end, and delights itself in the Lord. *Richard Steele.*

**Verse 31.** *(first clause).* He hath a Bible in his head, and another in his heart; he hath a good treasure within, and there hence bringeth good things. *John Trapp.*
Verses 32-33. The Jews watched that Just One daily and hourly; they sought to slay him, and did so; but Jehovah left him not in their hands, but vindicated his innocence by raising him from the dead. George Horne.

Verse 34. Wait on the Lord, etc. He that truly trusts in God will stay God's time, and use God's means, and walk in God's way, though it seem round about; they will not neglect their souls for haste; they know this would be to make more haste than good speed. Nor would they step out of the way, the way that is holy and righteous, though they may escape a loss, an affliction by it, though they might gain some desirable advantage by it. True faith goes leaning upon God, and therefore will keep his way. He that will not be liberal for the promoting and honouring of the gospel; he that fears poverty or affliction more than he fears sin; he that is more careful for the things of the world than for his soul; he that takes indirect or suspected courses, to get, or increase, or secure his estate; he that is not jealous or watchful, lest his cares for the world (when he is much engaged therein) should be immoderate—it is plain he doth not trust God with his estate; and that he does not trust God for his estate, whatever he thinks or pretend, he does not trust God for his soul, for his salvation; his hopes of heaven and salvation are but presumption. David Clarkson.

Verse 34. Wait on the Lord. Bind him not to a day, wake not the Beloved till he please. John Trapp.

Verse 34. Wait...keep. While we are waiting let us take heed of wavering. Go not a step out of God's way, though a lion be in the way; avoid not duty to meet with safety; keep God's highway, the good old way Jer 6:16, the way which is paved with holiness. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness." Isa 35:8. Avoid crooked paths, take heed of turning to the left hand, lest you be set on the left hand. Sin doth cross our hopes, it barricades up our way; a man may as well expect to find heaven in hell, as in a sinful way. Thomas Watson.

Verse 35. Green bay tree. The LXX translate (Nner xrzak) as if it were (Nnbl xrzak), "Like the cedar of Lebanon; "but (Nner xrza) according to Delitzsch, means a noble timber tree, one that in the course of centuries of growth has acquired a gigantic trunk, and an umbrageous, dome like crown.

Verse 35. Green bay tree. The marginal rendering—"a tree that greweth in his own soil"—is, no doubt, the true one. The idea generally formed of this passage by the reader of the English Bible is that the tree referred to was the bay laurel (Prunus laurocerasus), or cherry laurel of our gardens. But this plant belongs to an entirely different family. The bay and the Portugal laurels, whose forms of
growth and evergreen leaves make them highly ornamental in shrubberies, belong to a subfamily \((\text{Drupaceae}, \text{Lind.})\) of the rose tribe \((\text{Rosaceae})\), but the bay tree proper, which flourisheth luxuriantly in Southern Europe, is the type of the laurel family \((\text{Lauraceae})\). Several circumstances make it unlikely that the true bay tree represents the Hebrew esrach. There is no evidence that it was ever so plentiful in Palestine as to be chosen by the psalmist in an illustration in a poem for popular use. It is indeed to be met with, but that chiefly in localities on the borders of the eastern shore of the Great Sea. The chief objection to the supposition that the bay tree was referred to by the royal poet is to be found in the Psalm itself. Having mentioned it in the lines quoted above, he adds, "Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." The idea here is not one which could be represented and illustrated by an evergreen plant, slow of growth, and yet reaching in maturity a height of above thirty feet. The words demand a quick growing tree, in a soil more than usually favourable to its growth. Thus planted, and shooting up in calm and sunshine, it would attract every eye; but when the storm broke over it, when the strong wind swept imperiously through its branches, it would not stand. Torn up by the root, and its timber comparatively useless, like Abraham's dead, it would be buried out of sight. And thus with the wicked. He was sought and could not be found. 

John Duns, D.D., F.R.S.E., in "Biblical Natural Science."

Verse 35. We see no force in the observation of Dr. Duns; in fact, if there were not other reasons for preferring the translation given in the following note by Wilson, we should see all the more reason to keep to the bay tree. It was a tree of permanence and of long continued verdure, and so the prosperous wicked seem to be. They look as if their happiness would be eternal; yet, for all that, those who carefully note the dealings of providence, observe with holy wonder that divine justice cuts short their glory, and they perish utterly. C. H. S.

Verse 35. I have seen the wicked in great power (terrible, fierce, violent), and spreading himself like a green bay tree (a tree in its native soil, vigorous, and luxuriant, that had never been transplanted). A striking figure of the ungodly man of the world, firmly rooted in earthly things—his native soil, grown proud and wanton in his prosperity, without fear or apprehension of any reverse. William Wilson.

Verse 35. Like a green bay tree, which produces all leaves and no fruit. Matthew Henry.

Verse 35. I have seen the wicked, saith David, in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. And why like a green bay tree? Because in the winter, when all other trees—as the vine tree, fig tree, apple tree, etc., which
are more profitable trees—are withered and naked, yet the bay tree continueth as green in the winter as the summer. So fares it with wicked men when the children of God, in the storms of persecutions, and afflictions, and miseries, seem withered, and, as it were, dead, yet the wicked all that time flourish, and do appear green in the eyes of the world: they wallow in worldly wealth, but it is for their destruction; they wax fat, but it is for the day of slaughter. It was the case of Hophni and Phinehas: the Lord gave them enough and suffered them to go on and prosper in their wickedness; but what was the reason? Because he would destroy them. J. Gore's Sermon at St. Paul's, 1633.

Verses 35-36.

—Today he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes, tomorrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours upon him:
Third day comes a frost, a killing frost;
And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening—nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do.
—William Shakespeare, in Henry VIII.

Verses 36-37. The hawk flies high, and is as highly prized, being set upon a perch, vervelled with the jingling bells of encouragement, and carried on his master's fist; but being once dead and picked over the perch, is cast upon the dunghill as good for nothing. The hen scrapes in the dust, not anything rewarded when she is alive, but being dead, is brought as a choice dish to her master's table. Thus wicked men are commonly set in high places, and prosper in this life; and good men lie grovelling with their mouths in the dust, as the very underlings of the world; but being once dead, the one is cast into the dungeon of hell, the other advanced to the kingdom of heaven: the one is into Abraham's bosom, whilst the other is tormented with the devil and his angels. Thomas Westfield, D.D., 1644.

Verse 37. Mark...and behold. Herodotus maketh mention of a custom among the Ethiopians to set the dead bodies of their friends in glazed sepulchres, that their proportions might be obvious to the passengers. How needless soever that custom was, it is doubtless no more than just that the pious lineaments of their minds who die in the Lord should be presented to the living in the mirror of art. Indeed, commendation after death is the tribute of a religious life. Good works are jewels not to be locked up in a cabinet, but to be set forth to public view. If Christ would have Mary's name remembered in the gospel until the world's end for one box of ointment poured on his head, we cannot imagine that he would
have the many pious and charitable deeds of his servants to be buried in oblivion. Consult the Scriptures and you shall scarce find any godly man laid in his grave without an epitaph of honour. View the fathers, and you shall observe it their practice to honour the death of the good by giving them their deserved praises. Nathaniel Hardy.

Verse 37. The perfect man, etc.—Divines well distinguish of a double perfection, it is absoluta or comparata. That is absolutely perfect, to which nothing (that it may be accounted truly good) is wanting; and thus He only is perfectus who is infactus; God, who made all things, and himself is not made, only enjoying an all sufficient perfection, in and of himself. That is comparatively perfect, in which, notwithstanding some wants there is a fulness compared with others. Thus every saint is perfect in comparison of the wicked among whom he liveth. In this respect it is said of Noah, That he was a perfect man in his generations; his grace compared with the wickedness of the old world well deserving the name of perfection; indeed every upright man is perfect in comparison of them who are openly bad, or but openly good; stained with wickedness, or but painted with holiness. Thus one saint may be perfect if compared with another, the strong Christian in respect of the weak, whom he outstrips in grace and piety: such saints Paul means when he saith, "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect; " that is, such as have attained to greater measures of grace than others. It was said of Benaiah, "He was more honourable than thirty, but he attained not to the first three; "and though no saint can ever attain to the perfections of the first three, the blessed Trinity, yet many saints may be honourable amongst thirty perfect in comparison of those among whom they live.

We must further distinguish of a double perfection, it is extrinseca and intrinseca. Extrinsic perfection so called, because by imputation, is that which every believer is partaker of through the perfect righteousness of Christ, whereby all his imperfections are covered; in this respect the author to the Hebrews tells us, "That by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; "and S. Paul tells the Colossians that they were "complete in him, "meaning Christ. Indeed omnia Dei mandata tune facta deputantua, quando id quod non fit ignoscitur: divine commands are then in God's account fulfilled when our defects for Christ's sake are pardoned; and the evangelical perfection of a Christian consists not in perfectione virtutum, sed remissions vitiorum, in the completion of our graces, but remission of our sins.

Intrinsical perfection, so called because by inhesion, is no less rationally than usually thus distinguished, there is perfectio partium et graduum. He is said to be perfect, cui nihil deest eorum quae ad statum salutis necessaria, who wants
no graces that accompany salvation; or he is perfect, *cui nihil deest in gradibus gratiarum et virtutum*; who is not defective in the measures of those graces; both these are frequently and fitly illustrated by the resemblance of a child, and a grown man; the one whereof hath all the essential and integral parts of a man, the other a complete use and measure of those parts. *Nathaniel Hardy.*

**Verse 37. The end.** All wise men affect the conclusion to be best: to ride two or three miles of fair way, and to have a hundred deep and foul ones to pass afterward is uncomfortable; especially when the end is worse than the way. But let the beginning be troublesome, the progress somewhat more easy, and the journey's end happy, and there is fair amends. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.* Mark him in the setting out, he hath many oppositions; mark him in the journey, he is full of tribulations; but mark in the conclusion, and the end of that man is peace. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 37. The end of that man is peace.** Give me leave to determine what it is to end or die in peace. To end in peace with *Euthymius,* is to end in *pace cogitationis,* in peace of mind as it is opposed to doubting. To end in peace with *Cyprian,* is to end in *pace securitatis,* in peace of security, as it is opposed to final falling. To end in peace with *Origen,* is to end in *pace conscientiae,* in peace of conscience as it is opposed to despairing. To end in peace with old *Irenaeus,* is to end in *pace mortis,* in the peace of death as it is opposed to labouring. Again, to end in peace, is to end in *pace Dei,* in the peace of God which passeth all understanding, *i.e.*, far beyond men's apprehensions. To end in peace, is to end in *pace proximi,* in peace with our neighbours, *i.e.*, when no outcries or exclamations follow us. And lastly, to end in peace, is to end in *pace sui,* in peace with ourselves, *i.e.*, when no distractions or perturbations of mind molest us. *Richard Parre.*

**Verse 37.** The text may be divided into these two parts. Here is 1. The godly man's *property;* and 2. The godly man's *privilege.* His property is perfection; his privilege is peace. Here is the saint's *character* and the saint's *crown:* he is characterised by uprightness or sincerity, and crowned with peace. Here is the Christian's *way* and his *end,* his *motion,* and his *rest.* His way is holiness, his end happiness; his motion is towards perfection and in uprightness; his rest is peace at his journey's end. *John Whitlock, in a Funeral Sermon entitled, "The Upright Man and his Happy End," 1658.*

**Verse 37.** Time would fail me to tell how Christians die, nor can anything save the pen of the recording angel who has stood by their bed of death and borne them to Abraham's bosom narrate the unnumbered instances of their delightful
departure from the present world, which verify the truth of the Bible. "I could never have believed," said a dying saint, "that it was so delightful a thing to die, or that it was possible to have such views of the heavenly world as I now enjoy." The memorable Melancthon just before he died, chanted in his sleep the words, "I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." He seemed restless, and on being asked by one near him, "Whether there was anything more that he desired?" replied, *Aliud nihil nisi coelum*—nothing more, unless it be heaven. *Gardiner Spring.*

**Verse 37.** To die well be sure to live well; we must not think to have Lazarus's death, and Dive's life; like him in Plutarch that would live with Craesus, as he said, but he would die with Socrates. No, Balaam's wishes are foolish and fruitless: If you would die well, Christians, you must have a care to live well: *qualis vita, finis ita,* if you would die quietly, you must live strictly; if you would die comfortably, you must live conformably; if you would die happily, you must live holily. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* John Kitchin, M.A., 1660.

**Verse 38.** *The end of the wicked shall be cut off.* The wicked in this world do easily run up without rub or interruption, many times with acclamations and applause, all the golden steps of honours and preferments; but upon the highest stair they find the most slippery standing, and the top of their earthly felicity is the most immediate and certain descent unto the greatest downfall. They are royally mounted here upon earth, and gallop swiftly over the fair and green plains of plenty and pleasures; but at the end of their race they are overturned horse and man, and tumbled headlong into the pit of destruction. They fairly glide over the sea of this world with full sail, with much calmness and serenity, and richly laden; but in the brightest sunshine, and when they least suspect it, they suddenly and without recovery, sink into the gulf of darkness and desolation. *Robert Bolton.*

**Verse 40.** *And the Lord shall help them.* He shall, he shall, he shall. Oh, the rhetoric of God! the safety of the saints! the certainty of the promises! *John Trapp.*

Luther closes his Exposition of the Psalm with the words, Oh, shame on our faithlessness, mistrust, and vile unbelief, that we do not believe such rich, powerful, consolatory, declarations of God, and take up so readily with little grounds of offence, whenever we but hear the wicked speeches of the ungodly. Help. O God, that we may once attain to right faith. Amen.
HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Verse 1.** The art of tranquillity. *W. Jones.*

**Verses 1-2.** A frequent temptation, and a double corrective—a sight of sinners in death and hell.

**Verses 1, 2.** A frequent temptation, and a double corrective—a sight of sinners in death and hell.

**Verse 2.** How and when the wicked perish.

**Verse 3.**

1. A combination descriptive of holy living.

2. A combination descriptive of happy living.

**Verse 3.** The believer portrayed.

1. His object of trust.

2. His mode of life.

3. His place of abode.

4. His certainty of provision.

**Verse 3.** (*last clause*). Read it in four ways.

1. "Certainly fed," or the certainty of supply.

2. "Fed in verity," or the sufficiency of the provision for soul and body.

3. "Fed on truth," or the spirituality of the provision.

4. "Feed on truth," or the duty of choosing such provision.

**Verse 4.** Explain the delight and the desire of the believer, and show the connection between them.

**Verses 5-6.** The higher life.
1. Based on hearty resignation.

2. Sustained by faith.

3. Constantly unfolded by the Lord.


**Verses 5-6.** The higher life.

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**Verse 6.** Sweet comfort for slandered saints. Where their character now is. Who shall reveal it. The gradual yet sure manner of the revelation, and the glorious conclusion.


**Verse 7.** Peace, patience, self possession.

**Verse 7.** Stillness in God. *Bishop Wilberforce.*

**Verse 7.** Rest in the Lord.

1. Rest in the *will* of God, for whatever he wills is for your good, your highest good.

2. Rest in the *love* of God, and often meditate on the words of Jesus on this point, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

3. Rest in the *mercy* of God.

4. Rest in the *word* of God.

5. Rest in the *relation* thy God fills to thee; he is the Father.

6. Rest in the Lord as he is manifested in Jesus, thy God *in covenant.*
James Smith.

**Verse 8.** A SERMON FOR THE FRETFUL.

1. *Cease* from present anger. It is madness, it is sin; it shuts out our prayers; it will grow into malice; it may lead to worse.

2. *Forsake it* for the future. Repent of it, watch temper, discipline thy passions, etc.

3. *Avoid* all kindred feelings of fretfulness, impatience, envy, etc., for they lead to evil.

**Verse 9.** How the humble are the true lords of the land.

**Verse 10.**

1. Consider what the departed sinner has left. Possessions, joys, honours, aims, hopes, etc.

2. Consider where he has gone.

3. Consider whether you will share the same lot.

**Verses 10-11.** Terror to the wicked: comfort for believers. *A. Farindon.*

**Verse 11.** The meek man's delight, or "the harvest of a quiet eye."

**Verse 14.** *Upright conversation.*

1. What it excludes. The horizontal or earthly, the crooked or crafty, the slanting or sinister.

2. What it includes. Motive, object, language, action.

3. What it achieves. It stands like a pillar; it supports like a column; it ascends like a tower; it adorns like a monument; it illuminates like a Pharos.

**Verse 15.** The self destructive nature of evil.

**Verse 16.** How to make much of a little.

**Verses 16-17.**
1. The owners contrasted.

2. The possessions compared.

3. The preference given.

4. The reasons declared.

**Verse 17.** *(last clause).*

1. The favoured persons.

2. Their evident need, "upholding."

3. Their singular blessedness, "upheld, "above trial, under trial, after trial.

4. Their august Patron.

**Verse 18.** The comforts derivable from a consideration of the divine knowledge. The eternity of the righteous man's possessions.

**Verse 18.**

1. The *persons,* "the upright."

2. The *period,* "their days." These are known to God. (1) He knows them *kindly* and *graciously;* (2) He knows their *number;* (3) He knows the *nature* of them.

3. The *portion,* "their inheritance shall be for ever."

—William Jay.

**Verse 18 (last clause).** What it is. How they come by it. How long they hold it.

**Verse 19.** Good words for hard times.

**Verse 21.** Monetary transactions tests of character.

**Verse 22.** The divine blessing the secret of happiness. The divine displeasure the essence of misery.

**Verses 23-24.**
1. The divine predestination.
2. The divine delight.
3. The divine support.

**Verse 24.** Temporary trials.

1. To be expected.
2. Have their limit.
3. Have their results.
4. Our secret comfort under them.

What may be. What cannot be. What shall be.

**Verse 25.** Memorandum of an aged observer.

**Verse 26.** The righteous man's merciful disposition, generous action, and rich reward.

**Verse 26.** The benediction of the good man's family: what it is, and what it is not.

**Verse 27.** Negative, positive, remunerative.

**Verse 28.**

1. The Lord's love of right.
2. His faithfulness to the righteous.
3. Their sure preservation thus doubly guaranteed.
4. The doom of the wicked thus certified.

**Verse 29.** Canaan as a type of the righteous man's inheritance.

**Verse 30.** *Our speech* as a test of godliness.

**Verse 31.**

1. The best thing.
2. In the best place.
3. With the best of results.
Verses 32-33. Our enemies; their inveterate malice; our safeguard and justification.

Verse 34.

1. A twofold admonition: (a) *Wait on the Lord.* (b) *And keep his way;* wait and work, wait and walk, get grace and exercise it.

2. A twofold promise: (a) *He shall exalt thee to inherit the land;* God is the source of all elevation and honour. (b) *When the wicked are cur off, thou shalt see it;* and they will be cut off. *William Jay.*

Verse 34. Patient faith, persevering holiness, and promised exaltation.

Verse 34 (*last clause*). Emotions caused in the godly by a sight of the sinner's doom.

Verse 34 (*last clause*). The wicked are often cut off 1. Even *in life,* from their places, and riches, and prospects. 2. At *death* they are cut off from all their possessions and comforts. 3. In *the last day* they will be cut off from "the resurrection of life." *William Jay.*

Verses 35-37. Three memorable scenes.

1. The imposing spectacle.
2. The astounding disappearance.
3. The delightful exit.

Verses 35-37. Three memorable scenes.

1. The imposing spectacle.
2. The astounding disappearance.
3. The delightful exit.

Verses 39-40.

1. The doctrines of grace condensed.
2. The experience of the gracious epitomised.
3. The promises of grace summarised.
4. The grandest evidence of grace declared: *because they trust in him.*
Psalm 38

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

TITLE. A Psalm of David, to bring remembrance. David felt as if he had been forgotten of his God, and, therefore, he recounted his sorrows and cried mightily for help under them. The same title is given to Psalm 70, where in like manner the psalmist pours out his complaint before the Lord. It would be foolish to make a guess as to the point in David's history when this was written; it may be a commemoration of his own sickness and endurance of cruelty; it may, on the other hand, have been composed by him for the use of sick and slandered saints, without special reference to himself.

DIVISION. The Psalm opens with a prayer, Ps 38:1; continues in a long complaint, Ps 38:2-8; pauses to dart an eye to heaven, Ps 38:9; proceeds with a second tale of sorrow, Ps 38:10-14; interjects another word of hopeful address to God, Ps 38:15; a third time pours out a flood of griefs, Ps 38:16-20; and then closes as it opened, with renewed petitioning, Ps 38:21-22.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath. Rebuked I must be, for I am an erring child and thou a careful Father, but throw not too much anger into the tones of thy voice; deal gently although I have sinned grievously. The anger of others I can bear, but not thine. As thy love is most sweet to my heart, so thy displeasure is most cutting to my conscience. Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Chasten me if thou wilt, it is a Father's prerogative, and to endure it obediently is a child's duty; but, O turn not the rod into a sword, smite not so as to kill. True, my sins might well inflame thee, but let thy mercy and longsuffering quench the glowing coals of thy wrath. O let me not be treated as an enemy or dealt with as a rebel. Bring to remembrance thy covenant, thy fatherhood, and my feebleness, and spare the servant.

Verse 2. For thine arrows stick fast in me. By this he means both bodily and spiritual griefs, but we may suppose, especially the latter, for these are most piercing and stick the fastest. God's law applied by the Spirit to the conviction of the soul of sin, wounds deeply and rankles long; it is an arrow not lightly to be brushed out by careless mirthfulness, or to be extracted by the flattering hand of self righteousness. The Lord knows how to shoot so that his bolts not only strike but stick. He can make convictions sink into the innermost spirit like arrows driven in up to the head. It seems strange that the Lord should shoot at his own beloved ones, but in truth he shoots at their sins rather than them, and those who feel his sin killing shafts in this life, shall not be slain with his hot
thunderbolts in the next world. *And thy hand presseth me sore.* The Lord had come to close dealings with him, and pressed him down with the weight of his hand, so that he had no rest or strength left. By these two expressions we are taught that conviction of sin is a piercing and a pressing thing, sharp and sore, smarting and crushing. Those who know by experience "the terrors of the Lord, "will be best able to vouch for the accuracy of such descriptions; they are true to the life.

**Verse 3.** *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger.* Mental depression tells upon the bodily frame; it is enough to create and foster every disease, and is in itself the most painful of all diseases. Soul sickness tells upon the entire frame; it weakens the body, and then bodily weakness reacts upon the mind. One drop of divine anger sets the whole of our blood boiling with misery. *Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.* Deeper still the malady penetrates, till the bones, the more solid parts of the system, are affected. No soundness and no rest are two sad deficiencies; yet these are both consciously gone from every awakened conscience until Jesus gives relief. God's anger is a fire that dries up the very marrow; it searches the secret parts of the belly. A man who has pain in his bones tosses to and fro in search of rest, but he finds none; he becomes worn out with agony, and in so many cases a sense of sin creates in the conscience a horrible unrest which cannot be exceeded in anguish except by hell itself.

**Verse 4.** *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head.* Like waves of the deep sea; like black mire in which a man utterly sinks. Above my hopes, my strength, my life itself, my sin rises in its terror. Unawakened sinners think their sins to be mere shallows, but when conscience is aroused they find out the depth of iniquity. *As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.* It is well when sin is an intolerable load, and when the remembrance of our sins burdens us beyond endurance. This verse is the genuine cry of one who feels himself undone by his transgressions and as yet sees not the great sacrifice.

**Verse 5.** *My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.* Apply this to the body, and it pictures a sad condition of disease; but read it of the soul, and it is to the life. Conscience lays on stripe after stripe till the swelling becomes a wound and suppurates, and the corruption within grows offensive. What a horrible creature man appears to be in his own consciousness when his depravity and vileness are fully opened up by the law of God, applied by the Holy Spirit! It is true there are diseases which are correctly described in this verse, when in the worst stage; but we prefer to receive the expressions as instructively figurative, since the words "because of my foolishness" point rather at a moral than a physical malady. Some of us know what it is to stink in
our own nostrils, so as to loathe ourselves. Even the most filthy diseases cannot be so foul as sin. No ulcers, cancers, or putrifying sores, can match the unutterable vileness and pollution of iniquity. Our own perceptions have made us feel this. We write what we do know, and testify what we have seen; and even now we shudder to think that so much of evil should lie festering deep within our nature.

Verse 6. *I am troubled.* I am wearied with distress, writhing with pain, in sore travail on account of sin revealed within me. *I am bowed down greatly.* I am brought very low, grievously weakened and frightfully depressed. Nothing so pulls a man down from all loftiness as a sense of sin and of divine wrath concerning it. *I go mourning all the day long.* The mourner's soul sorrow knew no intermission, even when he went about such business as he was able to attend, he went forth like a mourner who goes to the tomb, and his words and manners were like the lamentations of those who follow the corpse. The whole verse may be the more clearly understood if we picture the Oriental mourner, covered with sackcloth and ashes, bowed as in a heap, sitting amid squalor and dirt, performing contortions and writhings expressive of his grief; such is the awakened sinner, not in outward guise, but in very deed.

Verse 7. *For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease*—a hot, dry, parching disorder, probably accompanied by loathsome ulcers. Spiritually, the fire burns within when the evil of the heart is laid bare. Note the emphatic words, the evil is *loathsome,* it is in the *loins,* its seat is deep and vital—the man is *filled* with it. Those who have passed through the time of conviction understand all this. *And there is no soundness in my flesh.* This he had said before, and thus the Holy Spirit brings humiliating truth again and again to our memories, tears away every ground of glorying, and makes us know that in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.

Verse 8. *I am feeble.* The original is "benumbed," "or frozen, such strange incongruities and contradictions meet in a distracted mind and a sick body—it appears to itself to be alternately parched with heat and pinched with cold. Like souls in the Popish fabled Purgatory, tossed from burning furnaces into thick ice, so tormented hearts rush from one extreme to the other, with equal torture in each. A heat of fear, a chill of horror, a flaming desire, a horrible insensibility—by these successive miseries a convinced sinner is brought to death's door. *And sore broken.* Crushed as in a mill, pounded as in a mortar. The body of the sick man appears to be all out of joint and smashed into a palpitating pulp, and the soul of the desponding is in an equally wretched case; as a victim crushed under the car of Juggernaut, such is a soul over whose conscience the wheels of divine wrath have forced their awful way. *I have*
roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Deep and hoarse is the voice of sorrow, and often inarticulate and terrible. The heart learns groanings which cannot be uttered, and the voice fails to tone and tune itself to human speech. When our prayers appear to be rather animal than spiritual, they are none the less prevalent with the pitiful Father of mercy. He hears the murmur of the heart and the roaring of the soul because of sin, and in due time he comes to relieve his afflicted. The more closely the preceding portrait of an awakened soul is studied in the light of experience, the more will its striking accuracy appear. It cannot be a description of merely outward disorder, graphic as it might then be; it has a depth and pathos in it which only the soul's mysterious and awful agony can fully match.

Verse 9. Lord, all my desire is before thee. If unuttered, yet perceived. Blessed be God, he reads the longings of our hearts; nothing can be hidden from him; what we cannot tell to him he perfectly understands. The psalmist is conscious that he has not exaggerated, and therefore appeals to heaven for a confirmation of his words. The good Physician understands the symptoms of our disease and sees the hidden evil which they reveal, hence our case is safe in his hands. And my groaning is not hid from thee.

"He takes the meaning of our tears, The language of our groans."

Sorrow and anguish hide themselves from the observation of man, but God spies them out. None more lonely than the broken hearted sinner, yet hath he the Lord for his companion.

Verse 10. My heart panteth. Here begins another tale of woe. He was so dreadfully pained by the unkindness of friends, that his heart was in a state of perpetual palpitation. Sharp and quick were the beatings of his heart; he was like a hunted roe, filled with distressing alarms, and ready to fly out of itself with fear. The soul seeks sympathy in sorrow, and if it finds none, its sorrowful heart throbs are incessant. My strength faileth me. What with disease and distraction, he was weakened and ready to expire. A sense of sin, and a clear perception that none can help us in our distress, are enough to bring a man to death's door, especially if there be none to speak a gentle word, and point the broken spirit to the beloved Physician. As for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. Sweet light departed from his bodily eye, and consolation vanished from his soul. Those who were the very light of his eyes forsook him. Hope, the last lamp of night, was ready to go out. What a plight was the poor convict in! Yet here, we have some of us been; and here should we have perished had not infinite mercy interposed. Now, as we remember the
lovingkindness of the Lord, we see how good it was for us to find our own
strength fail us, since it drove us to the strong for strength; and how right it was
that our light should all be quenched, that the Lord's light should be all in all to
us.

Verse 11. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore. Whatever
affection they might pretend to, they kept out of his company, lest as a sinking
vessel often draws down boats with it, they might be made to suffer through his
calamities. It is very hard when those who should be the first to come to the
rescue, are the first to desert us. In times of deep soul trouble, even the most
affectionate friends cannot enter into the sufferer's case; let them be as anxious
as they may, the sores of a tender conscience they cannot bind up. Oh, the
loneliness of a soul passing under the convincing power of the Holy Ghost!
And my kinsmen stand afar off. As the women and others of our Lord's
acquaintances from afar gazed on his cross, so a soul wounded for sin sees all
mankind as distant spectators, and in the whole crowd finds none to aid. Often
relatives hinder seekers after Jesus, oftener still they look on with unconcern,
seldom enough do they endeavour to lead the penitent to Jesus.

Verse 12. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me. Alas! for us when
in addition to inward griefs, we are beset by outward temptations. David's foes
endeavoured basely to ensnare him. If fair means would not overthrow him,
foul should be tried. This snaring business is a vile one, the devil's own
poachers alone condescend to it; but prayer to God will deliver us, for the craft
of the entire college of tempters can be met and overcome by those who are led
of the Spirit. They that seek my hurt speak mischievous things. Lies and
slanders poured from them like water from the town pump. Their tongue was
for ever going, and their heart fore ever inventing lies. And imagine deceit all
the day long. They were never done, their forge was going from morning to
night. When they could not act they talked, and when they could not talk they
imagined, and schemed, and plotted. Restless is the activity of malice. Bad men
never have enough of evil. They compass sea and land to injure a saint; no
labour is too severe, no cost too great if they may utterly destroy the innocent.
Our comfort is, that our glorious Head knows the pertinacious malignity of our
foes, and will in due season put an end to it, as he even now sets a bound about
it.

Verse 13. But I, as a deaf man, heard not. Well and bravely was this done. A
sacred indifference to the slanders of malevolence is true courage and wise
policy. It is well to be as if we could not hear or see. Perhaps the psalmist
means that this deafness on his part was unavoidable because he had no power
to answer the taunts of the cruel, but felt much of the truth of their ungenerous
accusations. *And I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.* David was bravely silent, and herein was eminently typical of our Lord Jesus, whose marvellous silence before Pilate was far more eloquent than words. To abstain from self defence is often most difficult, and frequently most wise.

**Verse 14.** *Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.* He repeats the fact of his silence that we may note it, admire it, and imitate it. We have an advocate, and need not therefore plead our own cause. The Lord will rebuke our foes, for vengeance belongs to him; we may therefore wait patiently and find it our strength to sit still.

**Verse 15.** David committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, and so in patience was able to possess his soul. Hope in God's intervention, and belief in the power of prayer, are two most blessed stays to the soul in time of adversity. Turning right away from the creature to the sovereign Lord of all, and to him as our own covenant God, we shall find the richest solace in waiting upon him. Reputation like a fair pearl may be cast into the mire, but in due time when the Lord makes up his jewels, the godly character shall shine with unclouded splendour. Rest then, O slandered one, and let not thy soul be tossed to and fro with anxiety.

**Verse 16.** *For I said, hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me.* The good man was not insensible, he dreaded the sharp stings of taunting malice; he feared lest either by his conduct or his condition, he should give occasion to the wicked to triumph. This fear his earnest desires used as an argument in prayer as well as an incentive to prayer. *When my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.* The least flaw in a saint is sure to be noticed; long before it comes to a fall the enemy begins to rail, the merest trip of the foot sets all the dogs of hell barking. How careful ought we to be, and how importunate in prayer for upholding grace! We do not wish, like blind Samson, to make sport for our enemies; let us then beware of the treacherous Delilah of sin, by whose means our eyes may soon be put out.

**Verse 17.** *For I am ready to halt.* Like one who limps, or a person with tottering footsteps, in danger of falling. How well this befits us all. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." How small a thing will lame a Christian, how insignificant a stumbling block may cause him to fall! This passage refers to a weakness caused by pain and sorrow; the sufferer was ready to give up in despair; he was so depressed in spirit that he stumbled at a straw. Some of us painfully know what it is to be like dry tinder for the sparks of sorrow; ready to halt, ready to mourn, and sigh and cry upon any occasion, and for any cause. *And my sorrow is continually before me.* He did not need to look
out of window to find sorrow, he felt it within, and groaned under a body of sin
which was an increasing plague to him. Deep conviction continues to irritate
the conscience; it will not endure a patched up peace; but cries war to the knife
till the enmity is slain. Until the Holy Ghost applies the precious blood of Jesus,
a truly awakened sinner is covered with raw wounds which cannot be healed
nor bound up, nor mollified with ointment.

**Verse 18.** *For I will declare mine iniquity.* The slander of his enemies he
repudiates, but the accusations of his conscience he admits. Open confession is
good for the soul. When sorrow leads to hearty and penitent acknowledgment
of sin it is blessed sorrow, a thing to thank God for most devoutly. *I will be
sorry for my sin.* My confession will be salted with briny tears. It is well not so
much to bewail our sorrows as to denounce the sins which lie at the root of
them. To be sorry for sin is no atonement for it, but it is the right spirit in which
to repair to Jesus, who is the reconciliation and the Saviour. A man is near to
the end of his trouble when he comes to an end with his sins.

**Verse 19.** *But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong.* However weak and
dying the righteous man may be, the evils which oppose him are sure to be
lively enough. Neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil, are ever afflicted with
debility or inertness; this trinity of evils labour with mighty unremitting energy
to overthrow us. If the devil were sick, or our lusts feeble, or Madame Bubble
infirm, we might slacken prayer; but with such lively and vigorous enemies we
must not cease to cry mightily unto our God. *And they that hate me wrongfully
are multiplied.* Here is another misery, that as we are no match for our enemies
in strength, so also they outnumber us as a hundred to one. Wrong as the cause
of evil is, it is a popular one. More and more the kingdom of darkness grows.
Oh, misery of miseries, that we see the professed friends of Jesus forsaking
him, and the enemies of his cross and his cause mustering in increasing bands!

**Verse 20.** *They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries.* Such
would a wise man wish his enemies to be. Why should we seek to be beloved
of such graceless souls? It is a fine plea against our enemies when we can
without injustice declare them to be like the devil, whose nature it is to render
evil for good. *Because I follow the thing that good is.* If men hate us for this
reason we may rejoice to bear it: their wrath is the unconscious homage which
vice renders to virtue. This verse is not inconsistent with the writer's previous
confession; we may feel equally guilty before God, and yet be entirely innocent
of any wrong to our fellow men. It is one sin to acknowledge the truth, quite
another thing to submit to be belied. The Lord may smite me justly, and yet I
may be able to say to my fellow man, "Why smitest thou me?"
Verse 21. *Forsake me not, O Lord.* Now is the time I need thee most. When sickness, slander, and sin, all beset a saint, he requires the especial aid of heaven, and he shall have it too. He is afraid of nothing while God is with him, and God is with him evermore. *Be not far from me.* Withhold not the light of thy near and dear love. Reveal thyself to me. Stand at my side. Let me feel that though friendless besides, I have a most gracious and all sufficient friend in thee.

Verse 22. *Make haste to help me.* Delay would prove destruction. The poor pleader was far gone and ready to expire, only speedy help would serve his turn. See how sorrow quickens the importunity of prayer! Here is one of the sweet results of affliction, it gives new life to our pleading, and drives us with eagerness to our God. *O Lord my salvation.* Not my Saviour only, but my salvation. He who has the Lord on his side has salvation in present possession. Faith foresees the blessed issue of all her pleas, and in this verse begins to ascribe to God the glory of the expected mercy. We shall not be left of the Lord. His grace will succour us most opportune, and in heaven we shall see that we had not one trial too many, or one pang too severe. A sense of sin shall melt into the joy of salvation; grief shall lead on to gratitude, and gratitude to joy unspeakable and full of glory.

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**EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS**

**TITLE.** The first word, MIZMOR, or Psalm, is the designation of forty-four sacred poems, thirty-two of which are ascribed to David. The English reader must observe, that this word is not the same in the original Hebrew as that which forms the general title of the book of Psalms; the latter expressing a Hymn of Praise. The word *Psalm,* however, as used both in the context and in the titles of the individual compositions, is uniformly Mizmor in the original; a term which accurately defines their poetical character. To explain its proper meaning I must have recourse to the beautiful and accurate definition of Bishop Lowth. "The word Mizmor signifies a composition, which in a peculiar manner is cut up into sentences, short, frequent, and measured by regular intervals."

...He adds that Zamar means to cut or prune, as applied to the removing superfluous branches from trees; and, after mentioning the secondary sense of the word, "to sing with a voice or instrument, "gives it as his opinion, that Mizmar may be more properly referred to the primary sense of the root, so as to mean a poem cut up into short sentences, and pruned from all superfluity of words, which is the peculiar characteristic of the Hebrew poetry. *John Jebb.*
Title. The title that David gives this Psalm is worth your notice. A Psalm of David to bring to remembrance. David was on his deathbed as he thought, and he said it shall be a Psalm of remembrance, to bring sin to remembrance, to confess to God my uncleannesses with Bathsheba, to bring to my remembrance the evils of my life. Whenever God brings thee under affliction, thou art then in a fit plight to confess sin to God, and call to remembrance thy sins. Christopher Love.

Title. The Psalm is to bring to remembrance. This seems to teach us that good things need to be kept alive in our memories, that we should often sit down, look back, retrace, and turn over in our meditation things that are past, lest at any time we should let any good thing sink into oblivion. Among the things which David brought to his own remembrance, the first and foremost were, (1) his past trials and his past deliverances. The great point, however, in David's Psalm is to bring to remembrance, (2) the depravity of our nature. There is, perhaps, no Psalm which more fully than this describes human nature as seen in the light which God the Holy Ghost casts upon it in the time when he convinces us of sin. I am persuaded that the description here does not tally with any known disease of the body. It is very like leprosy, but it has about it certain features which cannot be found to meet in any leprosy described either by ancient or modern writers. The fact is, it is a spiritual leprosy, it is an inward disease which is here described, and David paints it to the very life, and he would have us to recollect this. A third thing the Psalm brings to our remembrance is, (3) our many enemies. David says, that his enemies laid snares for him, and sought his hurt, and spoke mischievous things, and devised and imagined deceits all the day long. "Well," says one, "how was it that David had so many enemies?" How could he make so many? Must he not have been imprudent and rash, or perhaps morose? It does not appear so in his life. He rather made enemies by his being scrupulously holy. His enemies attacked him, not because he was wicked, but as he says, in this very Psalm, they were his enemies because he loved the thing which is good. The ultimate result of the religion of Christ is to make peace everywhere, but the first result is to cause strife. Further, the Psalm reminds us of, (4) our gracious God. Anything which drives us to God is a blessing, and anything which weans us from leaning on the arm of flesh, and especially that weans us from trying to stand alone, is a boon to us. C. H. S

Whole Psalm. The most wonderful features in this Psalm, are the depth of misery into which the psalmist gradually plunges in his complaints in the first part of it, the sudden grasp at the arm of mercy and omnipotence that is made in
Ps 38:8, and the extreme height of comfort and consolation that it reaches in the end. Benjamin Weiss.

**Verse 1.** *O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath.* But is it not an absurd request, to require God not to rebuke me in his anger; as though I thought he would rebuke me if he were not angry? Is it not a senseless suit to pray to God not to chasten me in his displeasure, as though he would chasten me if he were not displeased? The most froward natures that are, will yet be quiet as long as they be pleased: and shall I have such a thought of the great yet gracious God, that he should be pleased and yet not be quiet? But, O my soul, is it all one, to rebuke in his anger and to rebuke when he is angry? He may rebuke when he is angry, and yet restrain and bridle in his anger; but to rebuke in his anger is to let loose the reins to his anger; and what is it to give the reins to his anger, but to make it outrun his mercy? And then what a miserable case should I be in, to have his anger to assault me, and not his mercy ready to relieve me? To have his indignation fall upon me when his lovingkindness were not by to take it off! Oh, therefore, *rebuke me not in thine anger, O God,* but let thy rebuking stay for thy mercy; chasten me not in thy displeasure, but let thy lovingkindness have the keeping of thy rod. Sir Richard Baker.

**Verse 1.** *Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure,* etc. Both these words, which we translate to *chasten,* and *hot displeasure,* are words of a heavy and of a vehement signification. They extend both to express the eternity of God's indignation, even to the binding of the soul and body in eternal chains of darkness. For the first, *jasar,* signifies in the Scriptures, *vincire,* to bind, often with ropes, often with chains; to fetter, or manacle, or pinion men that are to be executed; so that it imports a slavery, a bondage all the way, and a destruction at last. And so the word is used by Rehoboam, "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chasten you with scorpions." 1Ki 12:11. And then, the other word, *chamath,* doth not only signify *hot displeasure,* but that effect of God's hot displeasure which is intended by the prophet Esay: "Therefore hath he poured forth his fierce wrath, and the strength of battle, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not, and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." These be the fearful conditions of God's hot displeasure, to be in a furnace, and not to feel it; to be in a habit of sin, and not know what leads us into temptation; to be burnt to ashes, and so not only without all moisture, all holy tears, but, as ashes, without any possibility that any good thing can grow in us. And yet this word, *chamath,* hath a heavier signification than this; for it signifies poison itself, destruction itself, for so it is twice taken in one verse: "Their poison is like the poison of a serpent" Ps 58:4; so that this *hot displeasure* is that poison of the soul, obduration here, and that extension of
that obduration, a final impenitence in this life, and an infinite impenitableness in the next, to die without any actual penitence here, and live without all possibility of future penitence for ever hereafter. David therefore foresees, that if God _rebuke in anger_, it will come to a _chastening in hot displeasure_. For what should stop him? For, "if a man sin against the Lord, who will plead for him?" says Eli. "Plead thou my cause," says David; it is only the Lord that can be of counsel with him, and plead for him and that Lord is both the judge and angry too. _John Donne._

**Verse 2.** _For thine arrows stick fast in me._ First, we shall see in what respect he calls them _arrows_: and therein, first, that they are _alienae_, they are shot from others, they are not in his own power; a man shoots not an arrow at himself; and then that they are _veloces_, swift in coming, he cannot give them their time; and again, they are _vix visibles_, though they be not altogether invisible in their cunning, yet there is required a quick eye, and an express diligence and watchfulness to avoid them; so they are arrows in the hand of another, not his own; and swift as they come, and invisible before they come. And secondly, they are many arrows, the victory lies not in escaping one or two. And thirdly, they _stick_ in him: they find not David so good proof as to rebound back again, and imprint no sense: and they stick _Fast_: though the blow be felt and the wound discerned, yet there is not a present cure, he cannot shake them off; _infixae sunt_, and then, with all this, they _stick fast in him_; that is, in all him; in his body and soul; in him, in his thoughts and actions; in him, in his sins and in his good works too; _infixae mihi_, there is no part of him, no faculty in him, in which they stick not; for (which may well be another consideration), that _hand_, which shot them, _presses him_; follows the blow, and presses him _sore_ , that is, vehemently. But yet (which will be our conclusion), _sagittae tuae, thy arrows_, and _manus tua, thy hand_, these arrows that are shot, and this hand that presses him so sore, are the arrows, and the hand _of God_; and therefore, first, they must have their effect, they cannot be disappointed; but yet they bring their comfort with them, because they are his, because no arrows from him, no pressing with his hand, comes without that _balsamum_ of mercy to heal as fast as he wounds. _John Donne._

**Verse 2.** _Thine arrows stick fast._ Though importunity be to God most pleasing always, yet to us it is then most necessary when the cheerful face of God is turned into frowns, and when there is a justly conceived fear of the continuance of his anger: and have I not just cause to fear it, having the arrows of his anger sticking so fast in me? If he had meant to make me but a butt, at which to shoot his arrows, he would quickly, I suppose, have taken them up again; but now that he leaves them sticking in me, what can I think, but that he means to make
me his quiver; and then I may look long enough before he come to pluck them out. They are arrows, indeed, that are feathered with swiftness, and headed with sharpness; and to give them a force in flying, they are shot, I may say, out of his crossbow, I am sure his bow of crosses; for no arrows can fly so fast, none pierce so deep, as the crosses and afflictions with which he hath surprised me: I may truly say surprised me, seeing when I thought myself most safe, and said, "I shall never be moved," even then, these arrows of his anger lighted upon me, and stick so fast in my flesh, that no arm but his that shot them, is ever able to draw them forth. Oh, then, as thou hast stretched forth thine arm of anger, O God, to shoot these arrows at me, so stretch forth thine arm of mercy to draw them forth, that I may rather sing hymns than dirges unto thee; and that thou mayest show thy power, as well in pardoning as thou hast done in condemning.

Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 2. Thine arrows. Arrows are (1) swift, (2) secret, (3) sharp (4) killing instruments. They are instruments drawing blood and drinking blood, even unto drunkenness De 32:42; afflictions are like arrows in all these properties. 1. Afflictions often come very speedily, with a glance as an arrow, quick as a thought. 2. Afflictions come suddenly, unexpectedly; an arrow is upon a man afore he is aware, so are afflictions. Though Job saith, the thing he feared came upon him, he looked for this arrow before it came; yet usually afflictions are unlooked for guests, they thrust in upon us when we dream not of them. 3. They come with little noise; an arrow is felt before, or, as soon as it is heard; an arrow flies silently and secretly, stealing upon and wounding a man, unobserved and unseen. Lastly, all afflictions are sharp, and in their own nature killing and deadly. That any have good from them, is from the grace of God, not from their nature. Joseph Caryl.

Verse 2. Let no one think these expressions of penitence Ps 38:1-4 overstrained or excessive. They are the words of the Holy Spirit of God, speaking by the mouth of the man after God's own heart. If we were as repentant as David, we should bring home to ourselves his language; as it is, our affections are chilled, and therefore we do not enter into his words...And let us observe how all the miseries are referred to their proper end. The sin is not bewailed merely on account of its ill effect on the guilty one, but on account of the despite done to God. The psalmist's first thought is the "anger" of the Lord, and his hot displeasure. It is not the "arrows" that afflict him so much as that they are God's. "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me." The reason why there is no health in his flesh is because of God's displeasure. Such is true contrition, "not the sorrow of the world which worketh death, but the sorrow
that worketh repentance not to be repented of." *A Commentary on the Seven Penitential Psalms. Chiefly from Ancient Sources, (by A.P.F.)* 1847.

**Verse 2.** *Thy hand presseth me sore.* Not the hand of Egypt or Ashur; then it were hand for hand, a duel of some equality: hand to hand; here forces and stratagems might achieve a victory: but *Thy hand.* The weight of a man's blow is but weak, according to the force and pulse of his arm; as the princes of Midian answered Gideon, when he bade his son try the dint of his sword upon them; "Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength." Jud 8:21. But "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb 10:31. As Homer called the hands of Jupiter *ceirez aeptoi,* hands whose praise could not be sufficiently spoken; which some read *ceires aaptoii,* hands inaccessible, irresistible for strength: all the gods in heaven could not ward a blow of Jupiter's hand. This hand never strikes but for sin; and where sin is mighty his blow is heavy. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 3.** *Thine anger...my sin.* I, alas! am as an anvil under two hammers; one of thine anger, another of my sin; both of them beating incessantly upon me; the hammer of thine anger beating upon my flesh and making that unsound; the hammer of my sin beating upon my bones and making them unquiet; although indeed both beat upon both; but thine anger more upon my flesh, as being more sensible; my sin more upon my bones, as being more obdurate. God's anger and sin are the two efficient causes of all misery; but the procatarctic (as applied to diseases, signifies the exciting cause) cause indeed is sin: God's anger, like the house that Samson pulled upon his own head, falls not upon us but when we pull it upon ourselves by sin. *Sir Richard Baker.*

**Verse 3.** *My flesh...my bones.* I know by the unsoundness of my flesh that God is angry with me; for if it were not for his anger my flesh would be sound: but what soundness can there be in it now, when God's angry hand lies beating upon it continually, and never ceaseth? I know by the unquietness of my bones that I have sin in my bosom; for if it were not for sin my bones would be quiet. But what quietness can be in them now, when sin lies gnawing upon them incessantly with the worm of remorse? One would think my bones were far enough removed and closely enough hidden from sins doing them any hurt: yet see the searching nature, the venomous poison of sin, which pierceth through my flesh, and makes unquietness in my very bones. I know my flesh is guilty of many faults, by which it justly deserves unsoundness; but what have my bones done? for they minister no fuel to the flames of my flesh's sensuality; and why then should they be troubled? But are not my bones supporters of my flesh, and are they not by this at least accessory to my flesh's faults? As accessories, then,
they are subject to the same punishment the flesh itself is, which is the principal. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 3. neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. A Christian in this life is like quicksilver, which hath a principle of motion in itself, but not of rest: we are never quiet, but as the ball upon the racket, or the ship upon the waves. As long as we have sin, this is like quicksilver: a child of God is full of motion and disquiet...We are here in a perpetual hurry, in a constant fluctuation; our life is like the tide; sometimes ebbing, sometimes flowing; here is no rest; and the reason is because we are out of centre. Everything is in motion till it comes at the centre; Christ is the centre of the soul; the needle of the compass trembles till it comes to the North Pole. Thomas Watson.

Verse 3. Learn here of beggars how to procure succour and relief. Lay open thy sores, make known thy need, discover all thy misery, make not thy case better than it is. Beggars by experience find that the more miserable they appear to be, the more they are pitied, the more succoured; and yet the mercies of the most merciful men are but as drops in comparison of the oceans of God's mercies; and among men there are many, like the priest and Levite in the parable Lu 10:30-32, that can pass by a naked, wounded man, left half dead, and not pity him nor succour him. But God, like the merciful Samaritan, hath always compassion on such as with sense of their misery are forced to cry out and crave help. Read how Job, Job 6:1-30 and Job 7:1-21; David, Ps 38:3, etc., Hezekiah, Isa 38:10, etc., and other like saints poured out their complaints before the Lord, and withal observe what mercy was showed them of the Lord, and you may have in them both good patterns how to behave yourselves in like cases, and good encouragement so to do. This is it which God expects of us, and wherunto he desireth to bring us, that seeing our own emptiness and insufficiency, and the impotency and disability of others to help us, we should in all humility fly to his mercy. William Gouge.

Verse 4. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. David proceeds to a reason why his prayer must be vehement, why these miseries of his are so violent, and why God's anger is permanent, and he finds this all to be, because in his sins, all these venomous qualities, vehemence, violence, and continuance, were complicated, and unwrapped; for he had sinned vehemently, in the rage of lust, and violently, in the effusion of blood, and permanently, in a long and senseless security. They are all contracted in this text into two kinds, which will be our two parts in handling these words: first, the Supergressae super, "Mine iniquities are gone over my head, "there is the multiplicity, the number, the succession, and so the continuation of his sin; and then, the Gravatae super, "My sins are as a heavy
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Verse 4. As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. No strength is so great but it may be overburdened; though Samson went light away with the gates of Gaza, yet when a whole house fell upon him it crushed him to death. And such, alas! am I; I have had sin as a burden upon me ever since I was born, but bore it a long time as light as Samson did the gates of Gaza; but now that I have pulled a whole house of sin upon me, how can I choose but be crushed to death with so great a weight? And crushed, O my soul, thou shouldst be indeed, if God for all his anger did not take some pity on thee, and for all his displeasure did not stay his hand from further chastening thee. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 4. It is of singular use to us, that the backslidings of the holy men of God are recorded in Holy Writ. Spots appear nowhere more disagreeable than when seen in a most beautiful face, or on the cleanest garment. And it is expedient to have a perfect knowledge of the filthiness of sin. We also learn from them to think humbly of ourselves, to depend on the grace of God, to keep a stricter eye upon ourselves, lest perhaps we fall into the same or more grievous sins. Ga 6:1. Herman Witsius, D.D., 1636-1708.
Verses 4-5. It is only when we can enter into all that is implied here that we begin to see our exceeding sinfulness. There is a certain feeling of sin which does not interfere with our pride, and self respect. We can have that sort of feeling, and say pretty earnestly, *Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.* But it is otherwise with us when we get to know ourselves better, and to feel ourselves loathsome in our wickedness, when our folly and meanness and ingratitude oppress us, and we begin to loathe ourselves, and can enter into verse five. Our wounds, once an object of self pity, and something in which we could claim sympathy and healing from our friends, have become corrupt, because of the meanness and folly we feel to be in us. We hide them now, for if they were seen, would not "lovers and friends stand aloof from our sore"? Then we are silent except to God, *"For in thee, O Lord, do I hope; thou wilt hear, O Lord my God, "Ps 38:15. O love of God that turns not away! O blessed Jesus, that turneth not away from the leprous man that fell upon his face and said, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean, but put forth thine hand and touched him, saying, 'I will: be thou clean, 'to whom can we go but unto thee!" Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verse 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt,* etc. These expressions seem to be in a great measure figurative, and significant rather of the diseased state of his mind than of his body. *William Walford.*

Verse 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt.* I know, O Lord, I have done most foolishly, to let my sores run so long without seeking for help; for now, *My wounds stink and are corrupt,* in as ill a case as Lazarus' body was when it had been four days buried; enough to make any man despair that did not know thee as I do. For, do not I know, that *nullum tempus occurrit tibi;* do not I know thou hast as well wisdom to remedy my foolishness as power to cure my wounds? Could the grave hold Lazarus when thou didst but open thy mouth to call him forth? No more can the corruption of my sores be any hindrance to their healing when thy pleasure is to have them to be cured. Although, therefore, I have done my own discretion wrong to defer my care, yet I will not do thy power wrong to despair of thy cure; for, how should I despair, who know thee to be as powerful as thou art merciful; if I may not rather say, to be as merciful as thou art powerful! *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt.* Either they must be understood literally of the sores that were in his body (as the words in the following verse may also seem to import) which he calls wounds, to intimate that he looked upon them as the wheals or swelling tumours (for so the original word may signify) which the rod of God had made in his flesh, or the wounds of those arrows of which he had spoken Ps 38:2, "Thine arrows stick fast in me; "or else
figuratively, of any other miseries that God had brought upon him, comparing them to stinking and festering sores; either to imply the long continuance of them, or the sharp pains and sorrows which he felt in himself by reason thereof. Yet some, I know, would have it meant of the shame which his sins had brought upon him. Arthur Jackson.

Verses 5-6. The spiritual feeling of sin is indispensable to the feeling of salvation. A sense of the malady must ever precede, and prepare the soul for, a believing reception and due apprehension of the remedy. Wherever God intends to reveal his Son with power, wherever he intends to make the gospel to be "a joyful sound," he makes the conscience feel and groan under the burden of sin. And sure am I that when a man is labouring under the burden of sin, he will be full of complaint. The Bible records hundreds of the complaints of God's people under the burden of sin. My wounds stink and are corrupt, cries one, because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. "My soul," cries another, "is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh until the grave," Ps 88:3. "He hath led me, "groans out a third, "and brought me into darkness, but not into light." La 3:2. A living man must needs cry under such circumstances. He cannot carry the burden without complaining of its weight. He cannot feel the arrow sticking in his conscience without groaning under the pain. He cannot have the worm gnawing his vitals, without complaining of its venomous tooth. He cannot feel that God is incensed against him without bitterly complaining that the Lord is his enemy. Spiritual complaint then is a mark of spiritual life, and is one which God recognises as such. "I have surely hear Ephraim bemoaning himself." Jer 31:18. It shows that he has something to mourn over; something to make him groan being burdened; that sin has been opened up to him in its hateful malignancy; that it is a trouble and distress to his soul; that he cannot roll it like a sweet morsel under his tongue; but that it is found out by the penetrating eye, and punished by the chastening hand of God. J. C. Philpot. 1842.

Verse 6. I am troubled. I writhe with pain. This is the proper sense of the original, which means to "turn out of its proper situation, or course; "thence to be "distorted, writhed, "as a person in pain. Our Bible translation, which says in the text, I am troubled, adds in the margin, "wried, "an obsolete word, correctly expressing the Hebrew. Richard Mant.

Verse 6. I go mourning all the day long. And now was I both a burden and a terror to myself, nor did I ever so know, as now, what it was to be weary of my life, and yet afraid to die. Oh, how gladly now would I have been anybody but myself! Anything but a man! and in any condition but mine own! for there was nothing did pass more frequently over my mind than that it was impossible for
me to be forgiven my transgression, and to be saved from wrath to come. *John Bunyan, in "Grace Abounding."

**Verse 6.** Let a man see and feel himself under the bonds of guilt, in danger of hell, under the power of his lusts, enmity against God, and God a stranger to him; let but the sense of this condition lie upon his heart, and let him go on in his jollity if he can. What a woeful creature doth a man see himself now to be! He envies the happiness of the beasts that are filled, and play in their pastures. We have heard of him who when he saw a toad, stood weeping, because God had made him a *man*, so excellent a creature, and not a toad, so abominable: the goodness of God, then, it seems, as he apprehended it, made him weep; but this man meets a toad, and he weeps also, but why? because he is a *man* who thinks his estate infinitely worse than the condition of a toad, and if it were possible to attain it, would change states with the toad, that hath no guilt of sin, fears no wrath of God, is not under power of lusts or creatures; God is not enemy to it, which is his miserable state. *Giles Firmin, 1617-1697.*

**Verse 7.** *For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease.* The word here used, according to Gesenius (*Lex.*), properly denotes the internal muscles of the loins near the kidneys, to which the fat adheres. The word rendered *loathsome*—the word *disease* being supplied by our translators—is derived from (*hlq*), *kalah*, a word which means to roast, to parch, as fruit, grain, etc.; and then, in the form used here, it means scorched, burned; hence, a burning or inflammation; and the whole phrase would be synonymous with *an inflammation of the kidneys*. The word here used does not imply that there was any eruption, or ulcer, though it would seem from verse five that this was the fact, and that the inflammation had produced this effect. *Albert Barnes.*

**Verse 7.** *A loathsome disease.* In many things our estimates are extravagant; but we never over estimate the evil of sin. It is as corrupting as it is damning. It covers the soul with plague spots, with the leprosy. *Isa 1:5-6.* *William S. Plumer.*

**Verse 8.** *I am feeble,* literally, *I am benumbed.* I have become deadly cold, cold as a corpse; possibly with reference to the burning inflammation in the previous verse, as marking the alternations in the fever fit. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Verse 8.** *I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.* Where sin is, there will never be but unquietness of heart; and an unquiet heart will always produce these miserable effects—feebleness of body, dejectedness of mind, and roaring of voice. But how can roaring stand with feebleness, which seems to require a strength of spirits? Is it not, therefore, a roaring, perhaps not so much
in loudness as in an inarticulate expressing? that having done actions more like a beast than a man, I am forced to use a voice not so much of a man as of a beast? Or is it perhaps a roaring in spirit, which the heart may send forth though the body be feeble; or rather then most, when it is most feeble; not unlike the blaze of a candle then greatest when going out? Howsoever it be, this is certain: the heart is that unhappy plot of ground, which, receiving into it the accursed seed of sin, brings forth in the body and soul of man these miserable fruits: and how, then, can I be free from these weeds of the fruits, since I have received into me so great a measure of the seed? Oh, vile sin, that I could as well avoid thee as I can see thee, or could as easily resist thee as I deadly hate thee, I should not then complain of either feebleness of body, or dejectedness of mind, or roaring of voice; but I should perfectly enjoy that happy quietness in all my parts, which thou, O God, didst graciously bestow as a blessed dowry on our first parents at their creation. Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 8. I have roared, etc. It is difficult for a true penitent, in the bitterness of his soul, to go over the life which he has dragged on in sinfulness, without groaning and sighing from the bottom of his heart. But happy are these groans, happy these sighs, happy these sobs, since they flow from the influence of grace, and from the breath of the Holy Spirit, who himself in an ineffable manner groans in us and with us, and who forms these groans in our hearts by penitence and love! but as the violence of both, that is, of penitence and of love, cannot but burst the narrow limits of a penitent heart, it must make a vent for itself by the eyes and mouth. The eyes shed tears, and the mouth sends forth sighs and groans, which it can no longer restrain; because they are driven on by the fire of divine love, and so these lamentations frame themselves into words and intelligible sentences. Jean Baptiste Elias Avrillon, 1652-1729.

Verse 8. The disquietness of my heart. David felt pains gather about his heart, and then he cried out. The heart is the mark that God principally aims at when a Christian hath turned aside from his upright course; other outward parts he may hit and deeply wound, but this is but to make holes in the heart, where the seat of unsoundness that principally offends him is. The fire which conscience kindles, it may flash forth into the eyes, and tongue, and hands, and make a man look fearfully, speak desperately, and do bloodily, against the body; but the heat of the fire is principally within, in the furnace, in the spirit; it is but some sparkles and flashes only that you see come forth at the lower holes of the furnace, which you behold in the eyes, words, and deeds of such men. Nicholas Lockyer.

Verse 9. There are usually, if not always, pains with desires, especially in desires after the creature, because that oftentimes there is a frustration of our
desires, or an elongation of the things, the things are far off, hard to come by; our desires oftentimes are mute, they speak not; or the things that we desire, know not our minds: but our desires after God always speak, they are open unto God, he heareth their voice. Lord, all my desire is before thee, saith David, and my groaning is not hid from thee. Therefore it must needs be sweet, when the soul lies thus open unto God. Other desires do not assure and secure a man in the things he desires; a man may wish this and wish that, and go without both; but the soul that thus longs after God is instated in his wish, hath a present enjoyment, and certainly shall have a full enjoyment of him. "He will fulfil the desire of those that fear him: he also will hear their cry." Ps 145:19. Joseph Symonds.

Verse 9. My groaning is not hid from thee. Secret tears for secret sins are an excellent sign of a holy heart, and a healing balsam for broken spirits. God well understands the language of half words interrupted with sighs, and interprets them as the steams and breathings of a broken heart. As all our foolishness is before him to cover it, so is all our heaviness to ease it; and therefore shall our souls praise and please him more than a bullock with young horns and hoofs upon his altar. Holy mourning keeps out carnal sorrow and produces spirit joy. It stirs up the heart of a saint to beg preventing grace which no false heart can perform without secret reserves. This inward sorrow prevents open shame. God will never give up such souls to be trampled on by spiritual enemies, who are already humbled by themselves. In saints' humiliation there's a door opened for secret hope, because of the precious promises that are plighted to it, and especially of preventing future sin by strengthening grace. For as the love of God is the fountain of all true repentance, so it is the attractive of more incomes of divine love to the soul. Samuel Lee.

Verse 10. My heart panteth. The verb which David here uses signifies to travel or wander hither and thither, but here it is taken for the agitation or disquietude which distress of heart engenders when we know not what to do. According as men are disquieted in mind, so do they turn themselves on all sides; and so their heart may be said to turn round, or to run to and fro. John Calvin.

Verse 11. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off. So miserable am I, that I am left alone as one utterly forsaken; they are all pieces that recoil and fly back at the first voice of the powder. Yet it is not so much me they stand aloof from as my sore; for if it were not for my sore, I should have enough of their company easily enough; but they cannot abide sores, their eyes are too tender to endure to see them, and yet hard enough not to relieve them. Or is it they stand aloof, that is, so near as to show they are willing enough to see them; but yet so far off as to show they have no
meaning to come and help them! ...*My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore,* as fearing more my sore than me; but *my kinsmen stand afar off,* as fearing me no less than my sore; and where my lovers and friends by standing aloof do but violate the law of a contracted friendship, my kinsmen by standing afar off violate even the law of natural affection; and is not this a grievous thing, that the law of reason, the law of friendship, the law of nature, shall all be broken rather than I shall be relieved or find assistance? *Sir Richard Baker.*

**Verse 11.** *My lovers and my friends stand afar off.* Deserted by false friends, but conqueror through thee, to thee I speed, who though seeming to act the part of an enemy, yet never changest thy love; but loveth for ever him whom thou once hast loved. When you seem afar off, you are near. I conceive this sorrow on account of the treachery of false friends, and the cowardliness of my kinsfolk, who are to me as piercing thorns rather than sweet smelling roses. The proof of affection is seen by deeds. I hear the name of kinsman and friend; I see no deed. To thee, therefore, I flee, whose word is deed; for I need thy help. *From the Latin of A. Rivetus.*

**Verse 13.** *But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.* For why should I hear when I meant not to speak? and why should I speak when I knew beforehand I should not be heard? I knew by contesting I should but provoke them, and make them more guilty that were guilty too much before. I therefore thought it better myself to be silent than to set them a roaring and make them grow outrageous. No doubt a great wisdom in David, to know that to be deaf and dumb was in this case his best course, but yet a far greater virtue that knowing it, he was able to do it. Oh, how happy should we be, if we could always do that which we know is best to be done, and if our wills were as ready to act, as our reason is able to enact; we should then decline many rocks we now run upon, we should then avoid many errors we now run into. To be deaf and dumb are indeed great inabilities and defects, when they be natural; but when they be voluntary, and I may say artificial, they are them great abilities, or rather perfections. *Sir Richard Baker.*

**Verse 13.** *But I, as a deaf man, heard not.* The inspired writer here compares himself to a dumb and deaf man for two reasons. In the first place, he intimates that he was so overwhelmed with the false and wicked judgments of his enemies, that he was not even permitted to open his mouth in his own defence. In the second place, he alleges before God his own patience, as a plea to induce God the more readily to have pity upon him; for such meekness and gentleness, not only with good reason, secures favour to the afflicted and the innocent, but it is also a sign of true piety. *John Calvin.*
Verse 14. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. You, who truly know yourselves; by whom silent suffering, secret grief, and hidden joy are understood; by the knowledge of your own unspoken sorrow, unexpressed, because inexpressible feelings, by the consciousness of the unrevealed depths of your own nature, the earnest, but ever unsatisfied yearnings of your spirit, learn to reverence and love those by whom you are surrounded, whose inner life can never be completely read, but whom you are sure must need sacred sympathy and tender consideration. If a secret grief is constantly gnawing my heart, making my voice falter in the song of praise, may not my brother's downcast eye and heavy heart be occasioned by a similar cause; shall I condemn him for his want of gladness? No: but remember, "the heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." The silent breathings of the spirit are not for our ears; the hot tears which in secret fall, are not for our eyes; in mercy has the veil been drawn round each heart; but by the sacred memory of our own sadness, let our voice be gentle, our look tender, our tread quiet, as we pass amongst the mourners. Jessie Coombs, in "Thoughts for the Inner Life," 1867.

Verse 15. A man that is to go down into a deep pit, he does not throw himself headlong into it, or leap down at all adventures, but fastens a rope at top upon a cross beam or some sure place, and so lets himself down by degrees: so let thyself down into the consideration of thy sin, hanging upon Christ; and when thou art gone so low that thou canst endure no longer, but art ready to be overcome with the horror and darkness of thy miserable estate, dwell not too long at the gates of hell, lest the devil pull thee in, but wind thyself up again by renewed acts of faith, and "fly for refuge unto the hope that is set before thee." Heb 6:18. Thomas Cole (1627-1697), in "Morning Exercises."

Verse 17. For I am ready to halt: to show my infirmity in my trials and afflictions; as Jacob halted after his wrestling with God. Ge 32:31. In the Greek, I am ready for scourges, that is, to suffer correction and punishment for my sins: so the Chaldee saith, for calamity. Henry Ainsworth.

Verse 18. Pliny writeth of some families that had private marks on their bodies peculiar to those of that line, and every man hath, as it were, a private sin, which is most justly called his; but if we will confess our sins aright, we must not leave out that sin; nay, our chiepest spite must be against it, according to David's resolve: I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. ...David doth not only say, I will declare, but, I will be sorry for my sin. The people of God 1Sa 7:6 in the day of their confession not only say, "We have sinned," but draw water, and pour it out before the Lord in token of contrition. We should, in confessing sin, have our hearts so affected, that our eyes, with Job, may
"pour tears before God" Job 16:20; that, with David, "rivers of tears may run down our eyes" Ps 119:136; yea, we should wish with Jeremiah, that "our head were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears." Jer 9:1. But, however, nonne stillabit oculus noster? if we cannot pour out, shall we not drop a tear? or at least, if we cannot shed a tear, let us breathe forth a sigh for our sins. It is only the heart broken with godly sorrow that sends forth a true confession. 

_Nathanael Hardy._

**Verse 20.** They are mine enemies because I follow the thing that good is. It is a bold attempt to ding Satan out of his nest. If we conform us to the men of this world we find peace with them; they will not discord with us so long as we go their way; but to shame them by a godly life is an affront they cannot digest; and to rebuke their sin, findeth at their hand all that Satan disappointed or corruption provoked can devise. A sleeping dog is quiet, but being stirred, turneth all in barking and biting. Not to do as they do is matter enough of anger, but a reproof is the highest degree of disgrace in their account. All that hatred which they ought to bear to Satan and his instruments, is turned upon God in his rebuking and reclaiming servants. That anger that in remorse should burn against their own sin is set against their reprovers. _William Struther._

**Verse 22.** O Lord my salvation. Faith the suppliant is now made faith triumphant. _Franz Delitzsch._

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

**TITLE.** The art of memory. Holy memorabilia. The usefulness of sacred remembrance.

**Verse 1.** The rebuke of God's wrath.

1. Richly deserved.
2. Reasonably dreaded.
3. Earnestly deprecated.
   —_B. Darie."

**Verse 22.** The evil consequences of sin in this world. _J. J. Blunt._

**Verse 1.** The bitterest of bitters, _thy wrath_; why deprecated; and how escaped.
Verse 2. God sharply chasteneth many of his children, and yet for all that he loves them never a whit the less, nor withholdeth in good time his mercy from them. Thomas Wilcocks.

Verse 3. (last clause). Sin causes unrest. He who cures it alone gives rest. Dwell on both facts.

Verse 4. (first clause). Sin in its relations to us. To the eye pleasing. To the heart disappointing. In the bones vexing. Over the head overwhelming.

Verse 4. The confession of an awakened sinner.

Verse 4. (last clause). Sin.

1. Heavy—a burden.

2. Very heavy—A heavy burden.

3. Superlatively heavy—too heavy for me.

4. Not immoveable, for though too heavy for me, yet Jesus bore it.

Verse 5. Foolishness. The folly of sin. Everything that a man has to do with sin shows his folly.

1. Dallying with sin.
2. Committing it.
3. Continuing in it.
4. Hiding it.
5. Palliating it.
—B. Davies.


Verse 6. I go mourning.

1. Unlawful reasons for mourning.
2. Legitimate themes for sorrow.
3. Valuable alleviations of grief.

Verse 9. The many desires of God's children: the fact that God understands them even when unexpressed; and the certainty that he will grant them.
Verse 9. Omniscience, a source of consolation to the desponding.

Verse 13. The wisdom, dignity, power, and difficulty of silence.

Verse 15. Prayer, the offspring of hope. Hope strengthened by confidence in God's answering prayer.

Verse 17. Mr. Ready to halt. His pedigree, and infirmity; his crutches, and his cure; his history, and safe departure.

Verse 18. The excellence of penitent confession.

Verse 18. The twin children of grace—confession and contrition: their mutual revelation and reaction.

Verse 18. (last clause). There is good reason for such sorrow, God is well pleased with it. It benefits the mourner.

Verse 19. The terrible energy and industry of the powers of evil.

Verse 22. Faith tried, faith trembling, faith crying, faith grasping, faith conquering.

WORKS UPON THE THIRTY-EIGHTH PSALM

"Meditations and Disquisitions upon the Seven Psalms of David, commonly called the Penitential Psalms. " By Sir RICHARD BAKER, Knight: London: 1639, (4to.) contains "Meditations upon the XXXVIII. Psalme."
Psalm 39

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

TITLE. To the Chief Musician, even to Jeduthun. Jeduthun's name, which signifies praising or celebrating, was a most appropriate one for a leader in sacred psalmody. He was one of those ordained by the King's order "for song in the house of the Lord with cymbals, psalteries, and harps" 1Ch 15:6, and his children after him appear to have remained in the same hallowed service, even so late as the days of Nehemiah. To have a name and a place in Zion is no small honour, and to hold this place by a long entail of grace is an unspeakable blessing. O that our household may never lack a man to stand before the Lord God of Israel to do him service. David left this somewhat sorrowful ode in Jeduthun's hands because he thought him most fit to set it to music, or because he would distribute the sacred honour of song among all the musicians who in their turn presided in the choir. A Psalm of David. Such as his chequered life would be sure to produce; fit effusions for a man so tempted, so strong in his passions, and yet so firm in faith.

DIVISION. The psalmist, bowed down with sickness and sorrow, is burdened with unbelieving thoughts, which he resolves to stifle, lest any evil should come from their expression, Ps 39:1-2. But silence creates an insupportable grief, which at last demands utterance, and obtains it in the prayer of Ps 39:3-6, which is almost a complaint and a sigh for death, or at best a very desponding picture of human life. From Ps 39:7-13 the tone is more submissive, and the recognition of the divine hand more distinct; the cloud has evidently passed, and the mourner's heart is relieved.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. I said. I steadily resolved and registered a determination. In his great perplexity his greatest fear was lest he should sin; and, therefore, he cast about for the most likely method for avoiding it, and he determined to be silent. It is right excellent when a man can strengthen himself in a good course by the remembrance of a well and wisely formed resolve. "What I have written I have written," or what I have spoken I will perform, may prove a good strengthener to a man in a fixed course of right. To avoid sin one had need be very circumspect, and keep one's actions as with a guard or garrison. Unguarded ways are generally unholy ones. Heedless is another word for graceless. In times of sickness or other trouble we must watch against the sins peculiar to such trials, especially against murmuring and repining. That I sin not with my tongue. Tongue sins are great sins; like sparks of fire ill words spread, and do great damage. If believers utter hard words of God in times of depression, the ungodly will take them up and use them as a justification for their sinful courses. If a man's own children rail at him, no wonder if his enemies' mouths are full of abuse. Our tongue always wants watching, for it is restive as an ill broken horse; but especially must we hold it in when the sharp
cuts of the Lord's rod excite it to rebel. *I will keep my mouth with a bridle,* or more accurately, with a muzzle. The original does not so much mean a bridle to check the tongue as a muzzle to stop it altogether. David was not quite so wise as our translation would make him; if he had resolved to be very guarded in his speech, it would have been altogether commendable; but when he went so far as to condemn himself to entire silence, "even from good, "there must have been at least a little sullenness in his soul. In trying to avoid one fault, he fell into another. To use the tongue against God is a sin of commission, but not to use it at all involves an evident sin of omission. Commendable virtues may be followed so eagerly that we may fall into vices; to avoid Scylla we run into Charybdis. *While the wicked is before me.* This qualifies the silence, and almost screens it from criticism, for bad men are so sure to misuse even our holiest speech, that it is as well not to cast any of our pearls before such swine; but what if the psalmist meant, "I was silent while I had the prosperity of the wicked in my thoughts, "then we see the discontent and questioning of his mind, and the muzzled mouth indicates much that is not to be commended. Yet, if we blame we must also praise, for the highest wisdom suggests that when good men are bewildered with sceptical thoughts, they should not hasten to repeat them, but should fight out their inward battle upon its own battlefield. The firmest believers are exercised with unbelief, and it would be doing the devil's work with a vengeance if they were to publish abroad all their questionings and suspicions. If I have the fever myself, there is no reason why I should communicate it to my neighbours. If any on board the vessel of my soul are diseased, I will put my heart in quarantine, and allow none to go on shore in the boat of speech till I have a clean bill of health.

**Verse 2.** *I was dumb with silence.* He was as strictly speechless as if he had been tongueless—not a word escaped him. He was as silent as the dumb. *I held my peace, even from good.* Neither bad nor good escaped his lips. Perhaps he feared that if he began to talk at all, he would be sure to speak amiss, and, therefore, he totally abstained. It was an easy, safe, and effectual way of avoiding sin, if it did not involve a neglect of the duty which he owed to God to speak well of his name. Our divine Lord was silent before the wicked, but not altogether so, for before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession, and asserted his kingdom. A sound course of action may be pushed to the extreme, and become a fault. *And my sorrow was stirred.* Inward grief was made to work and ferment by want of vent. The pent up floods are swollen and agitated. Utterance is the natural outlet for the heart's anguish, and silence is, therefore, both an aggravation of the evil and a barrier against its cure. In such a case the resolve to hold one's peace needs powerful backing, and even this is most likely to give way when grief rushes upon the soul. Before a flood gathering in force
and foaming for outlet the strongest banks are likely to be swept away. Nature may do her best to silence the expression of discontent, but unless grace comes to her rescue, she will be sure to succumb.

Verse 3. My heart was hot within me. The friction of inward thoughts produced an intense mental heat. The door of his heart was shut, and with the fire of sorrow burning within, the chamber of his soul soon grew unbearable with heat. Nature may do her best to silence the expression of discontent, but unless grace comes to her rescue, she will be sure to succumb. My heart was hot within me. The friction of inward thoughts produced an intense mental heat. The door of his heart was shut, and with the fire of sorrow burning within, the chamber of his soul soon grew unbearable with heat. Silence is an awful thing for a sufferer, it is the surest method to produce madness. Mourner, tell your sorrow; do it first and most fully to God, but even to pour it out before some wise and godly friend is far from being wasted breath. While I was musing the fire burned. As he thought upon the ease of the wicked and his own daily affliction, he could not unravel the mystery of providence, and therefore he became greatly agitated. While his heart was musing it was fusing, for the subject was confusing. It became harder every moment to be quiet; his volcanic soul was tossed with an inward ocean of fire, and heaved to and fro with a mental earthquake; and eruption was imminent, the burning lava must pour forth in a fiery stream. Then spake I with my tongue. The original is grandly laconic. I spake. The muzzled tongue burst all its bonds. The gag was hurled away. Misery, like murder, will out. You can silence praise, but anguish is clamorous. Resolve or no resolve, heed or no heed, sin or no sin, the impetuous torrent forced for itself a channel and swept away every restraint.

Verse 4. Lord. It is well that the vent of his soul was toward God and not towards man. Oh! if my swelling heart must speak, Lord let it speak with thee; even if there be too much of natural heat in what I say, thou wilt be more patient with me than man, and upon thy purity it can cast no stain; whereas if I speak to my fellows, they may harshly rebuke me or else learn evil from my petulance. Make me to know mine end. Did he mean the same as Elias in his agony, "Let me die, I am no better than my father"? Perhaps so. At any rate, he rashly and petulantly desired to know the end of his wretched life, that he might begin to reckon the days till death should put a finish to his woe. Impatience would pry between the folded leaves. As if there were no other comfort to be had, unbelief would fain hide itself in the grave and sleep itself into oblivion. David was neither the first nor the last who have spoken unadvisedly in prayer. Yet, there is a better meaning: the psalmist would know more of the shortness of life, that he might better bear its transient ills, and herein we may safely kneel with him, uttering the same petition. That there is no end to its misery is the hell of hell; that there is an end to life's sorrow is the hope of all who have a hope beyond the grave. God is the best teacher of the divine philosophy which looks for an expected end. They who see death through the Lord's glass, see a
fair sight, which makes them forget the evil of life in foreseeing the end of life. And the measure of my days. David would fain be assured that his days would be soon over and his trials with them; he would be taught anew that life is measured out to us by wisdom, and is not a matter of chance. As the trader measures his cloth by inches, and ells, and yards, so with scrupulous accuracy is life measured out to man. That I may know how frail I am, or when I shall cease to be. Alas! poor human nature, dear as life is, man quarrels with God at such a rate that he would sooner cease to be than bear the Lord's appointment. Such pettishness in a saint! Let us wait till we are in a like position, and we shall do no better. The ship on the stocks wonders that the barque springs a leak, but when it has tried the high seas, it marvels that its timbers hold together in such storms. David's case is not recorded for our imitation, but for our learning.

Verse 5. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth. Upon consideration, the psalmist finds little room to bewail the length of life, but rather to bemoan its shortness. What changeful creatures we are! One moment we cry to be rid of existence, and the next instant beg to have it prolonged! A handbreadth is one of the shortest natural measures, being the breadth of four fingers; such is the brevity of life, by divine appointment; God hath made it so, fixing the period in wisdom. The behold calls us to attention; to some the thoughts of life's hastiness will bring the most acute pain, to others the most solemn earnestness. How well should those live who are to live so little! Is my earthly pilgrimage so brief? then let me watch every step of it, that in the little of time there may be much of grace. And mine age is as nothing before thee. So short as not to amount to an entity. Think of eternity, and an angel is as a newborn babe, the world a fresh blown bubble, the sun a spark just fallen from the fire, and man a nullity. Before the Eternal, all the age of frail man is less than one ticking of a clock. Verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity. This is the surest truth, that nothing about man is either sure or true. Take man at his best, he is but a man, and a man is a mere breath, unsubstantial as the wind. Man is settled, as the margin has it, and by divine decree it is settled that he shall not be settled. He is constant only in inconstancy. His vanity is his only verity; his best, of which he is vain, is but vain; and this is verily true of every man, that everything about him is every way fleeting. This is sad news for those whose treasures are beneath the moon; those whose glorying is in themselves may well hang the flag half mast; but those whose best estate is settled upon them in Christ Jesus in the land of unfading flowers, may rejoice that it is no vain thing in which they trust.
Verse 6. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew. Life is but a passing pageant. This alone is sure, that nothing is sure. All around us shadows mock us; we walk among them, and too many live for them as if the mocking images were substantial; acting their borrowed parts with zeal fit only to be spent on realities, and lost upon the phantoms of this passing scene. Worldly men walk like travellers in a mirage, deluded, duped, deceived, soon to be filled with disappointment and despair. Surely they are disquieted in vain. Men fret, and fume, and worry, and all for mere nothing. They are shadows pursuing shadows, while death pursues them. He who toils and contrives, and wears himself for gold, for fame, for rank, even if he wins his desire, finds at the end of his labour lost; for like the treasure of the miser's dream, it all vanishes when the man awakes in the world of reality. Read well this text, and then listen to the clamour of the market, the hum of the exchange, the din of the city streets, and remember that all this noise (for so the word means), this breach of quiet, is made about unsubstantial, fleeting vanities. Broken rest, anxious fear, over worked brain, failing mind, lunacy, these are the steps in the process of disquieting with many, and all to be rich, or, in other words, to load one's self with the thick clay; clay, too, which a man must leave so soon. He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. He misses often the result of his ventures, for there are many slips between the cup and the lips. His wheat is sheaved, but an interloping robber bears it away—as often happens with the poor Eastern husbandman; or, the wheat is even stored, but the invader feasts thereon. Many work for others all unknown to them. Especially does this verse refer to those all gathering muckrakes, who in due time are succeeded by all scattering forks, which scatter riches as profusely as their sires gathered them parsimoniously. We know not our heirs, for our children die, and strangers fill the old ancestral halls; estates change hands, and entail, though riveted with a thousand bonds, yields to the corroding power of time. Men rise up early and sit up late to build a house, and then the stranger tramps along its passages, laughs in its chambers, and forgetful of its first builder, calls it all his own. Here is one of the evils under the sun for which no remedy can be prescribed.

Verse 7. And now, Lord, what wait I for? What is there in these phantoms to enchant me? Why should I linger where the prospect is so uninviting, and the present so trying? It were worse than vanity to linger in the abodes of sorrow to gain a heritage of emptiness. The psalmist, therefore, turns to his God, in disgust of all things else; he has thought on the world and all things in it, and is relieved by knowing that such vain things are all passing away; he has cut all cords which bound him to earth, and is ready to sound "Boot and saddle, up and away." My hope is in thee. The Lord is self existent and true, and therefore worthy of the confidence of men; he will live when all the creatures die, and his
fulness will abide when all second causes are exhausted; to him, therefore, let us direct our expectation, and on him let us rest our confidence. Away from sand to rock let all wise builders turn themselves, for if not today, yet surely ere long, a storm will rise before which nothing will be able to stand but that which has the lasting element of faith in God to cement it. David had but one hope, and that hope entered within the veil, hence he brought his vessel to safe anchorage, and after a little drifting all was peace.

Verse 8. Deliver me from all my transgressions. How fair a sign it is when the psalmist no longer harps upon his sorrows, but begs freedom from his sins! What is sorrow when compared with sin! Let but the poison of sin be gone from the cup, and we need not fear its gall, for the bitter will act medicinally. None can deliver a man from his transgression but the blessed One who is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins; and when he once works this great deliverance for a man from the cause, the consequences are sure to disappear too. The thorough cleansing desired is well worthy of note: to be saved from some transgressions would be of small benefit; total and perfect deliverance is needed. Make me not the reproach of the foolish. The wicked are the foolish here meant: such are always on the watch for the faults of saints, and at once make them the theme of ridicule. It is a wretched thing for a man to be suffered to make himself the butt of unholy scorn by apostasy from the right way. Alas, how many have thus exposed themselves to well deserved reproach! Sin and shame go together, and from both David would fain be preserved.

Verse 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it. This had been far clearer if it had been rendered, "I am silenced, I will not open my mouth." Here we have a nobler silence, purged of all sullenness, and sweetened with submission. Nature failed to muzzle the mouth, but grace achieved the work in the worthiest manner. How like in appearance may two very different things appear! silence is ever silence, but it may be sinful in one case and saintly in another. What a reason for hushing every murmuring thought is the reflection, "because thou didst it."! It is his right to do as he wills, and he always wills to do that which is wisest and kindest; why should I then arraign his dealings? Nay, if it be indeed the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.

Verse 10. Remove thy stroke away from me. Silence from all repining did not prevent the voice of prayer, which must never cease. In all probability the Lord would grant the psalmist's petition, for he usually removes affliction when we are resigned to it; if we kiss the rod, our Father always burns it. When we are still, the rod is soon still. It is quite consistent with resignation to pray for the removal of a trial. David was fully acquiescent in the divine will, and yet found it in his heart to pray for deliverance; indeed, it was while he was rebellious
that he was prayerless about his trial, and only when he became submissive did
he plead for mercy. *I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.* Good pleas may
be found in our weakness and distress. It is well to show our Father the bruises
which his scourge has made, for peradventure his fatherly pity will bind his
hands, and move him to comfort us in his bosom. It is not to consume us, but to
consume our sins, that the Lord aims at in his chastisements.

**Verse 11.** *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity.* God does not
trifle with his rod; he uses it because of sin, and with a view to whip us from it;
hence he means his strokes to be felt, and felt they are. *Thou makest his beauty
to consume away like a moth.* As the moth frets the substance of the fabric,
mars all its beauty, and leaves it worn out and worthless, so do the
chastisements of God discover to us our folly, weakness, and nothingness, and
make us feel ourselves to be as worn out vestures, worthless and useless.
Beauty must be a poor thing when a moth can consume it and a rebuke can mar
it. All our desires and delights are wretched moth eaten things when the Lord
visits us in his anger. *Surely every man is vanity.* He is as Trapp wittily says "a
curious picture of nothing." He is unsubstantial as his own breath, a vapour
which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. Selah. Well may
this truth bring us to a pause, like the dead body of Amasa, which, lying in the
way, stopped the hosts of Joab.

**Verse 12.** *Hear my prayer, O Lord.* Drown not my pleadings with the sound of
thy strokes. Thou hast heard the clamour of my sins, Lord; hear the laments of
my prayers. *And give ear unto my cry.* Here is an advance in intensity: a cry is
more vehement, pathetic, and impassioned, than a prayer. The main thing was
to have the Lord's ear and heart. *Hold not thy peace at my tears.* This is a yet
higher degree of importunate pleading. Who can withstand tears, which are the
irresistible weapons of weakness? How often women, children, beggars, and
sinners, have betaken themselves to tears as their last resort, and therewith have
won the desire of their hearts!—"This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul,
"falls not in vain. Tears speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues; they
act as keys upon the wards of tender hearts, and mercy denies them nothing, if
through them the weeper looks to richer drops, even to the blood of Jesus.
When our sorrows pull up the sluices of our eyes, God will ere long interpose
and turn our mourning into joy. Long may he be quiet as though he regarded
not, but the hour of deliverance will come, and come like the morning when the
dewdrops are plentiful. *For I am a stranger with thee.* Not to thee, but with
thee. Like thee, my Lord, a stranger among the sons of men, an alien from my
mother's children. God made the world, sustains it, and owns it, and yet men
treat him as though he were a foreign intruder; and as they treat the Master, so
do they deal with the servants. "It is no surprising thing that we should be
unknown." These words may also mean, "I share the hospitality of God, "like a
stranger entertained by a generous host. Israel was bidden to deal tenderly with
the stranger, and the God of Israel has in much compassion treated us poor
aliens with unbounded liberality. And a sojourner, as all my fathers were. They
knew that this was not their rest; they passed through life in pilgrim guise, they
used the world as travellers use an inn, and even so do I. Why should we dream
of rest on earth when our fathers' sepulchres are before our eyes? If they had
been immortal, their sons would have had an abiding city this side the tomb;
but as the sires were mortal, so must their offspring pass away. All of our
lineage, without exception, were passing pilgrims, and such are we. David uses
the fleeting nature of our life as an argument for the Lord's mercy, and it is such
a one as God will regard. We show pity to poor pilgrims, and so will the Lord.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

TITLE.—"To Jeduthun." A Levite of the family of Merari, and one of the
great masters of the temple music. The department superintended by Jeduthun
and his colleagues in the temple service was that of the "instruments of the
song of God, "by which are intended the nebel or psaltery, the kinnor or harp,
and the metsiltaim or cymbals. In 2Ch 35:15, Jeduthun is called "the king's
seer," which would seem to indicate that he was the medium of divine
guidance to David. The name occurs in the title of Psalms 39, 62, 77; where
some have thought that it indicates some special kind of composition, and
others some instrument of music, but without reason. William Lindsay
Alexander, in Kitto's Cyclopaedia.

Whole Psalm. The most beautiful of all the elegies in the psalter. H. Ewald.

Verse 1. I said. It was to himself that he said it; and it is impossible for any
other to prove a good or a wise man, without much of this kind of speech to
himself. It is one of the most excellent and distinguishing faculties of a
reasonable creature; much beyond vocal speech, for in that, some birds may
imitate us; but neither bird nor beast has anything of this kind of language, of
reflecting or discoursing with itself. It is a wonderful brutality in the greatest
part of men, who are so little conversant in this kind of speech, being framed
and disposed for it, and which is not only of itself excellent, but of continual
use and advantage; but it is a common evil among men to go abroad, and out of
themselves, which is a madness, and a true distraction. It is true, a man hath
need of a well set mind, when he speaks to himself; for otherwise, he may be
worse company to himself than if he were with others. But he ought to
endeavour to have a better with him, to call in God to his heart to dwell with him. If thus we did, we should find how sweet this were to speak to ourselves, by now and then intermixing our speech with discourses unto God. For want of this, the most part not only lose their time in vanity, in their converse abroad with others, but do carry in heaps of that vanity to the stock which is in their own hearts, and do converse with them in secret, which is the greatest and deepest folly in the world. Robert Leighton.

Verse 1. No lesson so hard to be learned of us here, as the wise and discreet government of the tongue. David promised a singular care of this, I said, I will take heed, etc. Socrates reports of one Pambo, an honest, well meaning man, who came to his friend, desiring him to teach him one of David's Psalms, he read to him this verse. He answered: this one verse is enough, if I learn it well. Nineteen years after, he said, in all that time, he had hardly learned that one verse. Samuel Page.

Verse 1. That I sin not with my tongue. Man's mouth, though it be but a little hole, will hold a world full of sin. For there is not any sin forbidden in the law or gospel which is not spoken by the tongue, as well as thought in the heart, or done in the life. Is it not then almost as difficult to rule the tongue as to rule the world? Edward Reyner.

Verse 1. I will keep a muzzle on my mouth, whilst a wicked man is before me. New Translation, by Charles Carter,

Verse 1. While the wicked is before me. It is a vexation to be tied to hear so much impertinent babbling in the world, but profitable to discern and abhor it. A wonder that men can cast out so much wind, and the more they have to utter, the more they are prodigal of their own breath and of the patience of others, and careless of their own reckoning. If they believe to give account of every idle word, they would be more sparing of foolish speaking. I like either to be silent, or to speak that that may edify. At tables or meetings, I cannot stop the mouth of others, yet may I close mine own ears, and by a heavenly soul speech with God divert my mind from fruitless talking. Though I be among them I shall as little partake their prattling as they do my meditation. William Struther.

Verse 2. I was dumb with silence, etc. That is, for a while I did what I resolved; I was so long wholly silent, that I seemed in a manner to be dumb, and not able to speak. I held my peace, even from good; that is, I forbore to speak what I might well and lawfully enough have spoken, as from alleging anything that I might have said in mine own offence, from making my complaint to God, and desiring justice at his hands, and such like; to wit, lest by degrees I should have
been brought to utter anything that was evil, and whilst I intended only to speak
that which was good, some unseemly word might suddenly slip from me; or
lest mine enemies should misconstrue anything I spake. Arthur Jackson.

Verse 2. I was dumb with silence. We shall enquire what kind of dumbness or
silence this of the psalmist was, which he is commended for, and which would
so well befit us when we smart under the rod of God, and then the doctrine
will be, in a great measure, evident by its own light. We shall proceed to our
inquiry, 1. Negatively, to prevent mistakes. 2. Positively, and show you what it
doeth import.

First, negatively. 1. This dumbness doth not import any such thing, as if the
prophet had been brought to that pass that he had nothing to say to God by way
of prayer and supplication. He was not so dumb, but that he could pray and cry
too. Ps 39:8,10-11. 2. Nor was he so dumb, as that he could not frame to the
confession and bewailing of his sins. 3. Nor was it a dumbness of stupidity and
senselessness. It doth not imply any such thing, as if by degrees he grew to that
pass, he cared not for, or made no matter of his affliction, but set, as the
proverb is, an hard heart against his hard hap. No, he did make his moan to
God, and as he smarted, so he did lament under the sense of his afflicting hand.
4. Neither was he so dumb as not to answer God's voice in the rod that was
upon him. 5. Much less was he dumb, and kept silence in any such sort as they
did of whom Amos speaks Am 6:10, that in their misery they took up a
resolution to mention the name of God no more, in whom they had gloried
formerly.

Secondly, affirmatively. 1. He was dumb so as neither to complain of, nor
quarrel with God's providence, nor to entertain any hard thoughts against him.
Complain to God he did; but against him he durst not. 2. He neither did nor
durst quarrel, or fall out with the ways of holiness for all his sufferings, a thing
we are naturally prone unto. 3. He was dumb, so as not to defend himself, or
justify his own ways before God, as if they were righteous, and he had not
deserved what he suffered. 4. He was dumb, so as to hearken to the voice of the
rod. "I will (saith he in another place) hear what God the Lord will speak." Ps
85:8. Now a man cannot listen to another while he will have all the talk and
discourse to himself. 5. Lastly, the prophet was dumb, that is, he did acquiesce,
and rest satisfied with God's dispensation; and that not only as good, but as
best. Condensed from a Funeral Sermon by Thomas Burroughes, B.D., entitled,
"A Sovereign Remedy for all kinds of Grief," 1657.

Verse 2. I held my peace. A Christian being asked what fruit he had by Christ:
Is not this fruit, said he, not to be moved at your reproaches? In cases of this
nature, we must refer all to God; si tu tacueris, Deus loquitur; if thou hold thy peace, God speaks for thee; and if God speaks for us, it is better than we can speak for yourselves. David saith, Obmutui, quia tu fecisti. I held my peace, for it was thy doing. Christopher Sutton, B.D.,—1629, in Disce Vicere.

Verses 2-9. An invalid who had been ordered a couple of pills, took them very absurdly, for, in place of swallowing them at once, he rolled them about in his mouth, ground them to pieces, and so tasted their full bitterness. Gotthold was present, and thus mused. The insults and calumnies of a slanderer and adversary are bitter pills, and all do not understand the art of swallowing without chewing them. To the Christian, however, they are wholesome in many ways. They remind him of his guilt, they try his meekness and patience, they show him what he needs to guard against, and at last they redound to his honour and glory in the sight of him for whose sake they were endured. In respect of the pills of slander, however, as well as the others, it is advisable not to roll them about continually in our minds, or judge of them according to the flesh, and the world's opinion. This will only increase their bitterness, spread the savour of it to the tongue, and fill the heart with proportional enmity. The true way is to swallow, keep silence, and forget. We must inwardly devour our grief, and say, I will be dumb, and not open my mouth, because thou didst it. The best antidotes to the bitterness of slander, are the sweet promises and consolations of Scripture, of which not the least is this, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Mt 5:11-12. Alas, my God! how hard it is to swallow the pills of obloquy, to bless them that curse me, to do good to them that hate me, and to pray for them that spitefully use me! But, Lord, as thou wilt have it so, give it as thou wilt have it, for it is a matter in which, without thy grace, I can do nothing! Christian Scriver.

Verse 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it. See David's carriage here; it was a patience not constrained, but from satisfaction of spirit: he saw love in his affliction, and that sweetened his soul. Joseph Symonds.

Verse 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it. God is training up his children here. This is the true character of his dealings with them. The education of his saints is the object he has in view. It is training for the kingdom; it is education for eternity...It is the discipline of love. Every step of it is kindness. There is no wrath nor vengeance in any part of the process. The discipline of the school may be harsh and stern; but that of the family is love. We are sure of this; and the consolation which it affords is unutterable.
Love will not wrong us. There will be no needless suffering. Were this but kept in mind there would be fewer hard thoughts of God amongst men, even when his strokes are most severe. I know not a better illustration of what the feelings of a saint should be, in the hour of bitterness, than the case of Richard Cameron's father. The aged saint was in prison "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." The bleeding head of his martyred son was brought to him by his unfeeling persecutors, and he was asked derisively if he knew it. "I know it, I know it,"—said the father, as he kissed the mangled forehead of his fair haired son—"it is my son's, my own dear son's! It is the Lord! good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me or mine, but who hath made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days." Horatius Bonar, in "The Night of Weeping," 1847.

Verse 9. Because thou didst it. This holy man had a breach made both at his body and spirit at this time; he was sick and sad; yet he remembers from whose hand the blow came. Thou, Lord, didst it; thou, whom I love dearly, and so can take it kindly; thou whom I have offended, and so take it patiently; yea, thou, who mightest have cast me into a bed of flames, instead of my bed of sickness, and therefore I accept thy correction thankfully. Thus he catches at the blow without retorting it back upon God by any quarrelling discontented language. William Gurnall.

Verse 9. Because thou didst it. We digest not a blow from our equals, but a blow from our king we can well digest. If the King of kings lays his hand on our backs, let us, beloved, lay our hands on our mouths. I am sure this stopped David's mouth from venting fretful speeches. "I held my tongue and said nothing." Why didst thou so, David? Because thou, Lord, didst it; and God gives this testimony of such an one; that he is a prudent man that keeps silence at an evil time. Am 5:13. Nicholas Estwick, B.D., 1644.

Verse 9. Perkins, in his "Salve for a Sick Man," gives the "last words" of many holy men, among others of Calvin:—"I held my tongue, because thou, Lord, hast done it—I mourned as a dove—Lord, you ground me to powder, but it suffices me because it is thy hand."

Verse 9. I wondered once at providence, and called white providence black and unjust, that I should be smothered in a town where no soul will take Christ off my hand. But providence hath another lustre (shining; appearance) with God than with my bleared eyes. I proclaim myself a blind body, who knoweth not black and white, in the unco (strange) course of God's providence. Suppose that Christ should set hell where heaven is, and devils up in glory beside the elect angels (which yet cannot be), I would I had a heart to acquiesce in his way,
without further dispute. I see that infinite wisdom is the mother of his judgments, and that his ways pass finding out. I cannot learn, but I desire to learn, to bring my thoughts, will, and lusts in under (close under) Christ's feet, that he may trample upon them. But, alas! I am still upon Christ's wrong side. Samuel Rutherford.

Verse 9. A little girl, in the providence of God, was born deaf and dumb. She was received, and instructed, at an institution established for these afflicted ones. A visitor was one day requested to examine the children thus sadly laid aside from childhood's common joys. Several questions were asked, and quickly answered by means of a slate and pencil. At length the gentleman wrote, *Why were you born deaf and dumb?* A look of anguish clouded for the moment the expressive face of the little girl; but it quickly passed, as she took her slate, and wrote, "*Even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight.*" Mrs. Rogers, in "The Shepherd King."

Verse 10. *Remove thy plague away from me:* thy plague and mine; thine by affliction, mine by passion; thine because thou didst send it, mine because I endure it; thine because it comes from thy justice, mine because it answers my injustice; remit what I have done, and remove what thou hast done. But whosoever laid it on, the Lord will take it off. Thomas Adams.

Verse 10. *Remove,* etc. Having first prayed off his sin, he would now pray off his pain, though it less troubled him; and for ease he repairs to Jehovah that healeth, as well as woundeth. Ho 6:1. John Trapp.

Verse 11. *Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* The meaning may be, As the moth crumbles into dust under the slightest pressure, or the gentlest touch, so man dissolves with equal ease, and vanishes into darkness, under the finger of the Almighty. Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture.

Verse 11. *Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* Moths I must not omit naming. I once saw some knives, the black bone hafts of which were said to have been half consumed by them. I also saw the remains of a hair seated sofa which had been devoured. It is no uncommon thing to find dresses consumed in a single night. In Isa 51:6, "wax old" probably refers to a garment that is moth eaten. So in Ps 6:7 31:9, *consumed* means moth eaten; and again in Ps 39:11. John Gadsby.

Verse 11. *Like a moth.* The moths of the East are very large and beautiful, but short lived. After a few showers these splendid insects may be seen fluttering in every breeze, but the dry weather, and their numerous enemies, soon consign
them to the common lot. Thus the beauty of man consumes away like that of this gay rover, dressed in his robes of purple, and scarlet, and green. *John Kitto.*

**Verse 11.** The body of man is as a "garment" to the soul: in this garment sin hath lodged a "moth," which, by degrees, fretteth and weareth away, first, the beauty, then the strength, and finally, the contexture of its parts. Whoever has watched the progress of a consumption, or any other lingering distemper, nay, the slow and silent devastations of time alone, in the human frame, will need no farther illustration of this just and affecting similitude; but will discern at once the propriety of the reflection which follows upon it. *Surely every man is vanity.* *George Horne.*

**Verse 11.** *Surely every man is vanity.* What is greatness? Can we predicate it of man, independently of his qualities as an immortal being? or of his actions, independently of principles and motives? Then the glitter of nobility is not superior to the plumage of the peacock; nor the valour of Alexander to the fury of a tiger; nor the sensual delights of Epicurus to those of any animal that roams the forest. *Ebenezer Porter, D.D., in Lectures on Homiletics, 1834.*

**Verse 12.** *Hear my prayer, O Lord,* etc. Now, in this prayer of David, we find three things, which are the chief qualifications of all acceptable prayers. The first is *humility.* He humbly confesses his sins, and his own weakness and worthlessness. We are not to put on a stoical, flinty kind of spirit under our affliction, that so we may seem to shun womanish repinings and complaints, lest we run into the other evil, of despising the hand of God, but we are to humble our proud hearts, and break our unruly passions...The second qualification of this prayer is, *fervency* and *importunity,* which appears in the elegant gradation of the words, *Hear my prayer,* my words; if not that, yet, *Give ear to my cry,* which is louder; and if that prevail not, yet, *Hold not thy peace at my tears,* which is the loudest of all; so David, elsewhere, calls it the voice of weeping. ...The third qualification is *faith.* "He who comes to God must believe that he is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." *Heb 11:6.* And, certainly, as he that comes to God must believe this, so he that believes this, cannot but come to God; and if he be not presently answered, "he that believes makes no haste," "he resolves patiently to wait for the Lord, and go to no other. *Condensed from Robert Leighton.*

**Verse 12.** *Hold not thy peace at my tears.* We may, in all humility, plead our heart breakings and weepings in sense of want of mercies which we crave, and our pantings and faintings after the same. *Thomas Cobbett.*
Verse 12. *For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.* Both in thy judgment expressed Le 25:23, and in their own opinion Heb 11:13. Upon which account thou didst take a special care of them, and therefore do so to me also. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 12. *I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner.* How settled soever their condition be, yet this is the temper of the saints upon earth—to count themselves but strangers. All men indeed are strangers and sojourners, but the saints do best discern it, and most freely acknowledge it. Wicked men have no firm dwelling upon earth, but that is against their intentions; their inward thought and desire is that they may abide for ever; they are strangers against their wills, their abode is uncertain in the world, and they cannot help it. And pray mark, there are two distinct words used in this case, *strangers* and *sojourners.* A stranger is one that hath his abode in a foreign country, that is not a native and a denizen of the place, though he liveth there, and in opposition to the natives he is called a stranger: as if a Frenchman should live in England, he is a stranger. But a *sojourner* is one that intends not to settle, but only passes through a place, and is in motion travelling homeward. So the children of God in relation to a country of their own in another place, namely, heaven, they are denizens there, but strangers in the world; and they are sojourners and pilgrims in regard of their motion and journey towards their country. *Thomas Manton.*

Verse 12. *A Stranger.* 1. A stranger is one that is absent from his country, and from his father's house: so are we, heaven is our country, God is there, and Christ is there. 2. A stranger in a foreign country is not known, nor valued according to his birth and breeding: so the saints walk up and down in the world like princes in disguise. 3. Strangers are liable to inconveniences: so are godly men in the world. Religion, saith Tertullian, is like a strange plant brought from a foreign country, and doth not agree with the nature of the soil, it thrives not in the world. 4. A stranger is patient, standeth not for ill usage, and is contented with pilgrim's fare and lodging. We are now abroad and must expect hardship. 5. A stranger is wary, that he may not give offence, and incur the hatred and displeasure of the natives. 6. A stranger is thankful for the least favour; so we must be thankfully contented with the things God hath bestowed upon us: anything in a strange country is much. 7. A stranger, that hath a journey to go, would pass over it as soon as he can, and so we, who have a journey to heaven desire to be dissolved. 8. A stranger buyeth not such things as he cannot carry with him; he doth not buy trees, house, household stuff, but jewels and pearls, and such things as are portable. Our greatest care should be to get the jewels of the covenant, the graces of God's Spirit, those things that will abide with us. 9. A stranger's heart is in his country; so is a saint's. 10. A
stranger is inquisitive after the way, fearing lest he should go amiss, so is a Christian. 11. A stranger provides for his return, as a merchant, that he may return richly laden. So we must appear before God in Sion. What manner of persons ought we to be? Let us return from our travel well provided. Condensed from Thomas Manton.

Verse 13. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more. Man in his corrupt state is like Nebuchadnezzar, he hath a beast's heart, that craves no more than the satisfaction of his sensual appetite; but when renewed by grace, then his understanding returns to him, by which he is enabled in praying for temporals to elevate his desires to a nobler end. Doth David pray that some farther time may be added to his temporal life? It is not out of a fond love for this world, but to prepare himself the better for another. Is he comforted with hopes of a longer stay here? It is not this world's carnal pleasures that kindle this joy in his holy breast, but the advantage that thereby he shall have for praising God in the land of the living...O spare me, that I may recover strength. David was not yet recovered out of that sin which had brought him exceeding low as you may perceive, Ps 39:10-11. And the good man cannot think of dying with any willingness till his heart be in a holier frame: and for the peace of the gospel, serenity of conscience, and inward joy; alas! all unholiness is to it as poison is to the spirits which drink them up. William Gurnall.

Verse 13. O spare me, etc. Attachment to life, the feeling cherished by the psalmist, when he thus appealed to the Sovereign of the universe, varies in its character with the occasions and the sentiments by which it is elicited and confirmed. Take one view of it, and you pronounce it criminal; take another, and you pronounce it innocent; take a third, and you pronounce it laudable.

1. Life may inspire a criminal attachment, warranting our censure. The most obvious and aggravated case is that in which the attachment has its foundations in the opportunities which life affords, of procuring "the wages of unrighteousness, "and "the pleasures of sin."

2. Life may inspire an innocent attachment, awakening our sympathy...Life is a scene in which we often descry a verdant and luxuriant spot, teeming with health, and ease, and harmony, and joy. We have beheld the husbands and the wives whose interwoven regards have, from year to year, alleviated all their afflictions, and heightened all their privileges. We have beheld the parents and the children whose fellowship has yielded them, through the shifting seasons, a daily feast. There are indulgent masters, and faithful servants; some neighbourhoods are undisturbed; some Christian societies are exquisitely
attractive; here and there we have intercourse with those individuals in whom are seen the beauties of high character irradiated by the beams of general prosperity. You would pronounce no censure on a man thus happily connected, were he, when beginning to languish, as one "going the way of all the earth, to cry, "O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more."

3. The last view which it has been proposed to take of human life, shows that it may inspire a laudable attachment, at once challenging our approbation, and urging us to bring our minds under its influence. The language before us admits of being illustrated as the prayer of a penitent, a saint, and a philanthropist.

(a). Commend him who pleads for life as a penitent. Was it recently that the Holy Spirit first wounded him with the arrows of conviction? Perhaps, he doubts the source, the quality, and the result, of his powerful feelings. He knows that we may be solemnly impressed, without being converted. There are many considerations which entitle to favourable opinion those who, not having arrived at a view of their moral state, at once evident and encouraging, wish earnestly to live till grace shall have carried them from victory to victory, and enabled them "to make" their "calling and election sure." Even they may fall from their steadfastness; and these words, "O spare me, that I may recover strength," may proceed from the lips of a backslider, once more blushing, trembling, and petitioning to be restored.

(b). Commend him, in the next place, who pleads for life, as a saint. ...The distinguishing office of pleading, acting, and suffering, for the advancement of the divine honour among the profane, the sensual, the formal, and the worldly is delegated, exclusively, to "the saints which are upon the earth." Yet, surely he whose attachment to life is strongly enhanced by a commission which dooms him to the contradiction of sinners, and defers "the fulness of joy," a saint so magnanimous and devoted, puts forth the expressions of a piety which the very angels are compelled to revere.

(c). Commend him, finally, who pleads for life as a philanthropist. I refer to the generous patron, a man intent on doing good. I would also refer to a fond parent. I would now refer to "a preacher of righteousness, ""a good minister of Jesus Christ."

**Verse 13.** May not the very elect and faithful themselves fear the day of judgment, and be far from fetching comfort at it? I answer, he may. First, at his first conversion and soon after, before he have gotten a full persuasion of the remission of his sins. And again, in some spiritual desertion, when the Lord seems to leave a man to himself, as he did David and others, he may fear to think of the same. And lastly, when he hath fallen into some great sin after he is a strong man in Christ, he may fear death and judgment, and be constrained to pray with Job and David, *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.* John Barlow's Sermon, 1618.

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

**Verses 1-2.** I was dumb, etc.

1. There is a time to be silent. He had been enabled to do this when reproached and unjustly accused by others. He did it for good; others might attribute it to sullenness, or pride, or timidity, or conscious guilt; but he did it for good. Breathe upon a polished mirror and it will evaporate and leave it brighter than before; endeavour to wipe it off, and the mark will remain.

2. There is a time to meditate in silence. The greater the silence without, often the greater commotion within. "His heart was hot." The more he thought, the warmer he grew. The fire of pity and compassion, the fire of love, the fire of holy zeal burned within him.

3. There is a time to speak. "Then spake I." The time to speak is when the truth is clear and strong in the mind, and the feeling of the truth is burning in the heart. The emotions burst forth as from a volcano. Jer 20:8-9. The language should always be a faithful representation of the mind and the heart. *G. Rogers, Tutor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle College.*

**Verse 2.** There is a sevenfold silence.

1. A *stoical* silence.
5. A *forced* silence.
7. A *prudent, a holy, a gracious* silence.
   —Thomas Brooks' "Mute Christian."
Verse 4. *Make me to know mine end.*

1. *What we may desire to know about our end.* Not its date, place, circumstances, but

(a). *Its nature.* Will it be the end of saint or sinner?

(b). *Its certainty.*

(c). *Its nearness.*

(d). *Its issues.*

(e). *Its requirements.* In the shape of attention, preparation, passport.

2. Why ask God to make us know it? Because the knowledge is important, difficult to acquire, and can be *effectually imparted by the Lord only.* W. Jackson.

Verse 4. David prays,

1. That he may be enabled continually to keep in view the end of life: all things should be judged by their *end.* "Then understood I their end." Life may be honourable, and cheerful, and virtuous here; but the *end!* What will it be?

2. That he may be diligent in the performance of all the duties of this life. The measure of his days, how short, how much to be done, how little time to do it in!

3. He prays that he may gain much instruction and benefit from the frailties of life. *That I may know,* etc. My frailties may make me more humble, more diligent, while I am able for active service; more dependent upon divine strength, more patient and submissive to the divine will, more ripe for heaven. —G. Rogers.

Verse 5. *(last clause).* Man is vanity, *i.e.*, he is mortal, he is mutable. Observe how emphatically this truth is expressed here.

1. *Every* man is vanity, without exception, high and low, rich and poor.

2. He is so at his *best estate;* when he is young, and strong, and healthful, in wealth and honour, etc.
3. He is altogether vanity, as vain as you can imagine.

4. Verily he is so.

5. Selah is annexed, as a note commanding observation. —Matthew Henry.

Verse 6. The vanity of man, as mortal, is here instanced in three things, and the vanity of each shown.

1. The vanity of our joys and honours: Surely every man walketh in a vain show.

2. The vanity of our griefs and fears: Surely they are disquieted in vain.

3. The vanity of our cares and toils: He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. —Matthew Henry.

Verse 6. The world's trinity consists, 1. In fruitless honours: what appears to them to be substantial honours are but a vain show. 2. In needless cares. They are disquieted in vain. Imaginary cares are substituted for real ones. 3. In useless riches; such as yield no lasting satisfaction to themselves, or in their descent to others. G. Rogers.


Verse 7.

1. An urgent occasion. And now Lord, etc. There are seasons that should lead us specially to look up to God, and say, Now, Lord. "Father, the hour is come."

Verse 8.

1. Prayer should be general: *Deliver me from all my transgressions.* We often need anew to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Afflictions should remind us of our sins. If we pray to be delivered from all transgressions, we are sure to be delivered from the one for which affliction was sent.

2. Prayer should be particular: *Make me not the reproach of the foolish.* Suffer me not so to speak or show impatience in affliction as to give occasion even to the foolish to blaspheme. The thought that many watch for our halting should be a preservative from sin. —G. Rogers.

Verse 9.

1. The occasion referred to. *I was dumb,* etc. We are not told what the particular trial was, that each one may apply it to his own affliction, and because all are to be viewed in the same light.

2. The conduct of the psalmist upon that particular occasion: *I opened not my mouth.* (a) Not in anger and rebellion against God in murmurs or complaints. (b) Not in impatience, or complaining, or angry feelings against men. (c) The reason he assigns for this conduct: *Because thou didst it.* G. Rogers.

Verse 10.

1. Afflictions are sent by God. *Thy strokes.* They are strokes of his hand, not of the rod of the law, but of the shepherd's rod. Every affliction is his stroke.

2. Afflictions are removed by God. *Remove.* He asks not for miracles, but that God in his own way, in the use of natural means, would interpose for his deliverance. We should seek his blessing upon the means employed for our deliverance both by ourselves and others. "Cause to remove," etc.

3. Afflictions have their end from God. *I am consumed by the conflict,* etc. God hath a controversy with his people. It is a conflict between his will and their wills. The psalmist owns himself conquered and subdued in the struggle. We should be more anxious that this end should be accomplished than that the affliction should be removed, and when this is accomplished the affliction will be removed. G. Rogers.

Verse 10.
1. The cause of our trials: "for iniquity." Oh, this trial is come to take away my comforts, my peace of mind, and the divine smile! No, this is all the fruit to take away their sin—the dross, none of the gold—sin, nothing but sin.

2. The effect of our trials. All that he counted desirable in this life, but not for his real good, is consumed. His robes which are beautiful in men's esteem are moth eaten, but the robe of righteousness upon his soul cannot decay.

3. The design of our trials. They are not penal inflictions, but friendly rebukes and fatherly corrections. On Christ our Surety the penal consequences were laid, upon us their paternal chastisements only.

4. The reasonableness of our trials. "Surely every man is vanity." How in a world like this could any expect to be exempt from trials! The world is the same to the Christian as before, and his body is the same. He has a converted soul in an unconverted body, and how can he escape the external ills of life? G. Rogers.

Verse 12. David pleads the good impressions made upon him by his affliction.

1. It had set him a weeping.
2. It had set him a praying.
3. It had helped to wean him from the world.
—Matthew Henry.

Verse 12. (last clause). Am I a stranger and a sojourner with God? Let me realise, let me exemplify the condition.

1. Let me look for the treatment such characters commonly meet with.
2. And surely if any of my own nation be near me, I shall be intimate with them.
3. Let me not be entangled in the affairs of this life.
4. Let my affection be set on things that are above, and my conversation be always in heaven.
5. Let me be not impatient for home; but prizing it. —W. Jay.

Verse 13.
1. The *subject* of his petition—not that he may escape death and live always in this life, because he knows that he must go hence; but 1. That he may be recovered from his afflictions; and, 2. That he may continue longer in this life. Such a prayer is lawful when offered in submission to the will of God.

2. The *reasons* for this petition. 1. That he may remove by his future life, the calumnies that had been heaped upon him. 2. That he may have brighter evidences of his interest in the divine favour. 3. That he may become a blessing to others, his family and nation. 4. That he might have greater peace and comfort in death; and, 5. That he might "have an entrance ministered more abundantly," etc. —G. Rogers.

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**WORK UPON THE THIRTY-NINTH PSALM**

Expository Lectures on Psalm Thirty-nine, in Archbishop Leighton's Works.
Psalm 40

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

TITLE. To the Chief Musician. Well might so exceedingly precious a Psalm be specially committed to the most skilled of the sacred musicians. The noblest music should be made tributary to a subject so incomparable. The dedication shows that the song was intended for public worship, and was not a merely personal hymn, as its being in the first person singular might lead us to suppose. A Psalm of David. This is conclusive as to the authorship: lifted by the Holy Spirit into the region of prophecy, David was honoured to write concerning a far greater than himself.

SUBJECT. Jesus is evidently here, and although it might not be a violent wresting of language to see both David and his Lord, both Christ and the church, the double comment might involve itself in obscurity, and therefore we shall let the sun shine even though this should conceal the stars. Even if the New Testament were not so express upon it, we should have concluded that David spoke of our Lord in Ps 40:6-9, but the apostle in Heb 10:5-9, puts all conjecture out of court, and confines the meaning to him who came into the world to do the Father's will.

DIVISION. From Ps 40:1-3, is a personal thanksgiving, followed by a general declaration of Jehovah's goodness to his saints, Ps 40:4-5. In Ps 40:6-10, we have an avowal of dedication to the Lord's will; Ps 40:11-17, contains a prayer for deliverance from pressing trouble, and for the overthrow of enemies.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. I waited patiently for the Lord. Patient waiting upon God was a special characteristic of our Lord Jesus. Impatience never lingered in his heart, much less escaped his lips. All through his agony in the garden, his trial of cruel mockings before Herod and Pilate, and his passion on the tree, he waited in omnipotence of patience. No glance of wrath, no word of murmuring, no deed of vengeance came from God's patient Lamb; he waited and waited on; was patient, and patient to perfection, far excelling all others who have according to their measure glorified God in the fires. Job on the dunghill does not equal Jesus on the cross. The Christ of God wears the imperial crown among the patient. Did the Only Begotten wait, and shall we be petulant and rebellious? And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. Neither Jesus the head, nor any one of the members of his body, shall ever wait upon the Lord in vain. Mark the figure of inclining, as though the suppliant cried out of the lowest depression, and condescending love stooped to hear his feeble moans. What a marvel is it that our Lord Jesus should have to cry as we do, and wait as we do, and should receive the Father's help after the same process of faith and pleading as must be gone through by ourselves! The Saviour's prayers among the
Psalm 40

midnight mountains and in Gethsemane expound this verse. The Son of David was brought very low, but he rose to victory; and here he teaches us how to conduct our conflicts so as to succeed after the same glorious pattern of triumph. Let us arm ourselves with the same mind; and panoplied in patience, armed with prayer, and girt with faith, let us maintain the Holy War.

Verse 2. *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit.* When our Lord bore in his own person the terrible curse which was due to sin, he was so cast down as to be like a prisoner in a deep, dark, fearful dungeon, amid whose horrible glooms the captive heard a noise as of rushing torrents, while overhead resounded the tramp of furious foes. Our Lord in his anguish was like a captive in the *oubliettes*, forgotten of all mankind, immured amid horror, darkness, and desolation. Yet the Lord Jehovah made him to ascend from all his abasement; he retraced his steps from that deep hell of anguish into which he had been cast as our substitute. He who thus delivered our surety in extremis, will not fail to liberate us from our far lighter griefs. *Out of the miry clay.* The sufferer was as one who cannot find a foothold, but slips and sinks. The figure indicates not only positive misery as in the former figure, but the absence of solid comfort by which sorrow might have been rendered supportable. Once give man a good foothold, and a burden is greatly lightened, but to be loaded and to be placed on slimy, slippery clay, is to be tried doubly. Reader, with humble gratitude, adore the dear Redeemer who, for thy sake, was deprived of all consolation while surrounded with every form of misery; remark his gratitude at being born up amid his arduous labours and sufferings, and if thou too hast experienced the divine help, be sure to join thy Lord in this song. *And set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.* The Redeemer's work is done. He reposes on the firm ground of his accomplished engagements; he can never suffer again; for ever does he reign in glory. What a comfort to know that Jesus our Lord and Saviour stands on a sure foundation in all that he is and does for us, and his goings forth in love are not liable to be cut short by failure in years to come, for God has fixed him firmly. He is for ever and eternally able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing that in the highest heavens he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Jesus is the true Joseph taken from the pit to be Lord of all. It is something more than a "sip of sweetness" to remember that if we are cast like our Lord into the lowest pit of shame and sorrow, we shall by faith rise to stand on the same elevated, sure, and everlasting rock of divine favour and faithfulness.

Verse 3. *And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.* At the passover, before his passion, our Lord sang one of the grand old Psalms of praise; but what is the music of his heart now, in the midst of his redeemed!
What a song is that in which his glad heart for ever leads the chorus of the elect! Not Miriam's tabor nor Moses' triumphant hymn over Miriam's chivalry can for a moment rival that ever new and exulting song. Justice magnified and grace victorious; hell subdued and heaven glorified; death destroyed and immortality established; sin overthrown and righteousness resplendent; what a theme for a hymn in that day when our Lord drinketh the red wine new with us all in our heavenly Father's kingdom! Even on earth, and before his great passion, he foresaw the joy which was set before him, and was sustained by the prospect. *Our God.* The God of Jesus, the God of Israel, "my God and your God." How will we praise him, but ah! Jesus will be the chief player on our stringed instruments; he will lead the solemn hallelujah which shall go up from the sacramental host redeemed by blood. *Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.* A multitude that no man can number shall see the griefs and triumphs of Jesus, shall tremble because of their sinful rejection of him, and then through grace shall receive faith and become trusters in Jehovah. Here is our Lord's reward. Here is the assurance which makes preachers bold and workers persevering. Reader, are you one among the many? Note the way of salvation, a sight, a fear, a trust! Do you know what these mean by possessing and practising them in your own soul? Trusting in the Lord is the evidence, nay, the essence of salvation. He who is a true believer is evidently redeemed from the dominion of sin and Satan.

**Verse 4.** *Blessed.* This is an exclamation similar to that of the first Psalm, "Oh, the happiness of the man." God's blessings are emphatic, "I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, "indeed and in very truth. *Is that man that maketh the Lord his trust.* Faith obtaineth promises. A simple single eyed confidence in God is the sure mark of blessedness. A man may be as poor as Lazarus, as hated as Mordecai, as sick as Hezekiah, as lonely as Elijah, but while his hand of faith can keep its hold on God, none of his outward afflictions can prevent his being numbered among the blessed; but the wealthiest and most prosperous man who has no faith is accursed, be he who he may. *And respecteth not the proud.* The proud expect all men to bow down and do them reverence, as if the worship of the golden calves were again set up in Israel; but believing men are too noble to honour mere money bags, or cringe before bombastic dignity. The righteous pay their respect to humble goodness, rather than to inflated self consequence. Our Lord Jesus was in this our bright example. No flattery of kings and great ones ever fell from his lips; he gave no honour to dishonourable men. The haughty were never his favourites. *Nor such as turn aside to lies.* Heresies and idolatries are lies, and so are avarice, worldliness, and pleasure seeking. Woe to those who follow such deceptions. Our Lord was ever both the truth and the lover of truth, and the father of lies had no part in him. We must
never pay deference to apostates, time servers, and false teachers; they are an ill
leaven, and the more we purge ourselves of them the better; they are blessed
whom God preserves from all error in creed and practice. Judged by this verse,
many apparently happy persons must be the reverse of blessed, for anything in
the shape of a purse, a fine equipage, or a wealthy establishment, commands
their reverence, whether the owner be a rake or a saint, an idiot or a
philosopher. Verily, were the arch fiend of hell to start a carriage and pair, and
live like a lord, he would have thousands who would court his acquaintance.

Verse 5. Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast
done. Creation, providence, and redemption, teem with wonders as the sea with
life. Our special attention is called by this passage to the marvels which cluster
around the cross and flash from it. The accomplished redemption achieves
many ends, and compasses a variety of designs; the outgoings of the atonement
are not to be reckoned up, the influences of the cross reach further than the
beams of the sun. Wonders of grace beyond all enumeration take their rise from
the cross; adoption, pardon, justification, and a long chain of godlike miracles
of love proceed from it. Note that our Lord here speaks of the Lord as "my
God." The man Christ Jesus claimed for himself and us a covenant relationship
with Jehovah. Let our interest in our God be ever to us our peculiar treasure.

And thy thoughts which are toward us. The divine thoughts march with the
divine acts, for it is not according the God's wisdom to act without deliberation
and counsel. All the divine thoughts are good and gracious towards his elect.
God's thoughts of love are very many, very wonderful, very practical! Muse on
them, dear reader; no sweeter subject ever occupied your mind. God's thoughts
of you are many, let not yours be few in return. They cannot be reckoned up in
order unto thee. Their sum is so great as to forbid alike analysis and
numeration. Human minds fail to measure, or to arrange in order, the Lord's
ways and thoughts; and it must always be so, for he hath said, "As the heavens
are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my
thoughts than your thoughts." No maze to lose oneself in like the labyrinth of
love. How sweet to be outdone, overcome and overwhelmed by the astonishing
grace of the Lord our God! If I would declare and speak of them, and surely
this should be the occupation of my tongue at all seasonable opportunities, they
are more than can be numbered; far beyond all human arithmetic they are
multiplied; thoughts from all eternity, thoughts of my fall, my restoration, my
redemption, my conversion, my pardon, my upholding, my perfecting, my
eternal reward; the list is too long for writing, and the value of the mercies too
great for estimation. Yet, if we cannot show forth all the works of the Lord, let
us not make this an excuse for silence; for our Lord, who is in this our best
example, often spake of the tender thoughts of the great Father.
Verse 6. Here we enter upon one of the most wonderful passages in the whole of the Old Testament, a passage in which the incarnate Son of God is seen not through a glass darkly, but as it were face to face. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. In themselves considered, and for their own sakes, the Lord saw nothing satisfactory in the various offerings of the ceremonial law. Neither the victim pouring forth its blood, nor the fine flour rising in smoke from the altar, could yield content to Jehovah's mind; he cared not for the flesh of bulls or of goats, neither had he pleasure in corn and wine, and oil. Typically these offerings had their worth, but when Jesus, the Antitype, came into the world, they ceased to be of value, as candles are of no estimation when the sun has arisen. Mine ears hast thou opened. Our Lord was quick to hear and perform his Father's will; his ears were as if excavated down to his soul; they were not closed up like Isaac's wells, which the Philistines filled up, but clear passages down to the fountains of his soul. The prompt obedience of our Lord is here the first idea. There is, however, no reason whatever to reject the notion that the digging of the ear here intended may refer to the boring of the ear of the servant, who refused out of love to his master to take his liberty, at the year of jubilee; his perforated ear, the token of perpetual service, is a true picture of our blessed Lord's fidelity to his Father's business, and his love to his Father's children. Jesus irrevocably gave himself up to be the servant of servants for our sake and God's glory. The Septuagint, from which Paul quoted, has translated this passage, "A body hast thou prepared me:" how this reading arose it is not easy to imagine, but since apostolical authority has sanctioned the variation, we accept it as no mistake, but as an instance of various readings equally inspired. In any case, the passage represents the Only Begotten as coming into the world equipped for service; and in a real and material body, by actual life and death, putting aside all the shadows of the Mosaic law. Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Two other forms of offerings are here mentioned; tokens of gratitude and sacrifices for sin as typically presented are set aside; neither the general nor the private offerings are any longer demanded. What need of mere emblems when the substance itself is present? We learn from this verse that Jehovah values far more the obedience of the heart than all the imposing performances of ritualistic worship; and that our expiation from sin comes not to us as the result of an elaborate ceremonial, but as the effect of our great Substitute's obedience to the will of Jehovah.

Verse 7. Then said I. That is to say, when it was clearly seen that man's misery could not be remedied by sacrifices and offerings. It being certain that the mere images of atonement, and the bare symbols of propitiation were of no avail, the Lord Jesus, in propría persona, intervened. O blessed "then said I." Lord, ever give us to hear and feed on such living words as these, so peculiarly and
personally thine own. Lo, I come. Behold, O heavens, and thou earth, and ye places under the earth! Here is something worthy of your most intense gaze. Sit ye down and watch with earnestness, for the invisible God comes in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an infant the Infinite hangs at a virgin's breast! Immanuel did not send but come; he came in his own personality, in all that constituted his essential self he came forth from the ivory palaces to the abodes of misery; he came promptly at the destined hour; he came with sacred alacrity as one freely offering himself. In the volume of the book it is written of me. In the eternal decree it is thus recorded. The mystic roll of predestination which providence gradually unfolds, contained within it, to the Saviour's knowledge, a written covenant, that in the fulness of time the divine I should descend to earth to accomplish a purpose which hecatombs of bullocks and rams could not achieve. What a privilege to find our names written in the book of life, and what an honour, since the name of Jesus heads the page! Our Lord had respect to his ancient covenant engagements, and herein he teaches us to be scrupulously just in keeping our word; have we so promised, it is so written in the book of remembrance? then let us never be defaulters.

Verse 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God. Our blessed Lord alone could completely do the will of God. The law is too broad for such poor creatures as we are to hope to fulfil it to the uttermost: but Jesus not only did the Father's will, but found a delight therein; from old eternity he had desired the work set before him; in his human life he was straitened till he reached the baptism of agony in which he magnified the law, and even in Gethsemane itself he chose the Father's will, and set aside his own. Herein is the essence of obedience, namely, in the soul's cheerful devotion to God: and our Lord's obedience, which is our righteousness, is in no measure lacking in this eminent quality. Notwithstanding his measureless griefs, our Lord found delight in his work, and for "the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame." Yea, thy law is within my heart. No outward, formal devotion was rendered by Christ; his heart was in his work, holiness was his element, the Father's will his meat and drink. We must each of us be like our Lord in this, or we shall lack the evidence of being his disciples. Where there is no heart work, no pleasure, no delight in God's law, there can be no acceptance. Let the devout reader adore the Saviour for the spontaneous and hearty manner in which he undertook the great work of our salvation.

Verse 9. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. The purest morality and the highest holiness were preached by Jesus. Righteousness divine was his theme. Our Lord's whole life was a sermon, eloquent beyond compare, and it is heard each day by myriads. Moreover, he never shunned in his
ministry to declare the whole counsel of God; God's great plan of righteousness he plainly set forth. He taught openly in the temple, and was not ashamed to be a faithful and a true witness. He was the great evangelist; the master of itinerant preachers; the head of the clan of open air missionaries. O servants of the Lord, hide not your lights, but reveal to others what your God has revealed to you; and especially by your lives testify for holiness, be champions for the right, both in word and deed. Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. Never either from love of ease, of fear of men, did the Great Teacher's lips become closed. He was instant in season and out of season. The poor listened to him, and princes heard his rebuke; Publicans rejoiced at him, and Pharisees raged, but to them both he proclaimed the truth from heaven. It is well for a tried believer when he can appeal to God and call him to witness that he has not been ashamed to bear witness for him; for rest assured if we are not ashamed to confess our God, he will never be ashamed to own us. Yet what a wonder is here, that the Son of God should plead, just as we plead, and urge just such arguments as would befit the mouths of his diligent minsters! How truly is he "made like unto his brethren."

Verse 10. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart. On the contrary, "Never man spake like this man." God's divine plan of making men righteous was well known to him, and he plainly taught it. What was in our great Master's heart he poured forth in holy eloquence from his lips. The doctrine of righteousness by faith he spake with great simplicity of speech. Law and gospel equally found in him a clear expositor. I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation. Jehovah's fidelity to his promises and his grace in saving believers were declared by the Lord Jesus on many occasions, and are blessedly blended in the gospel which he came to preach. God, faithful to his own character, law and threatenings, and yet saving sinners, is a peculiar revelation of the gospel. God faithful to the saved ones evermore is the joy of the followers of Christ Jesus. I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation. The tender as well as the stern attributes of God, our Lord Jesus fully unveiled. Concealment was far from the Great Apostle of our profession. Cowardice he never exhibited, hesitancy never weakened his language. He who as a child of twelve years spake in the temple among the doctors, and afterward preached to five thousand at Gennesaret, and to the vast crowds at Jerusalem on that great day, the last day of the feast, was always ready to proclaim the name of the Lord, and could never be charged with unholy silence. He could be dumb when so the prophecy demanded and patience suggested, but otherwise, preaching was his meat and his drink, and he kept back nothing which would be profitable to his disciples. This in the day of his trouble, according to this Psalm, he used as a plea for divine aid. He had been faithful to his God, and
now begs the Lord to be faithful to him. Let every dumb professor, tongue tied by sinful shame, bethink himself how little he will be able to plead after this fashion in the day of his distress.

**Verse 11.** *Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord.* Alas! these were to be for awhile withheld from our Lord while on the accursed tree, but meanwhile in his great agony he seeks for gentle dealing; and the coming of the angel to strengthen him was a clear answer to his prayer. He had been blessed aforetime in the desert, and now at the entrance of the valley of the shadow of death, like a true, trustful, and experienced man, he utters a holy, plaintive desire for the tenderness of heaven. He had not withheld his testimony to God's truth, now in return he begs his Father not to withhold his compassion. This verse might more correctly be read as a declaration of his confidence that help would not be refused; but whether we view this utterance as the cry of prayer, or the avowal of faith, in either case it is instructive to us who take our suffering Lord for an example, and it proves to us how thoroughly he was made like unto his brethren. *Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.* He had preached both of these, and now he asks for an experience of them, that he might be kept in the evil day and rescued from his enemies and his afflictions. Nothing endears our Lord to us more than to hear him thus pleading with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save. O Lord Jesus, in our nights of wrestling we will remember thee.

**Verse 12.** *For innumerable evils have compassed me about.* On every side he was beset with evils; countless woes environed the great Substitute for our sins. Our sins were innumerable, and so were his griefs. There was no escape for us from our iniquities, and there was no escape for him from the woes which we deserved. From every quarter evils accumulated about the blessed One, although in his heart evil found no place. *Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.* He had no sin, but sins were laid on him, and he took them as if they were his. "He was made sin for us." The transfer of sin to the Saviour was real, and produced in him as man the horror which forbade him to look into the face of God, bowing him down with crushing anguish and woe intolerable. O my soul, what would thy sins have done for thee eternally if the Friend of sinners had not condescended to take them all upon himself? Oh, blessed Scripture! "The Lord hath made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all." Oh, marvellous depth of love, which could lead the perfectly immaculate to stand in the sinner's place, and bear the horror of great trembling which sin must bring upon those conscious of it. *They are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.* The pains of the divine penalty were beyond compute, and the Saviour's soul was so burdened with
them, that he was sore amazed, and very heavy even unto a sweat of blood. His strength was gone, his spirits sank, he was in an agony.

 Verse 13. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me. How touching! How humble! How plaintive! The words thrill us as we think that after this sort our Lord and Master prayed. His petition is not so much that the cup should pass away undrained, but that he should be sustained while drinking it, and set free from its power at the first fitting moment. He seeks deliverance and help; and he entreats that the help may not be slow in coming; this is after the manner of our pleadings. Is it not? Note, reader, how our Lord was heard in that he feared, for there was after Gethsemane a calm endurance which made the fight as glorious as the victory.

 Verse 14. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it. Whether we read this as a prayer or a prophecy it matters not, for the powers of sin, and death, and hell, may well be ashamed as they see the result of their malice for ever turned against themselves. It is to the infinite confusion of Satan that his attempts to destroy the Saviour destroyed himself; the diabolical conclave who plotted in council are now all alike put to shame, for the Lord Jesus has met them at all points, and turned all their wisdom into foolishness. Let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. It is even so; the hosts of darkness are utterly put to the rout, and made a theme for holy derision for ever and ever. How did they gloat over the thought of crushing the seed of the woman! but the Crucified has conquered, the Nazarene has laughed them to scorn, the dying Son of Man has become the death of death and hell's destruction. For ever blessed be his name.

 Verse 15. Let them be desolate, or amazed; even as Jesus was desolate in his agony, so let his enemies be in their despair when he defeats them. The desolation caused in the hearts of evil spirits and evil men by envy, malice, chagrin, disappointment, and despair, shall be a fit recompense for their cruelty to the Lord when he was in their hands. For a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. Did the foul fiend insult over our Lord? Behold how shame is now his reward! Do wicked men today pour shame upon the name of the Redeemer? Their desolation shall avenge him of his adversaries! Jesus is the gentle Lamb to all who seek mercy through his blood; but let despisers beware, for he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and "who shall rouse him up?" The Jewish rulers exulted and scornfully said, "Aha, aha; "but when the streets of Jerusalem ran like rivers deep with gore," and the temple was utterly consumed," then their house was left unto them desolate, and the blood of the last of the prophets, according to their own desire, came upon themselves and upon their children. O ungodly reader, if such a person glance over this page,
beware of persecuting Christ and his people, for God will surely avenge his own elect. Your "ahas" will cost you dear. It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.

**Verse 16.** *Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee.* We have done with Ebal and turn to Gerizim. Here our Lord pronounces benedictions on his people. Note who the blessed objects of his petition are: not all men, but some men, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world." He pleads for seekers: the lowest in the kingdom, the babes of the family; those who have true desires, longing prayers, and consistent endeavours after God. Let seeking souls pluck up heart when they hear of this. What riches of grace, that in his bitterest hour Jesus should remember the lambs of the flock! And what does he entreat for them? it is that they may be doubly glad, intensely happy, emphatically joyful, for such the repetition of terms implies. Jesus would have all seekers made happy, by finding what they seek after, and by winning peace through his grief. As deep as were his sorrows, so high would he have their joys. He groaned that we might sing, and was covered with a bloody sweat that we might be anointed with the oil of gladness. *Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.* Another result of the Redeemer's passion is the promotion of the glory of God by those who gratefully delight in his salvation. Our Lord's desire should be our directory; we love with all our hearts his great salvation, let us then, with all our tongues proclaim the glory of God which is resplendent therein. Never let his praises cease. As the heart is warm with gladness let it incite the tongue to perpetual praise. If we cannot do what we would for the spread of the kingdom, at least let us desire and pray for it. Be it ours to make God's glory the chief end of every breath and pulse. The suffering Redeemer regarded the consecration of his people to the service of heaven as a grand result of his atoning death; it is the joy which was set before him; that God is glorified as the reward of the Saviour's travail.

**Verse 17.** *But I am poor and needy.* The man of sorrows closes with another appeal, based upon his affliction and poverty. *Yet the Lord thinketh upon me.* Sweet was this solace to the holy heart of the great sufferer. The Lord's thoughts of us are a cheering subject of meditation, for they are ever kind and never cease. His disciples forsook him, and his friends forgot him, but Jesus knew that Jehovah never turned away his heart from him, and this upheld him in the hour of need. *Thou art my help and my deliverer.* His unmoved confidence stayed itself alone on God. O that all believers would imitate more fully their great Apostle and High Priest in his firm reliance upon God, even when afflictions abounded and the light was veiled. *Make no tarrying, O my God.* The peril was imminent, the need urgent, the suppliant could not endure
delay, nor was he made to wait, for the angel came to strengthen, and the brave heart of Jesus rose up to meet the foe. Lord Jesus, grant that in all our adversities we may possess like precious faith, and be found like thee, more than conquerors.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. \textit{David's Psalm, or, a Psalm of David}; but David's name is here set first, which elsewhere commonly is last: or \textit{A Psalm concerning David}, that is \textit{Christ}, who is called \textit{David} in the prophets: Ho 3:5 Jer 30:9 Eze 34:23 32:24. Of him this Psalm entreateth as the apostle teacheth, Heb 10:5-6, etc. \textit{Henry Ainsworth}.

Whole Psalm. It is plain, from Ps 40:6-8 of this Psalm, compared with Heb 10:5, that the prophet in speaking in the person of Christ, who, Ps 40:1-5, celebrates the deliverance wrought for his mystical body, the church, by his resurrection from the grave, effecting that of his members from the guilt and dominion of sin; for the abolition of which he declareth, Ps 40:6-8, the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices, and mentions his own inclination to do the will of his Father, and Ps 40:9-10, to preach righteousness to the world. Ps 40:11-13. He represents himself as praying, while under his sufferings, for his own, and his people's salvation; he foretells, Ps 40:14-15, the confusion and desolation of his enemies, and, Ps 40:16, the joy and thankfulness of his disciples and servants; for the speedy accomplishment of which, Ps 40:17, he prefers a petition. \textit{George Horne}.

Verse 1. \textit{I waited patiently for the Lord: and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry}. I see that the Lord, suppose he drifts and delays the effect of his servant's prayer, and grants not his desire at the first, yet he hears him. I shall give a certain argument, whereby thou may know that the Lord heareth thee, suppose he delay the effect of thy prayers. Do you continue in prayer? Hast thou his strength given thee to persevere in suiting (petitioning for or praying for) anything? Thou may be assured he heareth; for this is one sure argument that he heareth thee, suppose he delay the effect of thy prayers. Do you continue in prayer? Hast thou his strength given thee to persevere in suiting (petitioning for or praying for) anything? Thou may be assured he heareth; for this is one sure argument that he heareth thee, for naturally our impatience carrieth us to desperation; our suddenness is so great, specially in spiritual troubles, that we cannot continue in suits. When thou, therefore, continues in suiting, thou may be sure that this strength is furnished of God, and cometh from heaven, and if thou have strength, he letteth thee see that he heareth thy prayer; and suppose he delay the effect and force thereof, yet pray continually. This doctrine is so necessary for the troubled conscience, that I think it is the meetest bridle in the Scripture to refrain our impatience; it is the meetest bit to hold us in continual exercise of
patience; for if the heart understand that the Lord hath rejected our prayer altogether, it is not possible to continue in prayer; so when we know that the Lord heareth us, suppose he delay, let us crave patience to abide his good will. 

Robert Bruce, 1559-1631.

**Verse 1.** I waited for the Lord. The infinitive (hwq) being placed first brings the action strongly out: I waited. This strong emphasis on the waiting, has the force of an admonition; it suggests to the sufferer that everything depends on waiting. E. W. Hengstenberg.

**Verse 1.** I waited patiently: rather anxiously; the original has it, waiting I waited; a Hebraism which signifies vehement solicitude. Daniel Cresswell.

**Verse 1.** I waited. The Saviour endureth his sufferings waitingly, as well as patiently and prayerfully. He "waited for the Lord." He expected help from Jehovah; and he waited for it until it came. James Frame, in "Christ and his Work: an Exposition of Psalm 40." 1869.

**Verse 1.** Patiently. Our Lord's patience under suffering was an element of perfection in his work. Had he become impatient as we often do, and lost heart, his atonement would have been vitiated. Well may we rejoice that in the midst of all his temptations, and in the thickest of the battle against sin and Satan, he remained patient and willing to finish the work which his Father had given him to do. James Frame.

**Verse 1.** Heard my cry. Our Saviour endured his sufferings prayerfully as well as patiently. James Frame.

**Verse 2.** An horrible pit. Some of the pits referred to in the Bible were prisons, one such I saw at Athens, and another at Rome. To these there were no openings, except a hole at the top, which served for both door and window. The bottoms of these pits were necessarily in a filthy and revolting state, and sometimes deep in mud. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay; one of these filthy prisons being in the psalmist's view, in Isa 38:17, called "the pit of corruption, "or putrefaction and filth. John Gadsby.

**Verse 2.** An horrible pit; or, as it is in the Hebrew, a pit of noise; so called because of waters that falling into it with great violence, make a roaring dreadful noise; or because of the strugglings and outcries they make that are in it; or because when anything is cast into deep pits, it will always make a great noise; and where he stuck fast in miry clay, without seeming possibility of
getting out. And some refer this to the greatness of Christ's terrors and sufferings, and his deliverance from them both. Arthur Jackson.

Verse 2. Three things are stated in verse two. First, resurrection as the act of God, *He brought me up*, etc. Secondly, the justification of the name and title of the Sufferer, *and set my feet upon a rock*. Jesus is set up, as alive from the dead, upon the basis of accomplished truth. Thirdly, there is his ascension, *He establisheth my goings*. The Son of God having trodden, in gracious and self-renouncing obedience the passage to the grave, now enters finally as Man the path of life. "He is gone into heaven," says the Spirit. And again, "He ascended on high, and led captivity captive." Arthur Pridham in "Notes and Reflections on the Psalms," 1869.


Verse 3. *Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.* The terms *fear*, and *hope*, or *trust*, do not seem at first view to harmonise; but David has not improperly joined them together, for no man will ever entertain the *hope* of the favour of God but he whose mind is first imbued with the *fear* of God. I understand *fear*, in general, to mean the feeling of piety which is produced in us by the knowledge of the power, equity, and mercy of God. John Calvin.

Verse 3. *Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.* First of all they *see*. Their eyes are opened; and their opened eyes see and survey *what* they are, *where* they are, *whence* they came, and *whither* they are going...When the attention of sinners is really and decisively arrested by the propitiation of Jesus, not only are their eyes opened to their various moral relations, not only do they "see" but they *fear* too. They "see" and "fear." ...Conviction follows illumination...But while the sinner only sees and fears, he is but in the initial stage of conversion, only in a state of readiness to flee from the city of destruction. He may have set out on his pilgrimage, but he has not yet reached his Father to receive the kiss of welcome and forgiveness. The consummating step has not yet been taken. He has seen indeed; he has feared too; but he still requires to *trust*, to trust in the Lord, and banish all his fears. This is the culminating point in the great change; and, unless this be reached, the other experiences will either die away, like an untimely blossom, or they will only be fuel to the unquenchable fire. James Frame.

Verse 5. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done,* etc. Behold God in the magnificence and wisdom of the works which his hands have made, even this immense universe, which is full of his glory. What art and contrivance! What regularity, harmony, and proportion, are to be seen
in all his productions, in the frame of our own bodies, or those that are about us! And with what beams of majestic glory do the sun, moon, and stars proclaim how august and wonderful in knowledge their Maker is! And ought not all these numberless beauties wherewith the world is stored, which the minds of inquisitive men are ready to admire, lead up our thoughts to the great Parent of all things, and inflame our amorous souls with love to him, who is infinitely brighter and fairer than them all? Cast abroad your eyes through the nations, and meditate on the mighty acts which he hath done, and the wisdom and power of his providence, which should charm all thy affections. Behold his admirable patience, with what pity he looks down on obstinate rebels; and how he is moved with compassion when he sees his creatures polluted in their blood, and bent upon their own destruction; how long he waits to be gracious; how unwillingly he appears to give up with sinners, and execute deserved vengeance on his enemies; and then with what joy he pardons, for "with him is plenteous redemption." And what can have more force than these to win thy esteem, and make a willing conquest of thy heart? so that every object about thee is an argument of love, and furnishes fuel for this sacred fire. And whether you behold God in the firmament of his power, or the sanctuary of his grace, you cannot miss to pronounce him "altogether lovely." William Dunlop.

Verse 5. *Thy thoughts which are toward us, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee:* i.e., there is no one can digest them in order; for although that may be attempted according to the comprehension and meaning of men, yet not before thee, every attempt of that nature being infinitely beneath thy immeasurable glory. Victorinus Bythner's "Lyre of David; "translated by T. Dee: new edition, by N. L. Benmohel, 1847.

Verse 5. Toward us. It is worthy of notice that while addressing his Father, as Jehovah and his God, our Saviour speaks of the members of the human family as his fellows. This is implied in the expression "toward us." He regarded himself as most intimately associated with the children of men. James Frame.

Verse 5. *They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee.* They are "in order" in themselves, and if they could be "reckoned up" as they are, they would be "reckoned in order." Created mind may not be able to grasp the principle of order that pervades them, but such a principle there is. And the more we study the whole series in its interrelations, the more shall we be convinced that as to time and place all the preparations for the mediatorial work of Christ, all the parts of its accomplishment, and all the divinely appointed consequences of its acception throughout all time into eternity, are faultlessly in order; they are precisely what and where and when they should be. James Frame.
Verse 5. They are more than can be numbered. The pulses of Providence are quicker than those of our wrists or temples. The soul of David knew right well their multiplicity, but could not multiply them aright by any skill in arithmetic; nay, the very sum or chief heads of divine kindesses were innumerable. His "wonderful works" and "thoughts" towards him could not be reckoned up in order by him, they were more than could be numbered. Samuel Lee (1625-1691), in The Triumph of Mercy in the Chariot of Praise.

Verse 5. It is Christ's speech, of whom the Psalm is made, and that relating unto his Father's resolved purposes and contrivings from eternity, and those continued unto his sending Christ into the world to die for us, as Ps 40:6-7. It follows so, as although his thoughts and purposes were but one individual act at first, and never to be altered; yet they became many, through a perpetuated reiteration of them, wherein his constancy to himself is seen...My brethren, if God have been thinking thoughts of mercy from everlasting to those that are his, what a stock and treasury do these thoughts arise to, besides those that are in his nature and disposition! This is in his actual purposes and intentions, which he hath thought, and doth think over, again and again, every moment. Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are toward us, saith Jesus Christ; for Psalm 40 is a Psalm of Christ, and quoted by the apostle, and applied unto Christ in Hebrews 10, How many are thy thoughts toward us!—he speaks it in the name of the human nature—that is, to me and mine. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. And what is the reason? Because God hath studied mercies, mercies for his children, even from everlasting. And then, "He renews his mercies every morning; "not that any mercies are new, but he actually thinketh over mercies again and again, and so he brings out of his treasury, mercies both new and old, and old are always new. What a stock, my brethren, must this needs amount unto! Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 6. Sacrifice and offering...burnt offering and sin offering. Four kinds are here specified, both by the psalmist and apostle: namely, sacrifice (xbz) zebhach, yusia; offering, (hxnm) minchah, prosfora; burnt offering, (hlwe) olah, olokautwma; sin offering, (hajx) chataah, peri amartias. Of all these we may say with the apostle, it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats, etc., should take away sin. Adam Clarke.

Verse 6. Mine ears hast thou opened. The literal translation is, mine ears hast thou digged (or pierced) through; which may well be interpreted as meaning, "Thou hast accepted me as thy slave, " in allusion to the custom Ex 21:6 of masters boring the ear of a slave, who had refused his offered freedom, in token of retaining him. Daniel Cresswell.
Verse 6. John Calvin, in treating upon the interpretation, "mine ears hast thou bored," says, "this mode of interpretation appears to be too forced and refined."

Verse 6. Mine ears hast thou opened. If it is to be said that the apostle to the Hebrews read this differently, I answer, this does not appear to me. It is true, he found a different, but corrupted translation (wthia, ears, as the learned have observed, having been changed into swma, body) in the LXX, which was the version then in use; and he was obliged to quote it as he found it, under the penalty, if he altered it, of being deemed a false quoter. He therefore took the translation as he found it, especially as it served to illustrate his argument equally well. Upon this quotation from the LXX the apostle argues, Ps 40:9, "He, (Christ) taketh away the first (namely, legal sacrifices), that he may establish the second" (namely, obedience to God's will), in offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of mankind; and thus he must have argued upon a quotation for the Hebrew text as it stands at present. Green, quoted in S. Burder's "Scripture Expositor."

Verse 6. The apostle's reading Heb 10:5, though it be far distant from the letter of the Hebrew, and in part from the LXX (as I suppose it to have been originally), yet is the most perspicuous interpretation of the meaning of it: Christ's body comprehended the ears, and that assumed on purpose to perform in it the utmost degree of obedience to the will of God, to be obedient even to death, and thereby to be as the priest. Henry Hammond.

Verse 6.

Nor sacrifice thy love can win,
Nor offerings from the stain of sin
Obnoxious man shall clear:
Thy hand my mortal frame prepares,
(Thy hand, whose signature it bears,)
And opens my willing ear.
—James Merrick, M.A., 1720-1769.

Verses 6-7. In these words an allusion is made to a custom of the Jews to bore the ears of such as were to be their perpetual servants, and to enrol their names in a book, or make some instrument of the covenant. "Sacrifices and burnt offerings thou wouldst not have; "but because I am thy vowed servant, bored with an awl, and enrolled in thy book, I said, Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God. These words of the Psalm are alleged by S. Paul, Hebrews 10. But the first of them with a most strange difference. For whereas the psalmist hath, according to the Hebrew verity, Sacrifice and burnt offering thou wouldst
not: mine ears thou hast bored or digged, (tyrn); S. Paul reads with the LXX, swma kathrtisw moi, "A body thou hast prepared or fitted me." What equipollency can be in sense between these two? This difficulty is so much the more augmented because most interpreters make the life of the quotation to lie in those very words where the difference is, namely, That the words, "A body thou hast prepared me, "are brought by the apostle to prove our Saviour's incarnation; whereunto the words in the Psalm itself (Mine ears hast thou bored, or digged, or opened), take them how you will in no wise suit. I answer, therefore, That the life of the quotation lies not in the words of difference, nor can do, because this epistle was written to the Hebrews, and so first in the Hebrew tongue, where this translation of the LXX could have no place. And if the life of the quotation lay here, I cannot see how it can possibly be reconciled. It lies therefore in the words where there is no difference, namely, That Christ was such a High Priest as came to sanctify us, not with the legal offerings and sacrifices, but by his obedience in doing like a devoted servant the will of his Father. Thus, the allegation will not depend at all upon the words of difference, and so they give us liberty to reconcile them: Mine ears hast thou bored, saith the psalmist, i.e., Thou hast accepted me for a perpetual servant, as masters are wont, according to the law, to bore such servants' ears as refuse to part from them. Now the LXX, according to whom the apostle's epistle readeth, thinking perhaps the meaning of this speech would be obscure to such as knew not that custom, chose rather to translate it generally swma de katertisw moi, "Thou hast fitted my body, "namely, to be thy servant, in such a manner as servants' bodies are wont to be. And so the sense is all one, though not specified to the Jewish custom of boring the ear with an awl, but left indifferently applicable to the custom of any nation in marking and stigmatising their servants' bodies. Joseph Mede, B.D., 1586-1638.

Verses 6-10. Here we have in Christ for our instruction, and in David also (his type) for our example; 1. A firm purpose of obedience, in a bored ear, and a yielding heart. 2. A ready performance thereof: Lo, I come. 3. A careful observance of the word written: In the volume of the Book it is written of me, Ps 40:7. 4. A hearty delight in that observance, Ps 40:8. 5. A public profession and communication of God's goodness to others, Ps 40:9-10. Now, we should labour to express Christ to the world, to walk as he walked 1Jo 2:6: our lives should be in some sense parallel with his life, as the transcript with the original: he left us a copy to write by, saith St. Peter, 1Pe 2:21. John Trapp.

Verse 7. Then said I, Lo, I come. As his name is above every name, so this coming of his is above every coming. We sometimes call our own births, I confess, a coming into the world; but properly, none ever came into the world
but he. For, 1. He only truly can be said to come, who is before he comes; so were not we, only he so. 2. He only strictly comes who comes willingly; our crying and struggling at our entrance into the world, shows how unwillingly we come into it. He alone it is that sings out, *Lo, I come.* 3. He only properly comes who comes from some place or other. Alas! we had none to come from but the womb of nothing. *He* only had a place to be in before he came. *Mark Frank.*

**Verse 7.** *Then said I, Lo, I come,* to wit, as surety, to pay the ransom, and to do thy will, O God. Every word carrieth a special emphasis as 1. The time, *then,* even so soon as he perceived that his Father had prepared his body for such an end, then, without delay. This speed implies forwardness and readiness; he would lose no opportunity. 2. His profession in this word, *said I;* he did not closely, secretly, timorously, as being ashamed thereof, but he maketh profession beforehand. 3. This note of observation, *Lo,* this is a kind of calling angels and men to witness, and a desire that all might know his inward intention, and the disposition of his heart; wherein was as great a willingness as any could have to anything. 4. An offering of himself without any enforcement or compulsion; this he manifests in this word, *I come.* 5. That very instant set out in the present tense, *I come,* he puts it not off to a future and uncertain time, but even in that moment, he saith, *I come.* 6. The first person twice expressed, thus, "*I said," "*I come."* He sends not another person, nor substitutes any in his room; but he, even he himself in his own person, comes. All which do abundantly evidence Christ's singular readiness and willingness, as our surety, to do his Father's will, though it were by suffering, and by being made a sacrifice for our sins. *Thomas Brooks.*

**Verse 7.** *Lo, I come,* i.e., to appear before thee; a phrase used to indicate the coming of an inferior into the presence of a superior, or of a slave before his master, Nu 22:38 2Sa 19:20: as in the similar expression, "Behold, here I am, "generally expressive of willingness. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Verse 7.** *Lo, I come.* Christ's coming in the spirit is a *joyful* coming. I think this, *Lo, I come,* expresses 1. *Present joy.* 2. It expresses *certain joy:* the *Lo,* is a note of certainty; the thing is certain and true; and his joy is certain; certain, true, solid joy. 3. It expresses *communicative joy:* designing his people shall share of his joy, *Lo, I come!* The joy that Christ has as Mediator is a fulness of joy, designed for his people's use, that *out of his fulness we may receive,* and *grace for grace,* and joy for joy; grace answering grace in Jesus, and joy answering joy in him. 4. It expresses *solemn joy.* He comes with a solemnity; *Lo, I come!* according to the council of a glorious Trinity. Now, when the purpose of heaven is come to the birth, and the decree breaks forth, and the
fulness of time is come, he makes heaven and earth witness, as it were, to his solemn march on the errand: he says it with a loud, Lo! that all the world of men and angels may notice, Lo, I come! And, indeed, all the elect angels brake forth into joyful songs of praise at this solemnity; when he came in the flesh, they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards man." Ralph Erskine, 1685-1752.

Verse 7. Lo, I come, or, am come, to wit, into the world Heb 10:5, and particularly to Jerusalem, to give myself a sacrifice for sin. Henry Ainsworth.

Verse 7. The volume of the book. What book is meant, whether the Scripture, or the book of life, is not certain, probably the latter. W. Wilson, D.D.

Verse 7. The volume of the book. But what volume of manuscript roll is here meant? Plainly, the one which was already extant when the psalmist was writing. If the psalmist was David himself (as the title of the Psalm seems to affirm), the only parts of the Hebrew Scriptures then extant, and of course, the only part to which he could refer, must have been the Pentateuch, and perhaps the book of Joshua. Beyond any reasonable doubt, them, the kefalisi biblion (rpo tlnm) was the Pentateuch...But I apprehend the meaning of the writer to be, that the book of the law, which prescribes sacrifices that were merely skiai or parabolai of the great atoning sacrifice by Christ, did itself teach, by the use of these, that something of a higher and better nature was to be looked for than Levitical rites. In a word, it pointed to the Messiah; or, some of the contents of the written law had respect to him. Moses Stuart, M.A., in "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews," 1851.

Verse 7. The volume of the book etc. When I first considered Ro 5:14, and other Scriptures in the New Testament which make the first Adam, and the whole story of him both before and after, and in his sinning or falling, to be the type and lively shadow of Christ, the second Adam; likewise observing that the apostle Paul stands admiring at the greatest of this mystery or mystical type, the Christ, the second Adam should so wonderfully be shadowed forth therein, as Eph 5:32, he cries out, "This is a great mystery, "which he speaks applying and fitting some passages about Adam and Eve unto Christ and his church; it made me more to consider an interpretation of a passage in Heb 10:7, out of Ps 40:7, which I before had not only not regarded, but wholly rejected, as being too like a postil (A marginal note) gloss. The passage is, that "when Christ came into the world, "to take our nature on him, he alleged the reason of it to be the fulfilling of a Scripture written in "the beginning of God's book, "en kefalsi Biblion, so out of the original the words may be, and are by many interpreters, translated, though our translation reads them only thus, In the volume of the
book it is written of me. It is true, indeed, that in the fortieth Psalm, whence they are quoted, the words in the Hebrew may signify no more than that in God's book (the manner of writing which was anciently in rolls of parchment, folded up in a volume) Christ was everywhere written and spoken of. Yet the word kefalis which out of the Septuagint's translation the apostle took, signifying, as all know, the beginning of a book; and we finding such an emphasis set by the apostle in the fifth chapter of the Ephesians, upon the history of Adam in the beginning of Genesis, as containing the mystery, yea, the great mystery about Christ, it did somewhat induce, though not so fully persuade, me to think, that the Holy Ghost in those words might have some glance at the story of Adam in the first of the first book of Moses. And withal the rather because so, the words so understood do intimate a higher and further inducement to Christ to assume our nature, the scope of the speech, Hebrews 10, being to render the reason why he so willingly took man's nature: not only because God liked not sacrifice and burnt offering, which came in but upon occasion of sin, and after the fall, and could not take sin away, but further, that he was prophesied of, and his assuming a body prophetically foresighted, as in the fortieth Psalm, so even by Adam's story before the fall, recorded in the very beginning of Genesis, which many other Scriptures do expressly apply it unto. Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 10. I have not hid. This intimates, that whoever undertook to preach the gospel of Christ would be in great temptation to hide it, and conceal it, because it must be preached with great contention, and in the face of great opposition. Matthew Henry.

Verse 10. I have not hid, etc. What God has done for us, or for the church, we should lay to heart; but not lock up in our heart. Carl Bernhard Moll in Lange's "Bibelwerk." 1869.

Verse 11. Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me. Do not hinder them from coming showering down upon me. Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me; or, do thou employ them in preserving me. John Diodati.

Verse 12. For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head. We lose ourselves when we speak of the sins of our lives. It may astonish any considering man to take notice how many sins he is guilty of any one day; how many sins accompany any one single act; nay, how many bewray themselves in any one religious duty. Whenevery ye do anything forbidden, you omit the duty at that time commanded; and whenever you
neglect that which is enjoined, the omission is joined with the acting of something forbidden; so that the sin, whether omission or commission, is always double; nay, the apostle makes every sin tenfold. Jas 2:10. That which seems one to us, according to the sense of the law, and the account of God, is multiplied by ten. He breaks every command by sinning directly against one, and so sins ten times at once; besides that swarm of sinful circumstances and aggravations which surround every act in such numbers, as atoms use to surround your body in a dusty room; you may more easily number these than those. And though some count these but fractions, incomplete sins, yet even from hence it is more difficult to take an account of their number. And, which is more for astonishment, pick out the best religious duty that ever you performed, and even in that performance you may find such a swarm of sins as cannot be numbered. In the best prayer that ever you put up to God, irreverence, lukewarmness, unbelief, spiritual pride, self seeking, hypocrisy, distractions, etc., and many more, that an enlightened soul grieves and bewails; and yet there are many more that the pure eye of God discerns, than any man does take notice of. David Clarkson.

Verse 12. Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me. They seized him as the sinner's substitute, to deal with him as regards their own penalty, according to the sinner's desert. James Frame.

Verse 13. The remaining verses of this Psalm are almost exactly identical with Psalm 70.

Verse 14. Let them be ashamed and confounded, etc. Even this prayer carried benevolence in its bosom. It sought from the divine Father, such a manifestation of what was glorious and like God as might unnerv e each rebel arm, and overawe each rebel heart in the traitor's company. If each arm were for a little unnerved, if each heart were for a little unmanned, there might be time for the better principles of their nature to rise and put an arrest upon the prosecution of their wicked design. Such being the benevolent aim of the prayer, we need not wonder that it issued from the same heart that by and by exclaimed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do; "neither need we marvel that it was answered to the very letter, and that as soon as he said to the traitor band, "I am he," they went backward and fell to the ground. James Frame.

Verse 15. Aha, aha. An exclamation which occurs three times in the Psalms; and in each case there seems to be reference to the mockery at the Passion. See Ps 35:21 70:3, which appear to belong to the same time as the present Psalm. Christopher Wordsworth.
Verse 16. *Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee.* As every mercy to every believer giveth a proof of God's readiness to show the like mercy to all believers, when they stand in need; so should every mercy shown to any of the number, being known to the rest, be made the matter and occasion of magnifying the Lord. *David Dickson.*

Verse 16. *Such as love thy salvation.* To love God's salvation is to love God himself, the Saviour, or Jesus. *Martin Geier.*

Verse 16. *Such as love thy salvation.* One would think that self love alone should make us love salvation. Aye, but they love it because it is his, "that love *thy* salvation." It is the character of a holy saint to love salvation itself; not as his own only, but as God's, as God's that saves him. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 16. *Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.* Jesus who gave us our capacity of happiness and our capacity of speaking, realised the relation which he had established between them; and hence in praying for his friends, he prayed that in the joy and gladness of their souls they might say, "The Lord be magnified." He desired them to speak of their holy happiness; and it was his wish that when they did speak of it they should speak in terms of praise of Jehovah, for he was the source of it. He desired them to say continually, *The Lord be magnified.* *James Frame.*

Verse 17. In Dr. Malan's memoir, the editor, one of his sons, thus writes of his brother Jocelyn, who was for some years prior to his death, the subject of intense bodily sufferings:—"One striking feature in his character was his holy fear of God, and reverence for his will." One day I was repeating a verse from the Psalms, 'As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me: thou art my helper and deliverer; O Lord, make no long tarrying.' He said, 'Mamma, I love that verse, all but the last bit, it looks like a murmur against God. He never 'tarries' in my case.' From "The Life, Labours, and Writings of Caesar Malan" (1787-1864): By one of his sons, 1869.

Verse 17. *Yet the Lord thinketh upon me.* Sacred story derives from heaven the kindness of Abimelech to Abraham, of Laban and Esau to Jacob, of Ruth to Naomi, of Boaz to Ruth, and Jonathan to David. When others think of kindness to us, let us imitate David, it is the Lord that thinketh upon me, and forms those thoughts within their hearts. This should calm our spirits when a former friend's heart is alienated by rash admissions of false suggestions, or when any faithful Jonathan expires his spirit into the bosom of God. It should not be lost what Hobson, the late noted carrier of Cambridge, said to a young student receiving a letter of the sad tidings of his uncle's decease (who maintained him at the
University), and weeping bitterly, and reciting the cause of his grief, he replied, *Who gave you that friend?* Which saying did greatly comfort him, and was a sweet support to him afterwards in his ministry. The Ever living God is the portion of a living faith, and *he* can never want that hath *such* an ocean. He that turns the hearts of kings like rivers at his pleasure, turns all the little brooks in the world into what scorched and parched ground he pleases. *Samuel Lee.*

**Verse 17.** *The Lord thinketh upon me.* There are three things in *God's thinking upon us,* that are solacing and delightful. Observe the *frequency* of his thoughts. Indeed, they are incessant. You have a friend, whom you esteem and love. You wish to live in his mind. You say when you part, and when you write, "Think of me." You give him, perhaps, a token to revive his remembrance. How naturally is Selkirk, in his solitary island, made to say:—

"My friends, do they now and then send  
A wish or a *thought* after me?  
O tell me, I yet have a friend,  
Though a friend I am never to see."  
"Ye winds, that have made me your sport  
Convey to this desolate shore  
Some cordial, endearing report  
Of a land I shall visit no more."

But the dearest connexion in the world cannot be always thinking upon you. Half his time he is in a state of unconsciousness; and how much during the other half is he engrossed! But there is no remission in the Lord's thoughts...Observe in the next place, the *wisdom* of his thoughts. You have a dear child, absent from you, and you follow him in your mind. But you know not his present circumstances. You left him in such a place; but where is he now? You left him in such a condition. But what is he now? Perhaps while you are thinking upon his health, he is groaning under a bruised limb, or a painful disorder. Perhaps, while you are thinking of his safety, some enemy is taking advantage of his innocency. Perhaps, while you are rejoicing in his prudence, he is going to take a step that will involve him for life. But when God thinketh upon you, he is perfectly acquainted with your situation, your dangers, your wants. He knows all your walking through this great wilderness, and can afford you the seasonable succour you need. For again, observe the *efficiency* of his thoughts. You think upon another, and you are anxious to guide, or defend, or relieve him. But in how many cases can you think only? Solicitude cannot control the disease of the body, cannot dissipate the melancholy of the mind. But with God all things are possible. He who thinks upon you is a God at hand and not afar off; he has all events under his control; he is the God of all grace.
If, therefore, he does not immediately deliver, it is not because he is unable to redress, but because he is waiting to be gracious. *William Jay.*

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**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

**Verse 1.**

2. *God's part*—condescension and reply.

**Verse 2.**

1. The *depth* of God's goodness to his people. It finds them often in a horrible pit and miry clay. There is a certain spider which forms a pit in sand, and lies concealed at the bottom, in order to seize upon other insects that fall into it. Thus David's enemies tried to bring him into a pit.

2. The *height* of his goodness. He brought me out and set my feet upon a rock. That rock is Christ. Those feet are faith and hope.

3. The *breadth* of his goodness establisheth my *goings*, restored me to my former place in his love, showing me still to have been his during my low estate. He was the same to me, though I felt not the same to him. My goings refer both to the past and the future.

4. The *strength* of his goodness *established* my goings, making me stand firmer after every fall. —George Rogers.

**Verses 2-3.** The sinner's position by nature, and his rescue by grace.

**Verses 2-3.** By one and the same act the Lord works our salvation, our enemies' confusion, and the church's edification. *J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

**Verse 3.** The new song, the singer, the teacher.

**Verse 4.** *(last clause).*

1. Find out who turn aside to lies—Atheists, Papists, self righteous, lovers of sin.

2. Show their folly in turning aside from God and truth, and in turning to fallacies which lead to death.
3. Show how to be preserved from the like folly, by choosing truth, truthful persons, and above all the service of God.

Verse 5.

1. There are works of God in his people and for his people. There are his works of creation, of providence, and of redemption, and also his works of grace, wrought in them by his Spirit, and around them by his providence, as well as for them by his Son.

2. These are wonderful works; wonderful in their variety, their tenderness, their adaptation to their need, their cooperation with outward means and their power.

3. They are the result of the divine thoughts respecting us. They come not by chance, not by men, but by the hand of God, and that hand is moved by his will, and that will by his thought respecting us. Every mercy, even the least, represents some kind thought in the mind of God respecting us. God thinks of each one of his people, and every moment.

4. They are innumerable. They cannot be reckoned up. Could we see all the mercies of God to us and his wonderful works wrought for us individually, they would be countless as the sands, and all these countless mercies represent countless thoughts in the mind and heart of God to each one of his people. — George Rogers.

Verse 5. The multitude of God's thoughts, and deeds of grace; beginning in eternity, continuing for ever; and dealing with this life, heaven, hell, sin, angels, devils, and indeed all things.

Verse 6. Here David goes beyond himself, and speaks the language of David's Son. This was naturally suggested by God's wonderful works, and innumerable thoughts of love to man.

1. The sacrifices that were not required. These were the sacrifices and burnt offerings under the law. (a) When required? From Adam to the coming of Christ. (b) When not required? (c) Why required before? As types of the one method of redemption. (d) Why not now required? Because the great Antitype had come.

2. The sacrifice that was required. This was the sacrifice offered on Calvary. (a) It was required by God by his justice, his wisdom, his faithfulness, his love, his honour, his glory. (b) It was required by man to give him salvation and
confidence in that salvation. (c) It was required for the honour of the moral
government of God throughout the universe.

3. *The person by whom this sacrifice was offered. Mine ears hast thou opened.*
This is the language of Christ, prospectively denoting—(a) Knowledge of the
sacrifice required. (b) Consecration of himself as a servant for that end. —
George Rogers.

**Verse 6.** *Mine ears hast thou opened.* Readiness to hear, fixity of purpose,
perfection of obedience, entireness of consecration.

**Verses 6-8.** The Lord gives an ear to hear his word, a mouth to confess it, a
heart to love it, and power to keep it. —James Merrick, M.A., 1720-1769.

**Verses 6-8.** The Lord gives an ear to hear his word, a mouth to confess it, a
heart to love it, and power to keep it.

**Verse 7.**

1. The time of Christ's coming. *Then said I.* When types were exhausted, when
prophecies looked for their fulfilment, when worldly wisdom had done its
utmost, when the world was almost entirely united under one empire, when the
time appointed by the Father had come.

2. The design of his coming. *In the volume* was written—(a) The constitution of
his person. (b) His teaching. (c) The manner of his life. (d) The design of his
death. (e) His resurrection and ascension. (f) The kingdom he would establish.

3. The voluntariness of his coming, *Lo, I come.* Though sent by the Father, he
came of his own accord. "Christ Jesus came into the world." Men do not come
into the world, they are sent into it. *Lo, I come,* denotes pre-existence, pre-
determination, pre-operation. —George Rogers.

**Verses 6-8.** The Lord gives an ear to hear his word, a mouth to confess it, a
heart to love it, and power to keep it.

**Verse 8.** *To do thy will, O God.*

1. The will of God is seen in the fact of salvation. It has its origin in the will of
God.
2. The will of God is seen in the plan of salvation. All things have proceeded, are proceeding, and will proceed according to that plan.

3. It is seen in the provision of salvation, in the appointment of his own Son to become the mediator the atoning sacrifice, the law fulfiller, the head of the church, that his plan required.

4. It is seen in the accomplishment of salvation.

Verse 9. Referring to our Lord; a great preacher, a great subject, a great congregation, and his great faithfulness in the work.

Verse 10. (first clause).

1. The righteousness possessed by God.
2. The righteousness prescribed by God.
3. The righteousness provided by God. James Frame.

Verse 10. The preacher must reveal his whole message. He must not conceal any part: (a) Not of the righteousness of the law or the gospel; (b) Not of the lovingkindness of grace; (c) Not of any portion of the truth with flowers of rhetoric; (d) To give a partial representation; (e) To put one truth in the place of another; (f) To give the letter without the spirit. G.R.

Verse 10. The great sin of concealing what we know of God.

Verse 11. Enrichment and preservation sought. The true riches are from God, gifts of his sovereignty, fruits of his mercy, marked with his tenderness. The best preservations are divine love and faithfulness.

Verses 11-13. As an instance of clerical ingenuity, it may be well to mention that Canon Wordsworth has a sermon from these verses upon "the duty of making responses in public prayer."

"Came at length the dreadful night.
Vengeance with its iron rod
Stood, and with collected might
Bruised the harmless Lamb of God,
See, my soul, thy Saviour see,
Prostrate in Gethsemane!"
"There my God bore all my guilt,  
This through grace can be believed;  
But the horrors which he felt  
Are too vast to be conceived.  
None can penetrate through thee,  
Doleful, dark Gethsemane."

"Sins against a holy God;  
Sins against his righteous laws;  
Sins against his love, his blood;  
Sins against his name and cause;  
Sins immense as is the sea—  
Hide me, O Gethsemane!"

Verses 11-13. As an instance of clerical ingenuity, it may be well to mention that Canon Wordsworth has a sermon from these verses upon "the duty of making responses in public prayer."

Verse 12. Compare this with Ps 40:5. The number of our sins, and the number of his thoughts of love.

Verse 12. (second clause).

1. The soul arrested—"taken hold."  
2. The soul bewildered—"cannot look up."  
3. The soul's only refuge—prayer, Ps 40:13.

Verses 11-13. As an instance of clerical ingenuity, it may be well to mention that Canon Wordsworth has a sermon from these verses upon "the duty of making responses in public prayer."

Verse 13.

1. The language of believing prayer—deliver me, help me; looking for deliverance and help to God only.  
2. Of earnest prayer—make haste to help me.  
3. Of submissive prayer—be pleased, O Lord, if according to thy good pleasure.
4. Of consistent prayer. Help me, which implies efforts for his own deliverance, putting his own shoulder to the wheel.

**Verse 14.** Honi soit mal y pense; or, the reward of malignity.

**Verse 16.** (last clause). An everyday saying. Who can use it? What does it mean? Why should they say it? Why say it continually?

**Verse 17.** The humble But, and the believing Yet. The little I am, and the great Thou art. The fitting prayer.

**Verse 17.** The Lord thinketh upon me. Admire the condescension, and then consider that this is—

1. A promised blessing.
2. A practical blessing—he thinks upon us to supply, protect, direct, sanctify, &c.
3. A precious blessing—kind thoughts, continual, greatly good. He thinks of us as his creatures with pity, as his children with love, as his friends with pleasure.
4. A present blessing—promises, providences, visitations of grace.

**Verse 17.**

1. The less we think of ourselves the more God will think upon us.
2. The less we put trust in ourselves the more we may trust in God for help and deliverance.
3. The less delay in prayer and active efforts the sooner God will appear for us.

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**WORKS UPON THE FORTIETH PSALM**

A Sermon upon the Fortieth Psalme, preached in the time of Public Fast; in "Sermons by the Rev. ROBERT BRUCE, Minister of Edinburgh, reprinted from the original edition of 1590, and 1591...Edinburgh: printed for the Wodrow Society. 1843."

Christ and his Work: an Exposition of Psalm 40. By JAMES FRAME, 1869.
Psalm 41

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

TITLE. To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. This title has frequently occurred before, and serves to remind us of the value of the Psalm, seeing that it was committed to no mean songster; and also to inform us as to the author who has made his own experience the basis of a prophetic song, in which a far greater than David is set forth. How wide a range of experience David had! What power it gave him to edify future ages! And how full a type of our Lord did he become! What was bitterness to him has proved to be a fountain of unfailing sweetness to many generations of the faithful.

Jesus Christ betrayed by Judas Iscariot is evidently the great theme of this Psalm, but we think not exclusively. He is the antitype of David, and all his people are in their measure like him; hence words suitable to the Great Representative are most applicable to those who are in him. Such as receive a vile return for long kindness to others, may read this song with much comfort, for they will see that it is alas! too common for the best of men, to be rewarded for their holy charity with cruelty and scorn; and when they have been humbled by falling into sin, advantage has been taken of their low estate, their good deeds have been forgotten and the vilest spite has been vented upon them.

DIVISION. The psalmist in Ps 41:1-3, describes the mercies which are promised to such as consider the poor, and this he uses as a preface to his own personal plea for succour: from Ps 41:4-9 he states his own case, proceeds to prayer in Ps 41:10, and closes with thanksgiving, Ps 41:11-13.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. Blessed is he that considereth the poor. This is the third Psalm opening with a benediction, and there is a growth in it beyond the first two. To search the word of God comes first, pardoned sin is second, and now the forgiven sinner brings forth fruit unto God available for the good of others. The word used is as emphatic as in the former cases, and so is the blessing which follows it. The poor intended, are such as are poor in substance, weak in bodily strength, despised in repute, and desponding in spirit. These are mostly avoided and frequently scorned. The worldly proverb bequeaths the hindmost to one who has no mercy. The sick and the sorry are poor company, and the world deserts them as the Amalekite left his dying servant. Such as have been made partakers of divine grace receive a tenderer nature, and are not hardened against their own flesh and blood; they undertake the cause of the downtrodden, and turn their minds seriously to the promotion of their welfare. They do not toss them a penny and go on their way, but enquire into their sorrows, sift out their cause, study the best ways for their relief, and practically come to their rescue: such as these have the mark of the divine favour plainly upon them, and are as
surely the sheep of the Lord's pasture as if they wore a brand upon their foreheads. They are not said to have considered the poor years ago, but they still do so. Stale benevolence, when boasted of, argues present churlishness. First and foremost, yea, far above all others put together in tender compassion for the needy is our Lord Jesus, who so remembered our low estate, that though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor. All his attributes were charged with the task of our uplifting. He weighed our case and came in the fulness of wisdom to execute the wonderful work of mercy by which we are redeemed from our destructions. Wretchedness excited his pity, misery moved his mercy, and thrice blessed is he both by his God and his saints for his attentive care and wise action towards us. He still considereth us; his mercy is always in the present tense, and so let our praises be.

The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The compassionate lover of the poor thought of others, and therefore God will think of him. God measures to us with our own bushel. Days of trouble come even to the most generous, and they have made the wisest provision for rainy days who have lent shelter to others when times were better with them. The promise is not that the generous saint shall have no trouble, but that he shall be preserved in it, and in due time brought out of it. How true was this of our Lord! never trouble deeper nor triumph brighter than his, and glory be to his name, he secures the ultimate victory of all his blood bought ones. Would that they all were more like him in putting on bowels of compassion to the poor. Much blessedness they miss who stint their alms. The joy of doing good, the sweet reaction of another's happiness, the approving smile of heaven upon the heart, if not upon the estate; all these the niggardly soul knows nothing of. Selfishness bears in itself a curse, it is a cancer in the heart; while liberality is happiness, and maketh fat the bones. In dark days we cannot rest upon the supposed merit of alms giving, but still the music of memory brings with it no mean solace when it tells of widows and orphans whom we have succoured, and prisoners and sick folk to whom we have ministered.

Verse 2. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive. His noblest life shall be immortal, and even his mortal life shall be sacredly guarded by the power of Jehovah. Jesus lived on till his hour came, nor could the devices of crafty Herod take away his life till the destined hour had struck; and even then no man took his life from him, but he laid it down of himself, to take it again. Here is the portion of all those who are made like their Lord, they bless and they shall be blessed, they preserve and shall be preserved, they watch over the lives of others and they themselves shall be precious in the sight of the Lord. The miser like the hog is of no use till he is dead—then let him die; the righteous like the
ox is of service during life—then let him live. And he shall be blessed upon the earth. Prosperity shall attend him. His cruse of oil shall not be dried up because he fed the poor prophet. He shall cut from his roll of cloth and find it longer at both ends.

"There was a man, and some did count him mad,
The more he gave away the more he had."

If temporal gains be not given him, spirituals shall be doubled to him. His little shall be blessed, bread and water shall be a feast to him. The liberal are and must be blessed even here; they have a present as well as a future portion. Our Lord's real blessedness of heart in the joy that was set before him is a subject worthy of earnest thought, especially as it is the picture of the blessing which all liberal saints may look for. And thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. He helped the distressed, and now he shall find a champion in his God. What would not the good man's enemies do to him if they had him at their disposal? Better be in a pit with vipers than to be at the mercy of persecutors. This sentence sets before us a sweet negative, and yet it were not easy to have seen how it could be true of our Lord Jesus, did we not know that although he was exempted from much of blessing, being made a curse for us, yet even he was not altogether nor for ever left of God, but in due time was exalted above all his enemies.

Verse 3. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing. The everlasting arms shall stay up his soul as friendly hands and downy pillows stay up the body of the sick. How tender and sympathising is this image; how near it brings our God to our infirmities and sicknesses! Whoever heard this of the old heathen Jove, or of the gods of India or China? This is language peculiar to the God of Israel; he it is who deigns to become nurse and attendant upon good men. If he smites with one hand he sustains with the other. Oh, it is blessed fainting when one falls upon the Lord's own bosom, and is borne up thereby! Grace is the best of restoratives; divine love is the noblest stimulant for a languishing patient; it makes the soul strong as a giant, even when the aching bones are breaking through the skin. No physician like the Lord, no tonic like his promise, no wine like his love. Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. What, doth the Lord turn bed maker to his sick children? Herein is love indeed. Who would not consider the poor if such be the promised reward? A bed soon grows hard when the body is weary with tossing to and fro upon it, but grace gives patience, and God's smile gives peace, and the bed is made soft because the man's heart is content; the pillows are downy because the head is peaceful. Note that the Lord will make all his bed, from head to foot. What considerate and indefatigable kindness! Our dear and ever blessed Lord Jesus, though in all
respects an inheritor of this promise, for our sakes condescended to forego the blessing, and died on a cross and not upon a bed; yet, even there, he was after awhile upheld and cheered by the Lord his God, so that he died in triumph.

We must not imagine that the benediction pronounced in these three verses belongs to all who casually give money to the poor, or leave it in their wills, or contribute to societies. Such do well, or act from mere custom, as the case may be, but they are not here alluded to. The blessing is for those whose habit it is to love their neighbour as themselves, and who for Christ's sake feed the hungry and clothe the naked. To imagine a man to be a saint who does not consider the poor as he has ability, is to conceive the fruitless fig tree to be acceptable; there will be sharp dealing with many professors on this point in the day when the King cometh in his glory.

Verses 4-9. Here we have a controversy between the pleader and his God. He has been a tender friend to the poor, and yet in the hour of his need the promised assistance was not forthcoming. In our Lord's case there was a dark and dreary night in which such arguments were well befitting himself and his condition.

Verse 4. I said—said it in earnest prayer—Lord, be merciful unto me. Prove now thy gracious dealings with my soul in adversity, since thou didst aforetime give me grace to act liberally in my prosperity. No appeal is made to justice; the petitioner but hints at the promised reward, but goes straightforward to lay his plea at the feet of mercy. How low was our Redeemer brought when such petitions could come from his reverend mouth, when his lips like lilies dropped such sweet smelling but bitter myrrh! Heal my soul. My time of languishing is come, now do as thou hast said, and strengthen me, especially in my soul. We ought to be far more earnest for the soul's healing than for the body's ease. We hear much of the cure of souls, but we often forget to care about it. For I have sinned against thee. Here was the root of sorrow. Sin and suffering are inevitable companions. Observe that by the psalmist sin was felt to be mainly evil because directed against God. This is of the essence of true repentance. The immaculate Saviour could never have used such language as this unless there be here a reference to the sin which he took upon himself by imputation; and for our part we tremble to apply words so manifestly indicating personal rather than imputed sin. Applying the petition to David and other sinful believers, how strangely evangelical is the argument: heal me, not for I am innocent, but I have sinned. How contrary is this to all self righteous pleading! How consonant with grace! How inconsistent with merit! Even the fact that the confessing penitent had remembered the poor, is but obliquely urged, but a
direct appeal is made to mercy on the ground of great sin. O trembling reader, here is a divinely revealed precedent for thee, be not slow to follow it.

Verse 5. *Mine enemies speak evil of me.* It was their nature to do and speak evil; it was not possible that the child of God could escape them. The viper fastened on Paul's hand: the better the man the more likely, and the more venomous the slander. Evil tongues are busy tongues, and never deal in truth. Jesus was traduced to the utmost, although no offence was in him. *When shall he die, and his name perish?* They could not be content till he was away. The world is not wide enough for evil men to live in while the righteous remain, yea, the bodily presence of the saints may be gone, but their memory is an offence to their foes. It was never merry England, say they, since men took to Psalm singing. In the Master's case, they cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live." If persecutors could have their way, the church should have but one neck, and that should be on the block. Thieves would fain blow out all candles. The lights of the world are not the delights of the world. Poor blind bats, they fly at the lamp, and try to dash it down; but the Lord liveth, and preserveth both the saints and their names.

Verse 6. *And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity.* His visits of sympathy are visitations of mockery. When the fox calls on the sick lamb his words are soft, but he licks his lips in hope of the carcass. It is wretched work to have spies haunting one's bedchamber, calling in pretense of kindness, but with malice in their hearts. Hypocritical talk is always fulsome and sickening to honest men, but especially to the suffering saint. Our divine Lord had much of this from the false hearts that watched his words. *His heart gathereth iniquity to itself.* Like will to like. The bird makes its nest of feathers. Out of the sweetest flowers chemists can distil poison, and from the purest words and deeds malice can gather groundwork for calumnious report. It is perfectly marvellous how spite spins webs out of no materials whatever. It is no small trial to have base persons around you lying in wait for every word which they may pervert into evil. The Master whom we serve was constantly subject to this affliction. *When he goeth abroad, he telleth it.* He makes his lies, and then vends them in open market. He is no sooner out of the house than he outs with his lie, and this against a sick man whom he called to see as a friend—a sick man to whose incoherent and random speeches pity should be showed. Ah, black hearted wretch! A devil's cub indeed. How far abroad men will go to publish their slanders! They would fain placard the sky with their falsehoods. A little fault is made much of; a slip of the tongue is a libel, a mistake a crime, and if a word can bear two meanings the worse is always fathered upon it. Tell it in Gath, publish it in Askelon, that the daughters of the uncircumcised may triumph. It
is base to strike a man when he is down, yet such is the meanness of mankind towards a Christian hero should he for awhile chance to be under a cloud.

**Verse 7.** *All that hate me whisper together against me.* The spy meets his comrades in conclave and sets them all a whispering. Why could they not speak out? Were they afraid of the sick warrior? Or were their designs so treacherous that they must needs be hatched in secrecy? Mark the unanimity of the wicked—*all.* How heartily the dogs unite to hunt the stag! Would God we were half as united in holy labour as persecutors in their malicious projects, and were half as wise as they are crafty, for their whispering was craft as well as cowardice, the conspiracy must not be known till all is ready. *Against me do they devise my hurt.* They lay their heads together, and scheme and plot. So did Ahithophel and the rest of Absalom's counsellors, so also did the chief priests and Pharisees. Evil men are good at devising; they are given to meditation, they are deep thinkers, but the mark they aim at is evermore the hurt of the faithful. Snakes in the grass are never there for a good end.

**Verse 8.** *An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him.* They whisper that some curse has fallen upon him, and is riveted to him. They insinuate that a foul secret stains his character, the ghost whereof haunts his house, and never can be laid. An air of mystery is cast around this doubly dark saying, as if to show how indistinct are the mutterings of malice. Even thus was our Lord accounted "smitten of God and afflicted." His enemies conceived that God had forsaken him, and delivered him for ever into their hands. *And now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.* His sickness they hoped was mortal, and this was fine news for them. No more would the good man's holiness chide their sin, they would now be free from the check of his godliness. Like the friars around Wycliffe's bed, their prophecysings were more jubilant than accurate, but they were a sore scourge to the sick man. When the Lord smites his people with his rod of affliction for a small moment, their enemies expect to see them capitally executed, and prepare their *jubilates* to celebrate their funerals, but they are in too great a hurry, and have to alter their ditties and sing to another tune. Our Redeemer eminently foretokened this, for out of his lying in the grave he has gloriously risen. Vain the watch, the stone, the seal! Rising he pours confusion on his enemies.

**Verse 9.** *Yea.* Here is the climax of the sufferer's woe, and he places before it the emphatic affirmation, as if he thought that such villainy would scarcely be believed. *Mine own familiar friend.* "The man of my peace," so runs the original, with whom I had no differences, with whom I was in league, who had aforetime ministered to my peace and comfort. This was Ahithophel to David, and Iscariot with our Lord. Judas was an apostle, admitted to the privacy of the
Great Teacher, hearing his secret thoughts, and, as it were, allowed to read his
very heart. "Et tu Brute?" said the expiring Caesar. The kiss of the traitor
wounded our Lord's heart as much as the nail wounded his hand. In whom I
trusted. Judas was the treasurer of the apostolic college. Where we place great
confidence an unkind act is the more severely felt. Which did eat of my bread.
Not only as a guest but as a dependant, a pensioner at my board. Judas dipped
in the same dish with his Lord, and hence the more accursed was his treachery
in his selling his Master for a slave's price. Hath lifted up his heel against me.
Not merely turned his back on me, but left me with a heavy kick such as a
vicious horse might give. Hard is it to be spurned in our need by those who
formerly fed at our table. It is noteworthy that the Redeemer applied only the
last words of this verse to Judas, perhaps because, knowing his duplicity, he
had never made a familiar friend of him in the fullest sense, and had not placed
implicit trust in him. Infernal malice so planned it that every circumstance in
Jesus' death should add wormwood to it; and the betrayal was one of the
bitterest drops of gall. We are indeed, wretched when our quondam friend
becomes our relentless foe, when confidence is betrayed, when all the rites of
hospitality are perverted, and ingratitude is the only return for kindness; yet in
so deplorable a case we may cast ourselves upon the faithfulness of God, who,
having, delivered our Covenant Head, is in verity engaged to be the very
present help of all for whom that covenant was made.

Verse 10. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me. How the hunted and
affrighted soul turns to her God! How she seems to take breath with a "but,
thou!" How she clings to the hope of mercy from God when every chance of
pity from man is gone! And raise me up. Recover me from my sickness, give
me to regain my position. Jesus was raised up from the grave; his descent was
ended by an ascent. That I may requite them. This as it reads is a truly Old
Testament sentence, and quite aside from the spirit of Christianity, yet we must
remember that David was a person in magisterial office, and might without any
personal revenge, desire to punish those who had insulted his authority and
libelled his public character. Our great Apostle and High Priest had no personal
animosities, but even he by his resurrection has requited the powers of evil, and
avenged on death and hell all their base attacks upon his cause and person. Still
the strained application of every sentence of this Psalm to Christ is not to our
liking, and we prefer to call attention to the better spirit of the gospel beyond
that of the old dispensation.

Verse 11. We are all cheered by tokens for good, and the psalmist felt it to be
an auspicious omen, that after all his deep depression he was not utterly given
over to his foe. By this I know that thou favourest me. Thou hast a special
regard to me, I have the secret assurance of this in my heart, and, therefore, thine outward dealings do not dismay me, for I know that thou lovest me in them all. Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me. What if the believer has no triumph over his foes, he must be glad that they do not triumph over him. If we have not all we would we should praise God for all we have. Much there is in us over which the ungodly might exult, and if God's mercy keeps the dog's mouths closed when they might be opened, we must give him our heartiest gratitude. What a wonder it is that when the devil enters the lists with a poor, erring, bedridden, deserted, slandered saint, and has a thousand evil tongues to aid him, yet he cannot win the day, but in the end slinks off without renown.

"The feeblest saint shall win the day
Though death and hell obstruct the way,"

**Verse 12.** And as for me, despite them all and in the sight of them all, thou upholdest me in mine integrity; thy power enables me to rise above the reach of slander by living in purity and righteousness. Our innocence and consistency are the result of the divine upholding. We are like those glasses without feet, which can only be upright while they are held in the hand; we fall, and spill, and spoil all, if left to ourselves. The Lord should be praised every day if we are preserved from gross sin. When others sin they show us what we should do but for grace. "He today and I tomorrow," was the exclamation of a holy man, whenever he saw another falling into sin. Our integrity is comparative as well as dependent, we must therefore be humbled while we are grateful. If we are clear of the faults alleged against us by our calumniators, we have nevertheless quite enough of actual blameworthiness to render it shameful for us to boast. And settest me before thy face for ever. He rejoiced that he lived under the divine surveillance; tended, cared for, and smiled upon by his Lord; and yet more, that it would be so world without end. To stand before an earthly monarch is considered to be a singular honour, but what must it be to be a perpetual courtier in the palace of the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible?

**Verse 13.** The Psalm ends with a doxology. Blessed be the Lord, i.e., let him be glorified. The blessing at the beginning from the mouth of God is returned from the mouth of his servant. We cannot add to the Lord's blessedness, but we can pour out our grateful wishes, and these he accepts, as we receive little presents of flowers from children who love us. Jehovah is the personal name of our God. God of Israel is his covenant title, and shows his special relation to his elect people. From everlasting and to everlasting. The strongest way of expressing endless duration. We die, but the glory of God goes on and on without pause. Amen and amen. So let it surely, firmly, and eternally be. Thus the people
joined in the Psalm by a double shout of holy affirmation; let us unite in it with all our hearts. This last verse may serve for the prayer of the universal church in all ages, but none can sing it so sweetly as those who have experienced as David did the faithfulness of God in times of extremity.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS

TITLE. The Syriac says, "It was a Psalm of David, when he appointed overseers to take care of the poor." Adam Clarke.


Verse 1. Blessed is he that considereth the poor. Interpreters are generally of opinion that the exercise of kindness and compassion, manifested in taking care of the miserable, and helping them, is here commended. Those, however, who maintain that the psalmist here commends the considerate candour of those who judge wisely and charitably of men in adversity, form a better judgment of his meaning. Indeed, the participle, (lksm), maskil, cannot be explained in any other way. At the same time it ought to be observed on what account it is that David declares those to be blessed who form a wise and prudent judgment concerning the afflictions by which God chastises his servants...Doubtless it happened to him as it did to the holy patriarch Job, whom his friends reckoned to be one of most wicked of men, when they saw God treating him with great severity. And certainly it is an error which is by far too common among men, to look upon those who are oppressed with afflictions as condemned and reprobate...For the most part, indeed, we often speak rashly and indiscriminately concerning others, and, so to speak, plunge even into the lowest abyss those who labour under affliction. To restrain such a rash and unbridled spirit, David says, that they are blessed who do not suffer themselves, by speaking at random, to judge harshly of their neighbours; but discerning aright the afflictions by which they are visited, mitigate, by the wisdom of the spirit, the severe and unjust judgments to which we naturally are so prone. John Calvin.

Verse 1. Blessed is he that considereth the poor. As Christ considered us in our state of poverty, so ought we most attentively to consider him in his; to consider what he suffered in his own person; to discern him suffering in his poor afflicted members; and to extend to them the mercy which he extended to us. He, who was "blessed" of Jehovah, and "delivered in the evil day" by a
glorious resurrection, will "bless" and "deliver" in like manner, such as for his sake, love and relieve their brethren. George Horne.

Verse 1. Blessed is he that considereth the poor. Not the poor of the world in common, nor poor saints in particular, but some single poor man; for the word is in the singular number, and designs our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the last verse of the preceding Psalm, is said to be poor and needy. John Gill.

Verse 1. Blessed is he that considereth the poor. I call your attention to the way in which the Bible enjoins us to take up the care of the poor. It does not say in the text before us, Commiserate the poor; for, if it said no more than this, it would leave their necessities to be provided for by the random ebullitions of an impetuous and unreflecting sympathy. It provided them with a better security than the mere feeling of compassion—a feeling which, however useful to the purpose of excitement, must be controlled and regulated. Feeling is but a faint and fluctuating security. Fancy may mislead it. The sober realities of life may disgust it. Disappointment may extinguish it. Ingratitude may embitter it. Deceit, with its counterfeit representations, may allure it to the wrong object. At all events, Time is the little circle in which it in general expatiates. It needs the impression of sensible objects to sustain it; nor can it enter with zeal or with vivacity into the wants of the abstract and invisible soul. The Bible, then, instead of leaving the relief of the poor to the mere instinct of sympathy, makes it a subject for consideration—"Blessed is he that considereth the poor," a grave and prosaic exercise, I do allow, and which makes no figure in those high wrought descriptions, where the exquisite tale of benevolence is made up of all the sensibilities of tenderness on the one hand, and of all the ecstasies of gratitude on the other. The Bible rescues the cause from the mischief to which a heedless or unthinking sensibility would expose it. It brings it under the cognisance of a higher faculty—a faculty of sturdier operation than to be weary in well doing, and of sturdier endurance than to give it up in disgust. It calls you to consider the poor. It makes the virtue of relieving them a matter of computation, as well as of sentiment, and in so doing puts you beyond the reach of the various delusions, by which you are at one time led to prefer the indulgence of pity to the substantial interest of its object; at another, are led to retire chagrined and disappointed from the scene of duty, because you have not met with the gratitude or the honesty that you laid your account with; at another, are led to expend all your anxieties upon the accommodation of time, and to overlook eternity. It is the office of consideration to save you from all these fallacies. Under its tutorage attention to the wants of the poor ripens into principle...
It must be obvious to all of you, that it is not enough that you give money, and add your name to the contributions of charity. You must give it with judgment. You must give your time and your attention. You must descend to the trouble of examination. You must rise from the repose of contemplation, and make yourself acquainted with the object of your benevolent exercises...To give money is not to do all the work and labour of benevolence. You must go to the poor man's sick bed. You must lend your hand to the work of assistance. This is true and unsophisticated goodness. It may be recorded in no earthly documents; but, if done under the influence of Christian principle, in a word, if done unto Jesus, it is written in the book of heaven, and will give a new lustre to that crown to which his disciples look forward in time, and will wear through eternity. From a Sermon preached before the Society for Relief of the Destitute Sick, in St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, by Thomas Chalmers, D.D. and L.L.D. (1780-1847.)

Verse 1. Blessed is he that considereth the poor. A Piedmontese nobleman into whose company I fell, at Turin, told me the following story: "I was weary of life, and after a day such as few have known, and none would wish to remember, was hurrying along the street to the river, when I felt a sudden check, I turned and beheld a little boy, who had caught the skirt of my cloak in his anxiety to solicit my notice. His look and manner were irresistible. No less so was the lesson he had learnt—`There are six of us, and we are dying for want of food.' `Why should I not, 'said I, to myself, `relieve this wretched family? I have the means, and it will not delay me many minutes. But what if it does?' The scene of misery he conducted me to I cannot describe. I threw them my purse, and their burst of gratitude overcame me. It filled my eyes, it went as a cordial to my heart. 'I will call again tomorrow, 'I cried. 'Fool that I was to think of leaving a world where such pleasure was to be had, and so cheaply!'"

Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) in "Italy."

Verse 1. He that considereth the poor:

An ardent spirit dwells with Christian love,
The eagle's vigour in the pitying dove.
It is not enough that we with sorrow sigh,
That we the wants of pleading man supply,
That we in sympathy with sufferers feel,
Nor hear a grief without a wish to heal:
Not these suffice—to sickness, pain, and woe,
The Christian spirit loves with aid to go:
Will not be sought, waits not for want to plead,
But seeks the duty—nay, prevents the need;
Her utmost aid to every ill applies,
And plants relief for coming miseries.
—George Crabbe, 1754-1832.

Verse 1. How foolish are they that fear to lose their wealth by giving it, and fear not to lose themselves by keeping it! He that lays up his gold may be a good jailer, but he that lays it out is a good steward. Merchants traffic thither with a commodity where it is precious in regard of scarcity. We do not buy wines in England to carry them to France, spices in France to carry them to the Indies; so for labour and work, repentance and mortification, there is none of them in heaven, there is peace and glory, and the favour of God indeed. A merchant without his commodity hath but a sorry welcome. God will ask men that arrive at heaven's gates, ubi opera? Re 22:12. His reward shall be according to our works. Thou hast riches here, and here be objects that need thy riches—the poor; in heaven there are riches enough but no poor, therefore, by faith in Christ make over to them thy moneys in this world, that by bill of exchange thou mayest receive it in the world to come; that only you carry with you which you send before you. Do good while it is in your power; relieve the oppressed, succour the fatherless, while your estates are your own; when you are dead your riches belong to others. One light carried before a man is more serviceable than twenty carried after him. In your compassion to the distressed, or for pious uses, let your hands be your executors, and your eyes your overseers. Francis Raworth, Teacher to the Church at Shore-ditch, in a Funeral Sermon, 1656.

Verses 1, 3. It is a blessed thing to receive when a man hath need; but it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive. Blessed (saith the prophet David) is he that considereth the poor. What? to say, alas, poor man! the world is hard with him, I would there were a course taken to do him good? No, no; but to so consider him as to give; to give till the poor man be satisfied, to draw out one's sheaf, aye, one's very soul to the hungry. But what if troubles should come? were it not better to keep money by one? Money will not deliver one. It may be an occasion to endanger one, to bring one into, rather than help one out of trouble; but if a man be a merciful man, God will deliver him, either by himself, or by some other man or matter. Aye, but what if sickness come? Why, the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; and, which is a great ease and kindness; God, as it were, himself will make all his bed in his sickness. Here poor people have the advantage: such must not say, Alas, I am a poor woman, what work of mercy can I do? for they are they who best can make the beds of sick folk, which we see is a great act of mercy, in that it is said, that the
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Lord himself will make their bed in their sickness. And there are none so poor, but they may make the beds of the sick. Richard Capel.

Verses 1, 5. He that considereth. Mine enemies. Strigelius has observed, there is a perpetual antithesis in this Psalm between the few who have a due regard to the poor in spirit, and the many who afflict or desert them. W. Wilson, D.D.

Verse 2. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive. It is worthy of remark, that benevolent persons, who "consider the poor," and especially the sick poor; who search cellars, garrets, back lanes, and such abodes of misery, to find them out (even in the places where contagion keeps its seat), very seldom fall a prey to their own benevolence. The Lord, in an especial manner, keeps them alive, and preserves them; while many, who endeavour to keep far from the contagion, are assailed by it, and fall victims to it. God loves the merciful man. Adam Clarke.

Verse 2. He shall be blessed upon the earth. None of the godly man's afflictions shall hinder or take away his begun blessedness, even in this world. David Dickson.

Verse 3. Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. Into what minuteness of exquisite and touching tenderness does the Lord condescend to enter! One feels almost as we may suppose Peter felt when the Saviour came to him and would have washed his feet, "Lord! thou shalt never wash my feet;" thou shalt never make my bed. And yet, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;" if the Lord make not our bed in our sickness, there is no peace nor comfort there. We have had David calling on God to bow down his ear, like a loving mother listening to catch the feeblest whisper of her child; and the image is full of the sweetest sympathy and condescension; but here the Lord, the great God of heaven, he that said when on earth, "I am among you as one that serveth," does indeed take upon him the form, and is found in fashion as a servant, fulfilling all the loving and tender offices of an assiduous nurse. Barton Bouchier.

Verse 3. Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. The meaning rather is, "it is no longer a sick bed, for thou hast healed him of his disease." J. J. Stewart Perowne.

Verse 3. When a good man is ill at ease, God promises to make all his bed in his sickness. Pillow, bolster, head, feet, sides, all his bed. Surely that God who made him knows so well his measure and temper as to make his bed to please him. Herein his art is excellent, not fitting the bed to the person, but the person to the bed; infusing patience into him. But, oh! how shall God make my bed,
who have no bed of mine own to make. Thou fool, he can make thy not having a bed to be a bed unto thee. When Jacob slept on the ground, who would not have had his hard lodging, therewithal to have his heavenly dream? *Thomas Fuller.*

**Verse 3.** Sure that bed must need be soft which God will make. *T. Watson.*

**Verse 3.** We must not forget that Oriental beds needed not to be made in the same sense as our own. They were never more than mattresses or quilts thickly padded, and were turned when they became uncomfortable, and that is just the word here used. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 3.** When I visited one day, as he was dying, my beloved friend Benjamin Parsons, I said, "How are you today, Sir?" He said, "My head is resting very sweetly on three pillows—infinit power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom." Preaching in the Canterbury Hall, in Brighton, I mentioned this some time since; and many months after I was requested to call upon a poor but holy young woman, apparently dying. She said, "I felt I must see you before I died." I heard you tell the story of Benjamin Parsons and his three pillows; and when I went through a surgical operation, and it was very cruel, I was leaning my head on pillows, and as they were taking them away I said, "May I keep them?" The surgeon said, "No, my dear, we must take them away." "But, said I, "you cannot take away Benjamin Parsons three pillows. I can lay my head on infinit power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom." *Paxton Hood, in "Dark Sayings on a Harp," 1865.*

**Verses 3-4.** What saith David from the very bottom of his heart, in his sickness? Not, take away this death only. No; but David being sick, first comforts himself with this promise, *The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;* and then adds, *I said, Lord, be merciful unto me, and heal my soul;* that is, destroy my lusts, which are the diseases of my soul, Lord; and heal my soul, and renew life and communion with thee, which is the health and strength of my soul. Do not take this sickness and death only away; but this sin away, that hath dishonoured thee, hath separated between me and thee: *Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.* *Thomas Goodwin.*

**Verse 4.** *I said, Lord, be merciful.* Mercy, not justice! The extreme of mercy for the extreme of misery. Righteousness as filthy rags; a flesh in which dwelleth no good thing, on the one side; on the other, it is "neither herb nor mollifying plaster that restored" to health; "but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things." Wisdom 16:12. *Thomas Aquinas, quoted by J. M. Neale.*
Verse 4. God is the strength of a Christian's heart, by healing and restoring him when the infused habits of grace fail, and sin grows strong and vigorous. A Christian never fails in the exercise of grace, but sin gives him a wound; and therefore David prayed, Lord, heal my soul, for I have sinned. And what David prayed for, God promises to his people: "I will heal their backsliding." Ho 14:4. The weakness and decay of grace, brings a Christian presently to the falling sickness; and so it did in David and Ephraim; aye, but God will be a physician to the soul in this case, and will heal their diseases; and so he did David's falling sickness, for which he returned the tribute of praise. Ps 103:3. Samuel Blackerby.

Verse 4. (last clause). Saul and Judas each said, "I have sinned; "but David says," I have sinned against thee." William S. Plumer.

Verses 1, 5. He that considereth. Mine enemies. Strigelius has observed, there is a perpetual antithesis in this Psalm between the few who have a due regard to the poor in spirit, and the many who afflict or desert them. W. Wilson, D.D.

Verse 5. Mine enemies speak evil of me. To speak is here used in the sense of to imprecate. John Calvin.

Verse 5. His name. It is the name, the character, and privileges of a true servant of God, that calls out the hatred of ungodly men, and they would gladly extirpate him from their sight. W. Wilson, D.D.

Verse 6. If he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: many fair words, but none of them true. David Dickson.

Verse 6. I remember a pretty apologue that Bromiard tells:—A fowler, in a sharp, frosty morning, having taken many little birds for which he had long watched, began to take up his nets, and nipping the birds on the head laid them down. A young thrush, espying the tears trickling down his cheek by reason of the extreme cold, said to her mother, that certainly the man was very merciful and compassionate, who wept so bitterly over the calamity of the poor birds. But her mother told her more wisely, that she might better judge of the man's disposition by his hand than by his eye; and if the hands do strike treacherously, he can never be admitted to friendship, who speaks fairly and weeps pitifully. Jeremy Taylor.

Verse 6. His heart gathereth iniquity to itself.
1. By adding sin to sin, in that he covers over his malice with such horrid hypocrisy.

2. By inventing or contriving all the several ways he can to ensnare me, or do me some mischief, thereby seeking to satisfy and please his corrupt lusts and affections;

3. (Which I like best), by observing all he can in me, and drawing what he can from me, and so laying all up together in his mind, as the ground of his unjust surmises and censures concerning me. Arthur Jackson.

Verse 8. An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him. An evil deed of Belial cleaveth fast to him. Grammarians maintain that the word Belial is compounded of (ylb), beli, and (ley), yaal, which signify "not to rise" the expression, "thing of Belial" (for so it is literally in the Hebrew), I understand in this place as meaning an extraordinary and hateful crime which as we commonly say can never be expiated, and from which there is no possibility of escape; unless perhaps some would rather refer it to the affliction itself under which he laboured, as if his enemies had said that he was seized by some incurable malady. John Calvin.

Verse 8. An evil disease, etc. What is here meant by (leylb-rkd) is matter of some difficulty. The ancient interpreters generally render it a perverse or mischievous, or wicked word; the Chaldee, a perverse word; the Syriac, a word of iniquity; the LXX logon paranomon; the Latin, iniquum verbum, a wicked word; the Arabic, words contrary to the law. And so in all probability it is set to signify a great slander, or calumny—that as "men of Belial" are slanderous persons, so the speech of Belial shall signify a slanderous speech. And this is said to "cleave" to him on whom it is fastened, it being the nature of calumnies, when strongly affixed on any, to cleave fast, and leave some evil mark behind them. Henry Hammond.

Verse 9. Yea, mine own familiar friend, etc. The sufferings of the church, like those of her Redeemer, generally begin at home: her open enemies can do her no harm, until her pretended friends have delivered her into their hands; and, unnatural as it may seem, they who have waxed fat upon her bounty, are sometimes the first to lift the heel against her. George Horne.

Verse 9. Mine own familiar friend. He who, on visiting me, continually saluted me with the kiss of love and veneration, and the usual address: peace be to thee. Hermann Venema.
Verse 9. *Which did eat of my beard.* If the same sentiment prevailed among the Hebrews, which prevails at the present day among the Bedouin Arabs, of sacred regard to the person and property of one with whom they have eaten bread and salt, the language is very forcible. *Hath lifted up his heel:* a metaphor drawn from the horse, which attacks with its heel. This language may well have been used by our Saviour, in Joh 13:18, in the way of rhetorical illustration or emphasis. *George R. Noyes, D.D.*

Verse 9. *Hath lifted up his heel against me.* In this phrase he seems to allude to a beast's kicking at his master by whom he is fed, or the custom of men's spurning at or trampling upon those that are cast down on the ground, in a way of despite and contempt. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 9. *Hath lifted up his heel against me;* i.e., hath spurned me, hath kicked at me, as a vicious beast of burden does; hath insulted me in my misery. *Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 10. *That I may requite them.* Either (1), kindness for injuries (as in Ps 35:13): it is the mark of a good and brave man to do good to all in his power, to hurt no one, even though provoked by wrong: or, (2), punishment for wrong doing—*that I may punish them;* for am I not their magistrate, and the executioner of God's justice! *Martin Geier.*

Verse 10. *That I may requite them.* David was not as one of the common people, but a king appointed by God and invested with authority, and it is not from an impulse of the flesh, but in virtue of the nature of his office, that he is led to denounce against his enemies the punishment which they had merited. *John Calvin.*

Verse 11. *By this I know that thou favourest me,* because mine enemy doth not triumph over me: not because I have no enemies, or because I have no trouble which would overcome me. Therefore when he wrote down many troubles, he blotted it (as it were) with his pen again, as a merchant razes his book when the debt is discharged; and instead of many troubles, he putteth in, the Lord delivereth. Because he forgiveth all sins, he is said to deliver from all troubles, to show that we have need of no Saviour, no helper, no comforter, but him. *Henry Smith.*

Verse 11. *By this I know that thou favourest me.* In this text we see two things. 1. How David assures himself of God's love towards him. 2. How thankful he is to God for assuring him of his love. The first he doth by two arguments; one is taken from his enemies, they were prevented of their expectation—"Therefore
thou lovest me." The other is taken from his own estate, which was not one
whit hurt, or impaired, but bettered by them...Here the prophet speaketh of his
knowledge, and telleth us that though he knew not all things, yet he knew that
God loved him, and so long as he knoweth that, he careth not greatly for other
matters, how the world goeth with him, etc. And, to say the truth, he need not,
for he that is sure of that, is sure of all. God loveth all his creatures as a good
God, and hateth nothing that he made, but he loveth his elect children with a
more especial love than the rest, as a Father in Christ Jesus, and he that is sure
that God doth so favour him, is sure, I say, of all. For to him whom God loveth,
he will deny no good thing, no, not his own Son; and if he gave us his Son,
because he loved us, how shall he not with him give us all things else?

When the child is persuaded that his father loveth him, he is bold to ask this
and that of his father: so may we be bold to ask anything of God our heavenly
Father that is good for us, when we be sure that he loveth us. As Mary and
Martha put Christ in mind but of two things; the first was, that Christ loved
their brother Lazarus; the second was, that Lazarus was sick; "He whom thou
lovest is sick:" it was no need to tell him what he should do, for they knew he
would do what might be done for him, because he loved him. So we may say to
the Lord, when we are sure that he loveth us: Lord, he whom thou loveth
wanteth this or that for his body or his soul. We need not then appoint him what
to do, or when, or how; for look what he seeth most convenient for us, and for
his own glory, he will surely do it. Therefore whatsoever David knoweth, he
will be sure to know this; and whatsoever he is ignorant of, yet of this he will
not be ignorant; to teach is that whatsoever we seek to make sure, this must first
be made sure, or else nothing is sure. Peter bids us make our election sure; Job,
when he saith, "I am sure that my Redeemer liveth, "teacheth us to make our
redemption sure. And here David teacheth us to make God's favour sure: now if
we make that sure, then our election is sure, our redemption is sure, our
vocation is sure, and our salvation is sure. William Barton, 1602.

Verse 11. Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me. When God doth
deliver us from the hands of our enemies, or any trouble else, we may persuade
ourselves thereby, he hath a favour unto us, as David did. But then it may be
demanded, If God doth love his church, why doth he suffer his church to be
troubled and molested with enemies? The reason is this, because by this means
his love may be made more manifest in saving and delivering them. For as a
sure friend is not known but in time of need, so God's goodness and love is
never so well perceived as it is in helping of us when we cannot help ourselves.
As Adam's fall did serve to manifest God's justice and mercy, the one in
punishing, the other is pardoning of sin, which otherwise we had never known:
so the troubles of the church serve to manifest, first, our deserts by reason of our sins; secondly, our weakness and inability to help ourselves; and, thirdly, the lovingkindness of the Lord our God, in saving and defending, that so we might be truly thankful, and return all the praise and glory to God, and none to ourselves. So that the church of God may have enemies, and yet be still the beloved of God, as Lazarus was beloved of Christ, although he was sick; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and therefore he correcteth them because he loveth them. William Burton.

Verse 11. God preserves his own, and bringeth their foes to nought: after Passion week comes Easter. J. P. Lange's Commentary.

Verse 12. Integrity. This same integrity is like Noah's ark, wherein he was preserved, when others perished, being without it. It is like the red thread, which the spies of Joshua gave to Rahab, it was a charter whereby she claimed her life when the rest were destroyed, which had not the like. So is this integrity of small reckoning, I confess, with the men of this world, which think that there is no other heaven but earth; but as Rahab's thread was better to her than all her goods and substance when the sword came, so this is better to God's children than all the world when death comes. If they have this within they care not, nay, they need not care what can come without. If Satan's buffeting come, this is a helmet of proof; if Satan's darts fly out, this is a shield to quench them; if floods of crosses come to carry us away, this is a boat to bear us up; if all the world cast mire and filth in our faces, we are never a whit the more deformed, but still beautiful for all that, for "the king's daughter, "(saith Solomon, Ps 45:13), that is, the church of Christ, "is all glorious within." William Burton.

Verse 12. Settest me before thy face for ever; or hast confirmed or established me in thy presence; i.e, either under thine eye and special care, or to minister to thee, not only in thy temple, but as a king over thy people, or in that land where thou art peculiarly present. Matthew Poole.

Verse 13. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen. We are here taught, 1. To give glory to God, as the Lord God of Israel, a God in covenant with his people; that has done great and kind things for them, and has more and better in reserve. 2. To give him glory as an eternal God, that has both his being and his blessedness from everlasting and to everlasting. 3. To do this with great affection and fervour of spirit, intimated in a double seal set to it, Amen, and Amen. We say Amen to it, and let all others say Amen too. Matthew Henry.
Verse 13. *Amen and Amen.* As the Psalms were not written by one man, so neither do they form one book. The Psalter is, in fact, a Pentateuch, and the lines of demarcation, which divide the five books one from another, are clear and distinct enough. At the end of the 41st Psalm, of the 72nd, of the 89th, and of the 106th, we meet with the solemn, *Amen,* single or redoubled, following on a doxology, which indicates that one book ends and that another is about to begin. A closer study of the Psalms shows that each book possesses characteristics of its own. Jehovah ("the Lord") for example, is prominent as the divine name in the first book, Elohim ("God") in the second. *E. H. Plumptre, M.A., in "Biblical Studies, "1870.*

Verse 13. There is also another observable difference between the two books. In the first, all those Psalms which have any inscription at all are expressly assigned to David as their author, whereas in the second we find a whole series attributed to some of the Levitical singers. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 13. How ancient the division is cannot now be clearly ascertained. Jerome, in his epistle to Marcella, and Epiphanius speak of the Psalms as having been divided by the Hebrews into five books, but when this division was made they do not inform us. The forms of ascription of praise, added at the end of each of the five books, are in the Septuagint version, from which we may conclude that this distribution had been made before that version was executed. It was probably made by Ezra, after the return of the Jews from Babylon to their own country, and the establishment of the worship of God in the new temple, and it was perhaps made in imitation of a similar distribution of the books of Moses. In making this division of the Hebrew Psalter, regard appears to have been paid to the subject matter of the Psalms. *John Calvin.*

Verse 13. These forty-one Psalms, it has been observed, forming the first book, relate chiefly to the ministry of Christ upon earth, preparing those who were looking for the consolation of Israel, for his appearing amongst them. Accordingly, the second book, commencing with Psalm 42, may refer chiefly to the infant church of Christ. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 13. May not the growth of the Book of Psalms be illustrated by the case of our Modern Hymn Books which in the course of years require first one appendix and then another, so as to incorporate the growing psalmody of the church? In this case the purely Davidic Psalms of the first division formed the nucleus to which other sacred songs were speedily added. *C. H. S.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER
Verse 1. (first clause). The incidental blessings resulting from considering the pious poor.

1. We learn gratitude.
2. We see patience.
3. We often remark the triumphs of great grace.
4. We obtain light on Christian experience.
5. We have their prayers.
6. We feel the pleasure of beneficence.
7. We enter into communion with the lowly Saviour.

Verse 1. The support of the Small pox Hospitals recommended. Bishop Squire, 1760. Scores of sermons of this kind have been preached from this text.

Verse 2. Blessed upon the earth. What blessings of an earthly character godly character secures, and in general what it is to be blessed with regard to this life.

Verse 2. (second clause). What it is to be delivered in trouble. From impatience, from despair, from sinful expedients, from violent attacks, from losing fellowship with God.

Verse 3. Strength in weakness. Inward strength, divinely given, continuously sustained, enduring to the end, triumphant in death, glorifying to God, proving the reality of grace, winning others to the faith.

Verse 3. (last clause). The heavenly bed making.

Verse 4. (first clause). A saying worth repeating: I said. It expresses penitence, humility, earnestness, faith, importunity, fear of God, etc.

Verse 4. Heal my soul.

1. The hereditary disease, breaking out in many disorders—open sin, unbelief, decline of grace, etc.
2. Spiritual health struggling with it; shown in spiritual pain, desire, prayer, effort.
3. The well proved Physician. Has healed, and will, by his word, his blood, his Spirit, &c.

**Verse 4.** *I have sinned against thee.* This confession is personal, plain, without pretence of excuse, comprehensive and intelligent, for it reveals the very heart of sin—"against thee."

**Verse 5.** What we may expect. What our enemies desire. What we may therefore prize, *i.e.,* the power of Christian life and name. What we should do—tell the Lord all in prayer. What good will then come of the evil.

**Verse 6. (first clause).** The folly and sin of frivolous visits.

**Verse 6. (second and third clauses).** Like to like, or the way in which character draws its like to itself. The same subject might be treated under the title of *The Chiffonnier,* or the rag collector. What he gathers; where he puts it—in his *heart,* what he does with it; what he gets for it; and what will become of him.

**Verses 7-12.** On a sick bed a man discovers not only his enemies and his friends, but himself and his God, more intimately.

**Verse 9.** The treachery of Judas.

**Verse 11.** Deliverance from temptation a token of divine favour.

**Verse 12.** This text reveals the insignia of those whom grace has distinguished.

1. Their integrity is manifest.

2. Their character is divinely sustained.

3. They dwell in the favour of God.

4. Their position is stable and continues.

5. Their eternal future is secure.

**Verse 13.**

1. The object of praise—Jehovah, the covenant God.

2. The nature of the praise—without beginning or end.
3. Our participation in the praise—"Amen and Amen."

The ancient rabbins saw in the Five Books of the Psalter the image of the Five Books of the Law. This way of looking on the Psalms as a second Pentateuch, the echo of the first, passed over into the Christian church, and found favour with some early fathers. It has commended itself to the acceptance of good recent expositors, like Dr. Delitzsch, who calls the Psalter "the congregation's five fold word to the Lord, even as the Thora (the Law) is the Lord's five fold word to the Congregation." This may be mere fancy, but its existence from ancient times shows that the five fold division attracted early notice. *William Binnie, D.D.*

God presented Israel with the Law, a Pentateuch, and grateful Israel responded with a Psalter, a Pentateuch of praise. *F.L.K.*

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**WORKS UPON THE FORTY-FIRST PSALM**

"David's Evidence; or, the Assurance of God's Love: declared in seven Sermons upon the three last verses of the Forty-first Psalme. By WILLIAM BURTON. Minister of the Word at Reading in Berkshire ...1602." 4to.

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God presented Israel with the Law, a Pentateuch, and grateful Israel responded with a Psalter, a Pentateuch of praise, in acknowledgment of the divine gift. *J. L. K.*