

# 《The Treasury of David (Vol. 5)》 (C.H. Spurgeon)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Psalm 61</u>	<u>Psalm 62</u>	<u>Psalm 63</u>	<u>Psalm 64</u>
<u>Psalm 65</u>	<u>Psalm 66</u>	<u>Psalm 67</u>	<u>Psalm 68</u>	<u>Psalm 69</u>
<u>Psalm 70</u>	<u>Psalm 71</u>	<u>Psalm 72</u>	<u>Psalm 73</u>	<u>Psalm 74</u>
<u>Psalm 75</u>				

### Psalm 61

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician upon Neginah, a Psalm of David.* The original indicates that both the hymn and the musical instrument were David's. He wrote the verses and himself sang them to the stringed instrument whose sound he loved so well. We have left the Psalms entitled *Michtam*, but we shall still find much precious meaning though the golden name be wanting. We have met with the title of this Psalm before, in Psalms 4, 6, 54, and 55, but with this difference, that in the present case the word is in the singular number: the Psalm itself is very personal, and well adapted for the private devotion of a single individual.

**SUBJECT AND DIVISION.** This Psalm is a pearl. It is little, but precious. To many a mourner it has furnished utterance when the mind could not have devised a speech for itself. It was evidently composed by David after he had come to the throne,—see Ps 61:6. The second verse leads us to believe that it was written during the psalmist's enforced exile from the tabernacle, which was the visible abode of God: if so, the period of Absalom's rebellion has been most suitably suggested as the date of its authorship, and Delitzsch is correct in entitling it, "Prayer and thanksgiving of an expelled King on his way back to his throne." We might divide the verses according to the sense, but it is preferable to follow the author's own arrangement, and make a break at each SELAH.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Hear my cry, O God.* He was in terrible earnest; he shouted, he lifted up his voice on high. He is not however content with the expression of his need: to give his sorrows vent is not enough for him, he wants actual audience of heaven, and manifold succour as the result. Pharisees may rest in their prayers; true believers are eager for an answer to them: ritualists may be satisfied when they have, "said or sung" their litanies and collects, but living children of God will never rest till their supplications have entered the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Attend unto my prayer. Give it thy consideration, and such an answer as thy wisdom sees fit. When it comes to crying with us, we need not doubt but that it will come to attending with God. Our heavenly Father is not hardened against the cries of his own children. What a consoling thought it is that the Lord at all times hears his people's cries, and is never forgetful of their prayers; whatever else fails to move him, praying breath is never spent in vain!

**Verse 2.** *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee.* He was banished from the spot which was the centre of his delight, and at the same time his mind was in a depressed and melancholy condition; both actually and figuratively he was an outcast, yet he does not therefore restrain prayer, but rather finds therein a reason for the louder and more importunate cries. To be absent from the place of divine worship was a sore sorrow to saints in the olden times; they looked upon the tabernacle as the centre of the world, and they counted themselves to be at the fag end of the universe when they could no longer resort to the sacred shrine; their heart was heavy as in a strange land when they were banished from its solemnities. Yet even they knew right well that no place is unsuitable for prayer. There may be an end of the earth, but there must not be an end to devotion. On creation's verge we may call upon God, for even there he is within call. No spot is too dreary, no condition too deplorable; whether it be the world's end or life's end, prayer is equally available. To pray in some circumstances needs resolve, and the psalmist here expresses it,

I will cry. It was a wise resolution, for had he ceased to pray he would have become the victim of despair; there is an end to a man when he makes an end to prayer. Observe that David never dreamed of seeking any other God; he did not imagine the dominion of Jehovah to be local: he was at the end of the promised land, but he knew himself to be still in the territory of the Great King; to him only does he address his petitions. When my heart is overwhelmed:—when the huge waves of trouble wash over me, and I am completely submerged, not only as to my head, but also my heart. It is hard to pray when the very heart is drowning, yet gracious men plead best at such times. Tribulation brings us to God, and brings God to us. Faith's greatest triumphs are achieved in her heaviest trials. It is all over with me, affliction is all over me; it encompasses me as a cloud, it swallows me up like a sea, it shuts me in with thick darkness, yet God is near, near enough to hear my voice, and I will call him. Is not this brave talk? Mark how our psalmist tells the Lord, as if he knew

he were hearing him, that he intended to call upon him: our prayer by reason of our distress may be like to a call upon a far off friend, but our inmost faith has its quiet heart whispers to the Lord as to one who is assuredly our very present help. *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* I see thee to be my refuge, sure and strong; but alas! I am confused, and cannot find thee; I am weak, and cannot climb thee. Thou art so steadfast, guide me; thou art so high, uplift me. There is a mint of meaning in this brief prayer. Along the iron bound coast of our northern shores, lives are lost because the rocks are inaccessible to the shipwrecked mariner. A clergyman of one of the coast villages has with immense labour cut steps up from the beach to a large chamber, which he has excavated in the chalk cliffs; here many mariners have been saved; they have climbed the rock, which had else been too high for them, and they have escaped. We have heard of late, however, that the steps have been worn away by the storms, and that poor sailors have perished miserably within sight of the refuge which they could not reach, for it was too high for them: it is therefore proposed to drive in iron stanchions, and to hang up chain ladders that shipwrecked mariners may reach the chambers in the rock. The illustration is self interpreting. Our experience leads us to understand this verse right well, for the time was with us when we were in such amazement of soul be reason of sin, that although we knew the Lord Jesus to be a sure salvation for sinners, yet we could not come at him, by reason of our many doubts and forebodings. A Saviour would have been of no use to us if the Holy Spirit had not gently led us to him, and enabled us to rest upon him. To this day we often feel that we not only want a rock, but to be led to it. With this in view we treat very leniently the half unbelieving prayers of awakened souls; for in their bewildered state we cannot expect from them all at once a fully believing cry. A seeking soul should at once believe in Jesus, but it is legitimate for a man to ask to be led to Jesus; the Holy Spirit is able to effect such a leading, and he can do it even though the heart be on the borders of despair. How infinitely higher that we are is the salvation of God. We are low and grovelling, but it towers like some tall cliff far above us. This is its glory, and is our delight when we have once climbed into the rock, and claimed an interest in it; but while we are as yet trembling seekers, the glory and sublimity of salvation appal us, and we feel that we are too unworthy ever to be partakers of it; hence we are led to cry for grace upon grace, and to see how dependent we are for everything, not only for the Saviour, but for the power to believe on him.

**Verse 3.** *For thou hast been a shelter for me.* Observe how the psalmist rings the changes on, *Thou hast,* and *I will,* —Ps 61:3-6. Experience is the nurse of faith. From the past we gather arguments for present confidence. Many and many a time had the persecutions of Saul and the perils of battle imperilled David's life, and only by miracle had he escaped, yet was he still alive and unhurt; this he remembers, and he is full of hope. And a strong tower from the enemy. As in a fort impregnable, David had dwelt, because surrounded by omnipotence. Sweet is it beyond expression to remember the lovingkindnesses of the Lord in our former days, for he is unchangeable, and therefore will

continue to guard us from all evil.

**Verse 4.** *I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.* Let me once get back to thy courts, and nothing shall again expel me from them: even now in my banishment my heart is there; and ever will I continue to worship thee in spirit wherever my lot may be cast. Perhaps by the word *tabernacle* is here meant the dwelling place of God; and if so, the sense is, I will dwell with the Lord, enjoying his sacred hospitality, and sure protection.

"There would I find a settled rest,  
While others go and come;  
No more a stranger or a guest,  
But like a child at home."

He who communes with God is always at home. The divine omnipresence surrounds such a one consciously; his faith sees all around him the palace of the King, in which he walks with exulting security and overflowing delight. Happy are the indoor servants who go not out from his presence. Hewers of wood and drawers of water in the tents of Jehovah are more to be envied than the princes who riot in the pavilions of kings. The best of all is that our residence with God is not for a limited period of time, but for ages; yea, for ages of ages, for time and for eternity: this is our highest and most heavenly privilege, *I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.* I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Often does our sweet singer use this figure; and far better is it to repeat one apt and instructive image, than for the sake of novelty to ransack creation for poor, strained metaphors. The chicks beneath the hen how safe, how comfortable, how happy! How warm the parent's bosom! How soft the cherishing feathers! Divine condescension allows us to appropriate the picture to ourselves, and how blessedly instructive and consoling it is! O for more trust; it cannot be too implicit: such a covert invites us to the most unbroken repose. SELAH. Rest we well may when we reach this point. Even the harp may be eloquently silent when deep, profound calm completely fills the bosom, and sorrow has sobbed itself into a peaceful slumber.

**Verse 5.** *For thou, O God, hast heard my vows.* Proofs of divine faithfulness are to be had in remembrance, and to be mentioned to the Lord's honour. The prayer of Ps 61:1 is certain of an answer because of the experience of Ps 61:5, since we deal with an immutable God. Vows may rightly be joined with prayers when they are lawful, well considered, and truly for God's glory. It is great mercy on God's part to take any notice of the vows and promises of such faithless and deceitful creatures as we are. What we promise him is his due already, and yet he deigns to accept our vows as if we were not so much his servants as his free suitors who could give or withhold at pleasure. Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. We are made heirs, joint heirs with all the saints, partakers of the same portion. With this we ought to be delighted. If we suffer, it is the heritage of the saints; if we are persecuted, are in poverty, or in temptation, all this is contained in the

title deeds of the heritage of the chosen. Those we are to sup with we may well be content to dine with. We have the same inheritance as the Firstborn himself; what better is conceivable? Saints are described as fearing the name of God; they are reverent worshippers; they stand in awe of the Lord's authority; they are afraid of offending him, they feel their own nothingness in the sight of the Infinite One. To share with such men, to be treated by God with the same favour as he metes out to them, is matter for endless thanksgiving. All the privileges of all the saints are also the privileges of each one.

**Verse 6.** *Thou wilt prolong the king's life;* or, better, "days to the days of the King thou wilt add." Death threatened, but God preserved his beloved. David, considering his many perils, enjoyed a long and prosperous reign. And his years as many generations. He lived to see generation after generation personally; in his descendants he lived as king through a very long period; his dynasty continued for many generations; and in Christ Jesus, his seed and son, spiritually David reigns on evermore. Thus he who began at the foot of the rock, half drowned, and almost dead, is here led to the summit, and sings as a priest abiding in the tabernacle, a king ruling with God for ever, and a prophet foretelling good things to come. (Ps 61:7.) See the uplifting power of faith and prayer. None so low but they may yet be set on high.

**Verse 7.** *He shall abide before God for ever.* Though this is true of David in a modified sense, we prefer to view the Lord Jesus as here intended as the lineal descendant of David, and the representative of his royal race. Jesus is enthroned before God to eternity; here is our safety, dignity, and delight. We reign in him; in him we are made to sit together in the heavens. David's personal claim to sit enthroned for ever is but a foreshadowing of the revealed privilege of all true believers. O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him. As men cry, "Long live the king," so we hail with acclamation our enthroned Immanuel, and cry, "Let mercy and truth preserve him." Eternal love and immutable faithfulness are the bodyguards of Jesus' throne, and they are both the providers and the preservers of all those who in him are made kings and priests unto God. We cannot keep ourselves, and nothing short of divine mercy and truth can do it; but these both can and will, nor shall the least of the people of God be suffered to perish.

**Verse 8.** *So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever.* Because my prayer is answered, my song shall be perpetual; because Jesus for ever sits at thy right hand, it shall be acceptable; because I am preserved in him, it shall be grateful. David had given vocal utterance to his prayer by a cry; he will now give expression to his praise by a song: there should be a parallel between our supplications and our thanksgivings. We ought not to leap in prayer, and limp in praise. The vow to celebrate the divine name *for ever* is no hyperbolic piece of extravagance, but such as grace and glory shall enable us to carry out to the letter. That I may daily perform my vows. To God who adds days to our days we will devote all our days. We vowed perpetual praise, and we desire to render it without intermission. We would worship God *de die in diem*, going right on as the days roll on. We ask no

vacation from this heavenly vocation; we would make no pause in this sacred service. God daily performs his promises, let us daily perform our vows: he keeps his covenant, let us not forget ours. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth, even for evermore.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**TITLE.** The word *Neginah* (the singular of *Neginoth*) may be understood to be synonymous with the *kinnor* or harp: that is to say, the instrument of eight strings, probably played with a bow or plectrum. *John Jess.*

**Verse 1.** *Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.* Aquinas saith that some read the words thus, *Intende ad cantica mea*, attend unto my songs—and so the words may be safely read, from the Hebrew word *hgr ranah*, which signifies to shout or shrill out for joy—to note that the prayers of the saints are like pleasant songs and delightful ditties in the ears of God. No mirth, no music, can be so pleasing to us as the prayers of the saints are pleasing to God. So 2:14 Ps 141:2. *Thomas Brooks.*

**Verse 1.** *My cry.* There is a text in Job where the "hypocrites in heart" are spoken of condemningly, because "they cry not when he bindeth them." I like to feel that no hard fortitude is required of the chastened child of God, but that it ought to feel, and may cry, under the rod, without a single rebellious thought. *Mary B. M. Duncan.*

**Verses 1-2.** One ejaculation begetteth another. *Hear my cry; attend unto my prayer* (yet no words thereof mentioned); and Ps 61:2. *From the end of the earth will I cry:* he had thus cried, and he will therefore cry again and again. As billows of temptation ever and anon stop his mouth and interrupt him, so as he now and then doth but peep above water, and get breathing space, he will thus cry, *Lead me*, or "guide me, "or carry me to yonder rock which is higher than I. *Thomas Cobbet (1608-1686), on Prayer.*

**Verse 2.** *From the end of the earth.* This may be taken two ways: either *naturally*, and then it is an allusion to men that are far distant and remote from help, relief and comfort: or, as I may say, *ecclesiastically*, with reference to the temple of God, which was "*in medio terrae*," "in the midst and heart of the land, "where God manifested and gave tokens of his gracious presence and favour: as if he had said, "I am at the end of the earth; far from any tokens, pledges, or manifestations of the love and favour of God, as well as from outward help and assistance." *John Owen.*

**Verse 2.** *The end of the earth.* What place was this, *the end of the earth*, referring the expression to the writer of the Psalm? We know that the centre of the affections and devotions of the pious Israelite was the "holy city, Jerusalem; whither the tribes went up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, and to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." The country of which this city was the capital, was to the Jew the world; it was the world within the world; the earth within the earth; the whole globe besides was to him a waste, a place out of the world; an extraterrestrial territory, beyond the limits set

up by the Lord Almighty. Thus in Holy Writ what is called the world, or the earth, frequently signifieth only that part thereof which was the heritage of the chosen people... *The end of the earth*, then, as referred to the psalmist, would signify any place of bodily absence from the temple where the Deity had taken up his special abode, or any place whence his spiritual affections were unable to reach that temple. As referred to us, the expression signifies any sensible distance from God: for as God is the centre of life, hope, love, and joy, distance from him, of whatsoever degree, is the antipodes of the soul, a region of sterility and darkness; the Iceland of man's spirit. *Alfred Bowen Evans, 1852.*

**Verse 2.** *I will cry unto thee.* There is in this expression an endeavour to approach unto God; as you do when you *cry* after one whom you see at a distance, and are afraid he will go farther from you. It is the great work of faith to cry out after God, at a distance, when you are afraid lest at the next turn he should be quite out of sight. Crying to the Lord supposes him to be withdrawing or departing. *John Owen.*

**Verse 2.** *Cry.* No matter how abrupt the prayer be, so it be the representation of our hearts. Thus did David. Where doth he pray? In banishment. When? When his spirit *is overwhelmed*. How does he pray? He *cried*. Thus Hannah prayed herself into a composed state of mind. Remember, resignation is the work of the Spirit of God; and therefore you must plead for it before you have it. *John Singleton (1706), in "The Morning Exercises."*

**Verse 2.** *Cry.* Crying is a substitute for speech; and also the expression of earnestness. *William Jay.*

**Verse 2.** *When my heart is overwhelmed.* Troubles are of various kinds; some are *provoking*, some are *gnawing*, some are *perplexing*, and some are *overwhelming*; but whatever form they assume, they are troubles, and are part of the wear and tear of life. ... *Overwhelming troubles* are such as sweep over a man, just as the mighty billows of the ocean sweep over and submerge the sands. These are troubles which struggle with us, as it were, for life and death; troubles which would leave us helpless wrecks; troubles which enter into conflict with us in our prime, which grapple with us in our health and strength, and threaten to conquer us by sheer force, no matter how bravely we may contend. Such trouble the psalmist knew. *Philip Bennett Power, in "The I wills of the Psalms," 1861.*

**Verse 2.** *Heart.* The heart is here represented to us as being overwhelmed, or, as it is otherwise translated, "covered over; "it is smothered in, unable to perform its functions with proper action, unable to throw out the blood to the extremities, to give them needed vitality and power for necessary effort. When the action of the heart is paralysed, even temporarily, it will tell upon all the members, a chill there send its cold vibration through every limb; Satan knows this well, and so all his dealings are heart dealings, efforts to paralyse the very spring of life itself. This is precisely what we ourselves have experienced; we have partially felt death within us, we have felt a gradual numbing of our heart; a gradual diminution in the quickness of its beat; a gradual closing in, and pressure of a weight upon it, and this was the *overwhelming* process. *Philip Bennett Power.*

**Verse 2.** *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* The tower, in Ps 18:2, is "an high tower, "and the rock is here an *high rock*, the rock *higher than I*; and yet there is a way to get into the highest towers; by scaling ladders a man may get over the high walls of towers. This tower and rock were too high for David himself to get into, and therefore he sets to the scaling ladder. "*Lead me to the rock*, and into the tower *that is higher than I. Hear my cry, attend unto my prayer.*" So he makes prayer the scaling ladder to get upon that rock and into that tower that otherwise had been too high for him; he gets that safety and deliverance which otherwise but by prayer unto God had been impossible to have been obtained. *Jeremiah Dyke.*

**Verse 2.** *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* The language is very remarkable. It gives us the idea of a man suffering shipwreck. The vessel in which he has been sailing has sunk. He has been plunged into the mighty ocean; and there he is buffeting the waves, struggling for life, panting for breath, and just about to give up all for lost. Suddenly he discovers a *rock* towering above him. If he can but climb up to the top of it, and get sure footing upon it, the billows will not be able to reach him, and he will be safe. Now, the prayer in our text is the cry of that poor wretch for help. He is so spent and exhausted, that he cannot reach the rock *himself*. He shouts aloud for the friendly hand of some one stronger than himself, or for a rope that may be flung to him by those who are already safe on the rock, if by these helps he may gain it. *Lead me to the rock*, cries the poor perishing wretch. "O, lead me, guide me, direct me to it; for I am so worn and spent, that I cannot reach it otherwise. I am at the point to die; and I must sink, and be no more seen for ever, if there is none to help me." Thus he calls for some one to rescue him from the deep, and to place him on the *rock*. But what rock? He knows that unless the rock be a high one, he will not be in safety, though he should be on it. *The rock*, he says, "must be *higher than I*, or the waves will reach me, and wash me off again." It is not a rock, the top of which just shows itself above the sea, no higher than a man's own body, that will save the life of a shipwrecked mariner. Such a rock may occasion the wreck, but it will not afford any help to the sufferers afterwards; it is a rock to split upon for destruction, not to stand upon for safety. *Lead me to the rock*, or as it is in the Prayer book version, "Set me upon the rock that is *higher than I!*" ...The text having shown us the *danger of sin*, does not leave us comfortless; it shows us the *security of the refuge*. We have before remarked, that the prayer of David, as a shipwrecked man, is, to be "led to, "and set upon a *rock*, that is *higher than himself*. The expression seems to imply much. The rock that is higher than *he*, must be higher than *any man*; for David was a mighty monarch. He implies, therefore, that the refuge he seeks must be more than any "arm of flesh" can afford him; it must be therefore *divine*. *Condensed from a Sermon by Fountain Elwin, 1842.*

**Verse 2.** It is more the image of one overtaken by the tide, as he is hastening onwards to get beyond its reach, and yet with every step he sees it rolling nearer and nearer to him; he hears its angry roar, the loosening sand sinks beneath his tread—a few minutes more, and the waves will be around him;



despair hath *"overwhelmed his heart;* "when in the very depths of his agony he sees a point of rock high above the waves. "O that I could reach it and be safe!" And then comes the cry, the agonizing cry, to him that is mighty to save, *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* It is the sinner's cry to the sinner's Saviour! *Barton Bouchier, A.M., in "Manna in the Heart; or, Daily Comments on the Book of Psalms," 1855.*

**Verse 2.** *Lead me to the rock.* If we would find ourselves upon the rock, and enjoy the realisation of being so, we must be dependent upon another's hand. And that hand can do everything for us, even in our worst of times. When we are so blinded by the salt waves that dash in our eyes, so reeling in brain that we perhaps cannot think, much less make continuous efforts, there is a hand which can lead us, which can draw us out of the waters, which can set our feet upon the rock. Surely we have already experienced the power and tenderness of that hand? and it may be that in the reader's case, the waves, as they made sure of their prey, found it supernaturally drawn forth from them, that it might be set upon a rock, immoveable amid all the waters, and sufficient amid all storms! *Philip Bennett Power.*

**Verse 2.** *The rock that is higher than I.* The rock of our salvation, then, is "higher than we." Here we have the Deity of Christ, the Rock, set forth; in this he is "higher than we." And except as he is thus higher, as he is God, he could not be a Saviour; for "He is a just God, as well as a Saviour." A being no higher than we, or but a little higher, as the angels (for we are but "a little lower than they"), though he might teach us, or warn us, or console us, could never save us. The prey is in the hands of the mighty, and the Almighty alone is mightier. But a rock is not only high, but deep; it not only erects its front above the waves, but its base is fixed in the ocean's bed. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find our the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job 11:7. Here we have the humanity of him who is the rock; that humanity by which he was able to go down to the deeps, as well as ride triumphantly on the bosom of the waters—those deeps, whereof David speaking experimentally of himself, spake prophetically of him; the depths of our fall and degradation—that humanity in which he went down into the grave, into the recesses of the intermediate state, and "preached to the spirits in prison." This is our rock, both deep and high; the rock of our salvation; to which those whose sons have set them at "the end of the earth, "desire to be brought, that they may find a place of safe standing. Let not those fear who feel the bitterness of distance from God, for they shall be brought nigh; desolate may be the coast to which they are driven, but over against it is the Paradise of God; clouds and darkness may gather at the base of this rock of safety, but "eternal sunshine settles in its head." *Alfred Bowen Evans.*

**Verse 2.** *Higher.* A hiding place must be *locus exelsissimus.* Your low houses are soon scaled. Jesus Christ is a high place; he is as high as heaven. He is the Jacob's ladder that reacheth from earth to

heaven. Ge 28:12. He is too high for men, too high for devils; no creature can scale these high walls. *Ralph Robinson (1614-1655), in "Christ All and in All."*

**Verse 4.** *I will abide in thy tabernacle.* Some render it, *I shall dwell in thy tent or pavilion royal*, making it a metaphor from warfare, where those that are in the king's own tent must needs be in greatest safety. And this sense suits well with the following words: *I will trust in the covert of thy wings.* *John Trapp.*

**Verse 4.** *Covert of thy wings.* To a person who should penetrate the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, the most conspicuous object would be the outspread wings above the mercyseat: under their shelter and upon the mercyseat David would abide in quiet confidence. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 5.** (*first clause*). About this time I began to know that there is a God who hears and answers prayer. *John Newton, in his Journal.*

**Verse 5.** *Thou, O God, hast heard my vows:* that is, his prayers, which are always to be put up with vows. Indeed, that prayer is a blank which hath not a vow in it. Is it a mercy thou prayest him to give? If sincere, thou wilt vow to praise him for it, and serve him with it. Is it a sin thou prayest against? Except you juggle with God, thou wilt vow as well as pray against it. *William Gurnall.*

**Verse 5.** *The heritage.* Eternal life is called an inheritance. Theodoret remarks: "The true inheritance is eternal life, concerning which Christ saith to the sheep on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. This inheritance the Lord giveth to them that fear him." In Eph 1:14, the Spirit is called "the earnest of our inheritance." In Col 1:12, the apostle exhorts them "to give thanks unto the Father, who hath made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." On this verse we have the golden comment of Chrysostom, reiterated by Theophylact. He calls it an inheritance, to show that no man obtaineth the kingdom by his own good works; for no man hath so lived as to render himself worthy of the kingdom, but all is of the grace of God. Wherefore he saith, "When ye have done all, say that we are unprofitable servants, for we have only done that which we ought to have done." *John Caspar Suicer's "Thesaurus," 1728.*

**Verse 6.** *Thou wilt prolong the king's life,* etc. David cannot be considered as using these words of gratulation with an exclusive reference to himself. It is true that he lived to an extreme old age, and died full of days, leaving the kingdom in a settled condition, and in the hands of his son, who succeeded him; but he did not exceed the period of one man's life, and the greater part of it was spent in continued dangers and anxieties. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the series of years, and even ages, of which he speaks, extends prospectively to the coming of Christ, it being the very condition of the kingdom, as I have often remarked, that God maintained them as one people under one head, or when scattered, united them again. The same succession still subsists in reference to ourselves. Christ must be viewed as living in his members to the end of the world. To this Isaiah

alludes when he says, "Who shall declare his generation or age?"—words in which he predicts that the church would survive through all ages, notwithstanding the incessant danger of destruction to which it is exposed through the attacks of its enemies, and the many storms assailing it. So here David foretells the uninterrupted succession of the kingdom down to the time of Christ. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 6.** *The king's life: and his years.* David speaks designedly of the days of the *king* instead of his *own* days, as might have been expected from what had been said, for the purpose of showing that he considered the promise of eternal dominion as relating not to himself personally, but to his family—the royal family of David. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Verse 7.** *O prepare mercy.* David having declared in his own behalf the purpose of God towards him for everlasting salvation, *he*, speaking of himself, *shall abide before God for ever*: he withal considering what he was to run through in this life, and what it might require to keep him unto the end, and so *for ever*, doth presently thereupon, in way of prayer, subjoin *prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve me*. As if he had said, I have yet a long journey to go, and through many hazards, and thy promise is, *I shall abide before thee for ever*. Lord, thou hast need lay up and aforehand prepare an abundance of mercy and truth to preserve me for time to come. *Thomas Goodwin.*

**Verse 8.** They that are godly are oppressed and vexed in the church or congregation for this purpose: that when they are pressed, they should cry; and when they cry, that they should be heard; and when they are heard, that they should laud and praise God. *Augustine.*

---

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Whole Psalm. The progressive *I wills*.

1. I will cry.
2. I will abide in thy tabernacle.
3. I will trust.
4. I will sing praise.

**Verse 1.** Answers to prayer to be earnestly sought.

1. What hinders the answer of prayer?
2. What is our duty when answers are denied?
3. What encouragements we have to believe that the delay is only temporary.

**Verse 2.** *Lead me.*

1. Show me the way: reveal Jesus.
2. Enable me to tread it: work faith in me.
3. Uplift me when I cannot tread: do for me what is beyond me.

**Verse 2.** *Higher than I.* Jesus greater than our highest efforts, attainments, desires, expectations,

conceptions.

**Verse 2.** God, the saint's rock. *John Owen's Two Sermons*. Works. Vol. 9, pp. 237-256.

**Verse 2.** The heart's cry and desire.

1. A recognition of a place of safety; then,
2. We have this place brought before us, as abundantly sufficient, when personal weakness has been realised.
3. This place cannot be attained without the help of another's hand.
4. The character of this refuge, and the position of a believer when availing himself of it: the place of refuge is "a rock, "and the position of the believer is "upon a rock." *P. B. Power*.

**Verses 2-3.**

1. *How would he pray? I will cry unto thee.*
2. *Where would he pray? From the ends of the earth.*
3. *When would he pray? When my heart is overwhelmed.*
4. *For what would he pray? Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*
5. *Whence does he derive his encouragement to pray? For thou hast been, etc. (Ps 61:3). William Jay.*

**Verse 3.** A *shelter* from the rain of trouble, the storm of persecution, the floods of Satanic temptation, the heat of divine wrath, the blast of death. The ark, Lot's mountain, the blood stained door in Egypt, the city of refuge, the cave Adullam. A *strong tower*: lasting in itself, impregnable against foes, secure for the occupant.

**Verse 5.** (*second clause*). Enquire whether or no it fares with us as with the saints.

**Verses 5, 8.**

1. Vows heard in heaven.
2. Vows to be carefully fulfilled on earth.

**Verse 5.** (*second clause*).

1. They that fear God have a "heritage."
2. This heritage is "given."
3. We may know that we possess it. *William Jay*.

**Verse 6.** Our King, his eternal existence, our personal joy in this, and our joy for our descendants.

**Verses 4, 7.**

1. My privilege, *I will abide* (Ps 61:4).
2. The ground of it, *He shall abide*, etc. (Ps 61:7).

**Verses 5, 8.**

1. Vows heard in heaven.
2. Vows to be carefully fulfilled on earth.

## **Psalm 62**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

---

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician, to Jeduthun.* This is the second Psalm which is dedicated to Jeduthun, or Ethan, the former one being the thirty-ninth, a Psalm which is almost a twin with this in many respects, containing in the original the word translated *only* four times as this does six. We shall meet with two other Psalms similarly appointed for Jeduthun: namely, Psalms 77, and 89. The sons of Jeduthun were porters or doorkeepers, according to 1Ch 16:42. Those who serve well make the best of singers, and those who occupy the highest posts in the choir must not be ashamed to wait at the posts of the doors of the Lord's house. *A PSALM OF DAVID.* Even had not the signature of the royal poet been here placed, we should have been sure from internal evidence that he alone penned these stanzas; they are truly Davidic. From the sixfold use of the word *ac* or *only*, we have been wont to call it *THE ONLY PSALM.*

**DIVISION.** The Psalmist has marked his own pauses, by inserting *SELAH* at the end of Ps 62:4,8. His true and sole confidence in God laughs to scorn all its enemies. When this Psalm was composed it was not necessary for us to know, since true faith is always in season, and is usually under trial. Moreover, the sentiments here uttered are suitable to occasions which are very frequent in a believer's life, and therefore no one historic incident is needful for their explanation.

---

### EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Truly*, or verily, or only. The last is probably the most prominent sense here. That faith alone is true which rests on God alone, that confidence which relies but partly on the Lord is vain confidence. If we Anglicized the word by our word *verily*, as some do, we should have here a striking reminder of our blessed Lord's frequent use of that adverb. My soul waiteth upon God. My inmost self draws near in reverent obedience to God. I am no hypocrite or mere posture maker. To wait upon God, and for God, is the habitual position of faith; to wait on him truly is sincerity; to wait on him only is spiritual chastity. The original is, "only to God is my soul silence." The presence of God alone could awe his heart into quietude, submission, rest, and acquiescence; but when that was felt, not a rebellious word or thought broke the peaceful silence. The proverb that speech is silver but silence is gold, is more than true in this case. No eloquence in the world is half so full of meaning as the patient silence of a child of God. It is an eminent work of grace to bring down the will and subdue the

affections to such a degree, that the whole mind lies before the Lord like the sea beneath the wind, ready to be moved by every breath of his mouth, but free from all inward and self caused emotion, as also from all power to be moved by anything other than the divine will. We should be wax to the Lord, but adamant to every other force. From him cometh my salvation. The good man will, therefore, in patience possess his soul till deliverance comes: faith can hear the footsteps of coming salvation, because she has learned to be silent. Our salvation in no measure or degree comes to us from any inferior source; let us, therefore, look alone to the true fountain, and avoid the detestable crime of ascribing to the creature what belongs alone to the Creator. If to wait on God be worship, to wait on the creature is idolatry; if to wait on God alone be true faith, to associate an arm of the flesh with him is audacious unbelief.

**Verse 2.** *He only is my rock and my salvation.* Sometimes a metaphor may be more full of meaning and more suggestive than literal speech: hence the use of the figure of a rock, the very mention of which would awaken grateful memories in the psalmists's mind. David had often lain concealed in rocky caverns, and here he compares his God to such a secure refuge; and, indeed, declares him to be his only real protection, all-sufficient in himself and never failing. At the same time, as if to show us that what he wrote was not mere poetic sentiment but blessed reality, the literal word *salvation* follows the figurative expression: that our God is our refuge is no fiction, nothing in the world is more a matter of fact. He is my defence, my height, my lofty rampart, my high fort. Here we have another and bolder image; the tried believer not only abides in God as in a cavernous rock; but dwells in him as a warrior in some bravely defiant tower or lordly castle. I shall not be greatly moved. His personal weakness might cause him to be somewhat moved; but his faith would come in to prevent any very great disturbance; not much would he be tossed about. *Moved*, as one says, "but not removed." Moved like a ship at anchor which swings with the tide, but is not swept away by the tempest. When a man knows assuredly that the Lord is his salvation, he cannot be very much cast down: it would need more than all the devils in hell greatly to alarm a heart which knows God to be its salvation.

**Verse 3.** *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man?* It is always best to begin with God, and then we may confront our enemies. Make all sure with heaven, then may you grapple with earth and hell. David expostulates with his insensate foes; he marvels at their dogged perseverance in malice, after so many failures and with certain defeat before them. He tells them that their design was an imaginary one, which they never could accomplish however deeply they might plot. It is a marvel that men will readily enough continue in vain and sinful courses, and yet to persevere in grace is so great a difficulty as to be an impossibility, were it not for divine assistance. The persistency of those who oppose the people of God is so strange that we may well expostulate with them and say, "How long will ye thus display your malice?" A hint is given in the text as to the cowardliness of so many pressing upon one man; but none are less likely to act a fair and manly part than those who are

opposed to God's people for righteousness' sake. Satan could not enter into combat with Job in fair duel, but must needs call in the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and even then must borrow the lightning and the wind before his first attack was complete. If there were any shame in him, or in his children, they would be ashamed of the dastardly manner in which they have waged war against the seed of the woman. Ten thousand to one has not seemed to them too mean an advantage; there is not a drop of chivalrous blood in all their veins. Ye shall be slain all of you. Your edged tools will cut your own fingers. Those who take the sword shall perish with the sword. However many or fierce the bands of the wicked may be, they shall not escape the just retribution of heaven; rigorously shall the great Lawgiver exact blood from men of blood, and award death to those who seek the death of others.

As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence. Boastful persecutors bulge and swell with pride, but they are only as a bulging wall ready to fall in a heap; they lean forward to seize their prey, but it is only as a tottering fence inclines to the earth upon which it will soon lie at length. They expect men to bow to them, and quake for fear in their presence; but men made bold by faith see nothing in them to honour, and very, very much to despise. It is never well on our part to think highly of ungodly persons; whatever their position, they are near their destruction, they totter to their fall; it will be our wisdom to keep our distance, for no one is advantaged by being near a falling wall; if it does not crush with its weight, it may stifle with its dust. The passage is thought to be more correctly rendered as follows:—"How long will ye press on one man, that ye may crush him in a body, like a toppling wall, a sinking fence?" (So Dr. Kay, of Calcutta, translates it.) We have, however, kept to our own version as yielding a good and profitable meaning. Both senses may blend in our meditations; for if David's enemies battered him as though they could throw him down like a bulging wall, he, on the other hand, foresaw that they themselves would by retributive justice be overthrown like an old crumbling, leaning, yielding fence.

**Verse 4.** *They only consult to cast him down from his excellency.* The excellencies of the righteous are obnoxious to the wicked, and the main object of their fury. The elevation which God gives to the godly in Providence, or in dispute, is also the envy of the baser sort, and they labour to pull them down to their own level. Observe the concentration of malice upon our point *only*, as here set in contrast with the sole reliance of the gracious one upon his Lord. If the wicked could but ruin the work of grace in us, they would be content; to crush our character, to overturn our influence, is the object of their consultation. They delight in lies; hence they hate the truth and the truthful, and by falsehood endeavour to compass their overthrow. To lie is base enough, but to delight in it is one of the blackest marks of infamy. They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Flattery has ever been a favourite weapon with the enemies of good men; they can curse bitterly enough when it serves their turn; meanwhile, since it answers their purpose, they mask their wrath, and with smooth words

pretend to bless those whom they would willingly tear in pieces. It was fortunate for David that he was well practised in silence, for to cozening deceivers there is no other safe reply. Selah. Here pause, and consider with astonishment the futile rancour of unholy men, and the perfect security of such as rest themselves upon the Lord.

**Verse 5.** *My soul, wait thou only upon God.* When we have already practised a virtue, it is yet needful that we bind ourselves to a continuance in it. The soul is apt to be dragged away from its anchorage, or is readily tempted to add a second confidence to the one sole and sure ground of reliance; we must, therefore, stir ourselves up to maintain the holy position which we were at first able to assume. Be still silent, O my soul! submit thyself completely, trust immovably, wait patiently. Let none of thy enemies' imaginings, consultings, flatteries, or maledictions cause thee to break the King's peace. Be like the sheep before her shearers, and like thy Lord, conquer by the passive resistance of victorious patience: thou canst only achieve this as thou shalt be inwardly persuaded of God's presence, and as you wait solely and alone on him. Unmingled faith is undismayed. Faith with a single eye sees herself secure, but if her eye be darkened by two confidences, she is blind and useless. For my expectation is from him. We expect from God because we believe in him. Expectation is the child of prayer and faith, and is owned of the Lord as an acceptable grace. We should desire nothing but what would be right for God to give, then our expectation would be all from God; and concerning truly good things we should not look to second causes, but to the Lord alone, and so again our expectation would be all from him. The vain expectations of worldly men come not; they promise but there is no performance; our expectations are on the way, and in due season will arrive to satisfy our hopes. Happy is the man who feels that all he has, all he wants, and all he expects are to be found in his God.

**Verse 6.** *He only is my rock and my salvation.* Alone, and without other help, God is the foundation and completion of my safety. We cannot too often hear the toll of that great bell *only*; let it ring the death knell of all carnal reliances, and lead us to cast ourselves on the bare arm of God. He is my defence. Not my defender only, but my actual protection. I am secure, because he is faithful. I shall not be moved—not even in the least degree. See how his confidence grows. In the second verse an adverb qualified his quiet; here, however, it is absolute; he altogether defies the rage of his adversaries, he will not stir an inch, nor be made to fear even in the smallest degree. A living faith grows; experience develops the spiritual muscles of the saint, and gives a manly force which our religious childhood has not yet reached.

**Verse 7.** *In God is my salvation and my glory.* Wherein should we glory but in him who saves us? Our honour may well be left with him who secures our souls. To find all in God, and to glory that it is so, is one of the sure marks of an enlightened soul. The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. He multiplies titles, for he would render much honour to the Lord, whom he had tried, and proved to be a



faithful God under so many aspects. Ignorance needs but few words, but when experience brings a wealth of knowledge, we need varied expressions to serve as coffers for our treasure. God who is our rock when we flee for shelter, is also our *strong* rock when we stand firm and defy the foe; he is to be praised under both characters. Observe how the psalmist brands his own initials upon every name which he rejoicingly gives to his God—*my* expectation, *my* rock, *my* salvation, *my* glory, *my* strength, *my* refuge; he is not content to know that the Lord is all these things; he acts faith towards him, and lays claim to him under every character. What are the mines of Peru or Golconda to me if I have no inheritance in them? It is the word *my* which puts the honey into the comb. If our experience has not yet enabled us to realise the Lord under any of these consoling titles, we must seek grace that we may yet be partakers of their sweetness. The bees in some way or other penetrate the flowers and collect their juices; it must be hard for them to enter the closed cups and mouthless bags of some of the favourites of the garden, yet the honey gatherers find or make a passage; and in this they are our instructors, for into each delightful name, character, and office of our covenant God our persevering faith must find an entrance, and from each it must draw delight.

**Verse 8.** *Trust in him at all times.* Faith is an abiding duty, a perpetual privilege. We should trust when we can see, as well as when we are utterly in the dark. Adversity is a fit season for faith; but prosperity is not less so. God at all times deserves our confidence. We at all times need to place our confidence in him. A day without trust in God is a day of wrath, even if it be a day of mirth. Lean ever, ye saints, on him, on whom the world leans. Ye people, pour out your heart before him. Ye to whom his love is revealed, reveal yourselves to him. His heart is set on you, lay bare your hearts to him. Turn the vessel of your soul upside down in his secret presence, and let your inmost thoughts, desires, sorrows, and sins be poured out like water. Hide nothing from him, for you *can* hide nothing. To the Lord unburden your soul; let him be your only father confessor, for he only can absolve you when he has heard your confession. To keep our griefs to ourselves is to hoard up wretchedness. The stream will swell and rage if you dam it up: give it a clear course, and it leaps along and creates no alarm. Sympathy we need, and if we unload our hearts at Jesus' feet, we shall obtain a sympathy as practical as it is sincere, as consolatory as it is ennobling. The writer in the *Westminster Assembly's Annotations* well observes that it is the tendency of our wicked nature to bite on the bridle, and hide our grief in sullenness; but the gracious soul will overcome this propensity, and utter its sorrow before the Lord. God is a refuge for us. Whatever he may be to others, his own people have a peculiar heritage in him; *for us* he is undoubtedly a refuge: here then is the best of reasons for resorting to him whenever sorrows weigh upon our bosoms. Prayer is peculiarly the duty of those to whom the Lord has specially revealed himself as their defence. SELAH. Precious pause! Timely silence! Sheep may well lie down when such pasture is before them.

**Verse 9.** *Surely men of low degree are vanity.* Here the word is *only* again; men of low degree are

only vanity, nothing more. They are many and enthusiastic, but they are not to be depended on; they are mobile as the waves of the sea, ready to be driven to and fro by any and every wind; they cry "Hosanna" today, and "Crucify him" tomorrow. The instability of popular applause is a proverb; as well build a house with smoke as find comfort in the adulation of the multitude. As the first son of Adam was called Abel or vanity, so here we are taught that all the sons of Adam are Abels: it were well if they were all so in character as well as in name; but alas! in this respect, too many of them are Cains. And men of high degree are a lie. That is worse. We gain little by putting our trust in the aristocracy, they are not one whit better than the democracy: nay, they are even worse, for we expect something from them, but get nothing. May we not trust the *elite*? Surely reliance may be placed in the educated, the chivalrous, the intelligent? For this reason are they a lie; because they promise so much, and in the end, when relied upon, yield nothing but disappointment. How wretched is that poor man who puts his trust in princes. The more we rely upon God, the more shall we perceive the utter hollowness of every other confidence. To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Take a true estimate of them; judge them neither by quantity nor by appearance, but by weight, and they will no longer deceive you. Calmly deliberate, quietly ponder, and your verdict will be that which inspiration here records. Vainer than vanity itself are all human confidences: the great and the mean, alike, are unworthy of our trust. A feather has some weight in the scale, vanity has none, and creature confidence has less than that: yet such is the universal infatuation, that mankind prefer an arm of flesh to the power of the invisible but almighty Creator; and even God's own children are too apt to be bitten with this madness.

**Verse 10.** *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery.* Wealth ill gotten is the trust only of fools, for the deadly pest lies in it; it is full of canker, it reeks with God's curse. To tread down the poor and silence their cries for justice, is the delight of many a braggart bully, who in his arrogance imagines that he may defy both God and man; but he is warned in these words, and it will be well for him if he takes the warning, for the Judge of all the earth will surely visit upon men the oppression of the innocent, and the robbery of the poor: both of these may be effected legally in the courts of man, but no twistings of the law, no tricks and evasions will avail with the Court of Heaven. If riches increase, set not your heart upon them. If they grow in an honest, providential manner, as the result of industry or commercial success, do not make much account of the circumstance; be not unduly elated, do not fix your love upon your money bags. To bow an immortal spirit to the constant contemplation of fading possessions is extreme folly. Shall those who call the Lord their glory, glory in yellow earth? Shall the image and superscription of Caesar deprive them of communion with him who is the image of the invisible God? As we must not rest in men, so neither must we repose in money. Gain and fame are only so much foam of the sea. All the wealth and honour the whole world can afford would be too slender a thread to bear up the happiness of an immortal soul.

**Verse 11.** *God hath spoken once.* So immutable is God that he need not speak twice, as though he had changed; so infallible, that one utterance suffices, for he cannot err; so omnipotent, that his solitary word achieves all his designs. We speak often and say nothing; God speaks once and utters eternal verities. All our speaking may yet end in sound; but he speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. Twice have I heard this. Our meditative soul should hear the echo of God's voice again and again. What he speaks once in revelation, we should be always hearing. Creation and providence are evermore echoing the voice of God; "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." We have two ears, that we may hear attentively, and the spiritual have inner ears with which they hear indeed. He hears twice in the best sense who hears with his heart as well as his ears. That power belongeth unto God. He is the source of it, and in him it actually abides. This one voice of God we ought always to hear, so as to be preserved from putting our trust in creatures in whom there can be no power, since all power is in God. What reason for faith is here! It can never be unwise to rest upon the almighty arm. Out of all troubles he can release us, under all burdens sustain us, while men must fail us at the last, and may deceive us even now. May our souls hear the thunder of Jehovah's voice as he claims all power, and henceforth may we wait only upon God!

**Verse 12.** *Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.* This tender attribute sweetens the grand thought of his power: the divine strength will not crush us, but will be used for our good. God is so full of mercy that it belongs to him, as if all the mercy in the universe came from God, and still was claimed by him as his possession. His mercy, like his power, endureth for ever, and is ever present in him, ready to be revealed, For thou renderest to every man according to his work. This looks rather like justice than mercy; but if we understand it to mean that God graciously rewards the poor, imperfect works of his people, we see in it a clear display of mercy. May it not also mean that according to the work he allots us is the strength which he renders to us? he is not a hard master; he does not bid us make bricks without straw, but he metes out to us strength equal to our day. In either meaning we have power and mercy blended, and have a double reason for waiting only upon God. Man neither helps us nor rewards us; God will do both. In him power and grace are eternally resident; our faith should therefore patiently hope and quietly wait, for we shall surely see the salvation of God. *Deo soli gloria.* All glory be to God only.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Psalms 62, and 63 compared. ONLY AND EARLY. There is a sweet and profitable lesson taught us in Psalms 62 and 63. The heart is ever prone to divide its confidence between God and the creature. This will never do. We must "wait *only* upon God." "He *only*" must be our "rock, "our "salvation, "and our "defence." Then we are frequently tempted to look to an arm of flesh *first*, and when that fails us, we look to God. This will never do either. He must be our *first* as well as our *only* resource. "O God,

thou art my God, *early* will I seek thee." This is the way in which the heart should ever treat the blessed God. This is the lesson of Psalm 63. When we have learnt the blessedness of seeking God *"only*, "we shall be sure to seek him *"early*." Charles Mackintosh, in *"Things New and Old*, "1858.

**Whole Psalm.** There is in it throughout not one single word (and this is a rare occurrence), in which the prophet expresses *fear* or *dejection*; and there is also no prayer in it, although, on other occasions, when in danger, he never omits to pray... The prophet found himself remarkably well furnished in reference to that part of piety which consists in *pleroforia*, the full assurance and perfection of faith; and therefore he designed to rear a monument of this his state of mind, for the purpose of stimulating the reader to the same attainment. Moses Amyraut, 1596-1664.

**Whole Psalm.** Athanasius says of this Psalm: "Against all attempts upon thy body, thy state, thy soul, thy fame, temptations, tribulations, machinations, defamations", say this Psalm. John Donne.

**Verse 1.** *Only*. The particle may be rendered *only*, as restrictive; or, *surely*, as affirmative. Our translators have rendered it differently in different verses of this Psalm; Ps 62:1, *truly*; in Ps 62:2,4-6, *only*; in Ps 62:9, *surely*. If we render *only*, the meaning will be here that God exclusively is the object of trust; if *surely*, that this truth, that God is his salvation, has come home to him with a more lively conviction, with a more blessed certainty than ever. The first line of the verse rendered literally is, "*Only unto God my soul is silence*." J. J. Stewart Perowne.

**Verse 1.** *Truly my soul waiteth upon God*, etc. In the use of means, for answers of prayer, for performance of promises, and for deliverance from enemies, and out of every trouble: or, *is silent*, as the Targum; not as to prayer, but as to murmuring; patiently and quietly waiting for salvation until the Lord's time come to give it; being *subject* to him, as the Septuagint, Vulgate, Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; resigned to his will, and patient under his afflicting hand: it denotes a quiet, patient waiting on the Lord, and not merely bodily exercise in outward ordinances; but an inward frame of spirit, a soul waiting on the Lord, and that in truth and reality, in opposition to mere form and show. John Gill.

**Verse 1.** *Truly my soul waiteth upon God*; or, as the Hebrew, *My soul is silent*. Indeed, waiting on God for deliverance, in an afflicted state, consists much in a holy silence. It is a great mercy, in an affliction, to have our bodily senses, so as not to lie raving, but still and quiet, much more to have the heart silent and patient; and we find the heart is as soon heated into a distemper as the head. Now what the sponge is to the cannon, when hot with often shooting, hope is to the soul in multiplied afflictions; it cools the spirit and makes it meeker it, so that it doth not break out into distempered thoughts or words against God. (See also Ps 62:5.) William Gurnall.

**Verse 1.** *Waiteth*. *Waiting* is nothing else but *hope and trust lengthened*. John Trapp.

**Verse 1.** *My soul is silent before God*. As if he had said: to me as a man God has put in subjection all his creatures; to me as a king he has subjected the whole of Judaea, the Philistines, the Moabites,

Syrians, Idumeans, Ammonites, and other tribes; having taken me from the sheep cotes he has adorned me with a crown and sceptre now these thirty years, and extended my kingdom to the sea, and to the great river Euphrates; it is not without reason, then, that I subject myself to God alone in this affliction, wherein Absalom thirsts to crush me, especially since he reveals the deliverance prepared for me, and from him alone can I expect it. *Thomas Le Blanc—1669, in Psalmorum Davidicorum Analysis.*

**Verse 1.** *Is silent.* The Hebrew word used is hymwd *dumijah*, that is, silent, resting, expecting, reflecting, solicitous, and observing. For, first, we ought to be subject to God as silent disciples before a master...Whatever God has allowed to happen to me, yet I will be silent before him, and from my heart admire, both enduring his strokes and receiving his teaching... Secondly, we ought to be subject to God as creatures keeping quiet before their Creator... "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker." Isa 45:9. Thirdly, we ought to be subject to God as clay in the hands of the potter, ready for the form into which he wishes *to fashion us...* "*As clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*" Jer 18:6. Fourthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a maid servant to her master, observing his wish, even in the most menial affairs... Fifthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a wife to her husband (*sponsa sponso*), who in her love is solicitous and careful to do whatever may be pleasing to him. "*My beloved is mine, and I am his.*" Canticles 2:16. And, "*I am my beloved's.*" Canticles 6:3. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 1.** After almost every quiet prayer and holy meditation in the divine presence, we have the consciousness that there was an ear which heard us, and a heart that received our sighs. The effect of a silent colloquy with God is so soothing! There was a time when I used greatly to wonder at these words of Luther:—

"Bear and forbear, and *silent* be,  
Tell no man thy misery;  
Yield not in trouble to dismay,  
God can deliver any day."

I wondered because we feel the outpouring of grief into the heart of a friend to be so sweet. At the same time, he who talks much of his troubles to *men* is apt to fall into a way of saying too little of them to *God*; while, on the other hand, he who has often experienced the blessed alleviation which flows from silent converse with the Eternal, loses much of his desire for the sympathy of his fellows. It appears to me now as if spreading out our distress *too largely* before men served only to make it broader, and to take away its zest; and hence the proverb, "Talking of trouble makes it double." On the contrary, if when in distress we can contrive to maintain calm composure of mind, and to bear it always as in the sight of God, submissively waiting for succour from him, according to the words of the psalmist, *Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation*; in that case, the

distress neither extends in breadth nor sinks in depth. It lies upon the surface of the heart like the morning mist, which the sun as it ascends dissipates into light clouds. *Agustus F. Tholuck, in "Hours of Christian Devotion," 1870.*

**Verse 1.** The natural mind is ever prone to *reason*, when we ought to *believe*; to be *at work*, when we ought to be *quiet*; to go our own way, when we ought steadily to walk on in God's ways, however trying to nature... And how does it work, when we thus anticipate God, by going our own way? We bring, in many instances, guilt on our conscience; but if not, we certainly weaken faith, instead of increasing it; and each time we work thus a deliverance of our own, we find it more and more difficult to trust in God, till at last we give way entirely to our natural fallen reason, and unbelief prevails. How different if one is enabled to wait God's own time, and to look alone to him for help and deliverance! When at last help comes, after many seasons of prayer it may be, and after much exercise of faith and patience it may be, how sweet it is, and what a present recompense does the soul at once receive for trusting in God, and waiting patiently for his deliverance! Dear Christian reader, if you have never walked in this path of obedience before, do so now, and you will then know experimentally the sweetness of the joy which results from it. *George Müller, in "A Narrative of some of the Lord's Dealings," 1856.*

**Verse 2.** *I shall not be greatly moved.* Grace makes the heart move leisurely to all things except God. A mortified man is as a sea that hath no winds, that ebbs not and flows not. The mortified man sings and is not light, and weeps and is not sad, is zealous but he can quit it for God. Ah! few can act but they over act. *Alexander Carmichael, in "The Believer's Mortification of Sin," 1677.*

**Verse 3.**

"How long will ye assault a man?  
How long will ye crush him,  
As though he were a leaning wall—  
|A fence nearly thrust down?" *French and Skinner.*

**Verse 3.** *Against a man.* That sure is but a poetical expression for *against me, i.e., David*, the speaker, against whom the neighbouring nations raised war, and his own subjects rebellions. Thus doth Christ oft speak of himself under the title of the *Son of Man*, in the third person; and Paul (2Co 12:2), *Oisa anyrwpon, "I knew a man, "i.e., undoubtedly himself.* *Henry Hammond.*

**Verse 3.** *As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.* Christ gave no blow, but merely asked his murderers whom they sought for; and yet they fell flat and prostrate to the ground (John 18), so that the wicked persecutors of the godly are aptly and properly likened and compared to a tottering and trembling wall. For as soon as ever the blasts of God's wrath and judgment are moved and kindled against them, they are so quivering and comfortless, that they would take them to be most their friends who would soonest despatch them out of the world; as Christ said aptly of them,

they would pray the mountains to fall upon them. Luke 23. *John Hooper.*

**Verse 3.** *As a bowing wall shall ye be.* In consequence of heavy rains and floods, and unsound foundations, it is very common to see walls much out of perpendicular; and some of them so much so, that it might be thought scarcely possible for them to stand. "Poor old Raman is very ill, I hear." "Yes, the wall is bowing." "Begone, thou low caste! thou art a *kuttle chiover*, "that is, "a ruined wall." "By the oppression of the head man, the people of that village are like a ruined wall." *J. Robert's "Oriental Illustrations."*

**Verse 3.** *A bowing wall.* A wall, when ill built, bulges out in the centre, presenting the appearance of nearly twice its actual breadth; but, as it is hollow within, it soon falls to ruins. The wicked, in like manner, are dilated with pride, and assume, in their consultations, a most formidable appearance; but David predicts that they would be brought to unexpected and utter destruction, like a wall badly constructed, and hollow in the interior, which falls with a sudden crash, and is broken by its own weight into a thousand pieces. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 4.** *They only consult, etc.* Truly I am he whom if *they shall consult to cast down from his excellency, they shall delight in a lie, they shall bless with their mouth and curse inwardly.* That is: what I have said of worldly men, boasting themselves upon a man, falling into ruin, I desire that you should know that the same fate shall never befall me who trust in God; for otherwise does the matter stand. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 4.** *Excellency.* Rather, *elevation*; the figure of the preceding verse being followed out. *Religious Tract Society's Notes.*

**Verse 5.** *My soul, wait thou only upon God.* They trust not God *at all* who trust him not *alone*. He that stands with one foot on a rock, and another foot upon a quicksand, will sink and perish, as certainly as he that standeth with both feet upon a quicksand. David knew this, and therefore calleth earnestly upon his soul (for his business lay most within doors) to trust only upon God. See Ps 62:1. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 5.** *My expectation is from him.* As if he had said, never will he frustrate the patient waiting of his saints; doubtless my silence shall meet with its reward; I shall restrain myself, and not make that false haste which will only retard my deliverance. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 5.** *My expectation is from him.* In an account of the voyage of some of the early missionaries who left Hermannsburg for South Africa, is the following incident:—After a long calm, a brother prayed thus to the Lord for favouring wind: "Lord, thou givest them that fear thee the desires of their heart, and dost help them; help us now, that we may no longer be becalmed upon the sea; help us on our journey, you who ride on the wings of the wind." He was so joyful over this word of the Lord, that he rose up and said in his heart: "Now I have already that for which I prayed." After the prayer, one of the crew stepped over to the helmsman, and said, half mocking, half in earnest, "So we shall have

wind: did you hear the prayer? It does not look very like it!" So he said, and half an hour after there came so strong a blast that the waves broke over the ship. *William Fleming Stevenson, in "Praying and Working," 1862.*

**Verse 5.** He shifts much needless labour, and provideth great contentment, who closes himself with God alone. To deal with man alone, apart from God, is both an endless and fruitless labour. If we have counsel to ask, help or benefit to obtain, or approbation to seek, there is none end with man: for every man we must have sundry reasons and motives; and what pleaseth one will offend twenty: as many heads, as many wits and fancies. No man can give contentment to all, or change himself into so many fashions, as he shall encounter humours; and yet it is more easy to take sundry fashions than to be acceptable in them. *William Struther.*

**Verses 6-7.** Twice in this Psalm hath he repeated this, in the second and in the sixth verses, *He is my rock and my salvation, and my defence*, and (as it is enlarged in the seventh verse) *my refuge and my glory*. If my *defence*, what temptation shall wound me? If my *rock*, what storm shall shake me? If my *salvation*, what melancholy shall defeat me? If my *glory*, what calumny shall defame me? *John Dunne.*

**Verses 6-7.** How quickly the soul of the faithful returns again to the God of its confidence. He spared a moment to admonish the ungodly, but like the dove of Noah he returns to the ark. Observe how the expressions of this holy confidence are repeated, with every pleasing variety of expression, to denote the comfort of his heart. Reader, ask yourself—are such views of Christ your views of him? Do you know him in those covenant characters? Is Jesus your rock, your salvation, your defence? *Robert Hawker, D.D.*

**Verse 7. (first clause).** On the shields of the Greeks, Neptune was depicted; on the shields of the Trojans, Minerva; because in them they put their confidence, and in their protection deemed themselves secure... Now, Christ is the insignia of our shields. Often does David say, God is his protector. The Hebrew is *magen*; that is, shield, buckler, as Ps 18:2,30. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 7.** There are several names of God given in this verse, that so every soul may take with him that name which may minister most comfort to him. Let him that is pursued by any particular temptation, invest God, as God is *a refuge, a sanctuary*; let him that is buffeted with Satan, battered with his own concupiscence receive God, as God is his *defence and target*; let him that is shaken with perplexities in his understanding, or scruples in his conscience, lay hold on God, as God is his *rock and his anchor*; let him that hath any diffident jealousy and suspicion of the free and full mercy of God, apprehend God, as God is his *salvation*; and let him that walks in the ingloriousness and contempt of the world, contemplate God, as God is *glory*. Any of these notions is enough to any man; but God is all these, and all else, that all souls can think, to every man. *Abraham Wright.*

**Verse 9.** Other doctrines, moral or civil instructions, may be delivered to us possibly, and probably,



and likely, and credibly, and under the like terms and modifications, but this in our text, is assuredly, undoubtedly, undeniably, irrefragably, *Surely men of low degree*, etc. For howsoever when they two are compared together with one another, it may admit discourse and disputation, whether men of high degree, or of low degree, do most violate the laws of God; that is, whether prosperity or adversity make men most obnoxious to sin; yet, when they come to be compared, not with one another, but both with God, this asseveration, this *surely* reaches to both: "*Surely men of low degree are vanity*, and, as *surely*, *men of high degree are a lie*." And though this may seem to leave room for men of middle ranks, and fortunes, and places, that there is a mediocrity that might give an assurance, and an establishment, yet there is no such thing in this case; (*as surely* still) *to be laid in the balance, they are all* (not of low, and all of high degree, all rich, and all poor), but all, of all conditions, *altogether lighter than vanity*. Now, all this doth destroy, not extinguish, not annihilate, that affection in man, of hope and trust, and confidence in anything; but it rectifies that hope, and trust, and confidence, and directs it upon the right object. Trust not in flesh, but in spiritual things, that we neither bend our hope downward, to infernal spirits, to seek help in witches; nor miscarry it upward, to seek it in saints or angels, but fix it in him who is nearer to us than our own souls—our blessed, and gracious, and powerful God, who in this one Psalm is presented unto us by so many names of assurance and confidence: "*my expectation, my salvation, my rock, my defence, my glory, my strength, my refuge*," and the rest... *Men of high degree are a lie*. The Holy Ghost hath been pleased to vary the phrase here, and to call *men of high degree* not "*vanity*," but a *lie*; because the poor, men of low degree, in their condition promise no assistance, feed not men with hope, and therefore cannot be said *to lie*; but in the condition of men of high degree, who are of power, there is a tacit promise, a natural and inherent assurance of protection and assistance flowing from them. For the magistrate cannot say that he never promised me justice, never promised me protection; for in his assuming that place, he made me that promise. I cannot say that I never promised my parish my service; for in my induction I made them that promise, and if I perform it not I am a *lie*: for so this word *chasab* (which we translate a *lie*) is frequently used in the Scriptures, for that which is defective in the duty it should perform: "Thou shalt be a spring of water" (says God in Isaiah), *cujus aquae non mentiuntur*, "whose waters never lie; that is, never dry, never fail. So, then, when men of high degree do not perform the duties of their places, then they are a lie of their own making; and when I overmagnify them in their place, flatter them, humour them, ascribe more to them, expect more from them, rely more upon them than I should, then they are a lie of my making... *To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity*. Vanity is nothing, but there is a condition worse than nothing. Confidence in the things or persons of this world, but most of all a confidence in ourselves, will bring us at last to that state wherein we would fain be nothing, and cannot. But yet we have a *balance* in our text; and all these are but put together in one balance. In the other scale there is something put

too, in comparison whereof all this world is so light. God does not leave our great and noble faculty and affection of hope, and trust, and confidence without something to direct itself upon, and rectify itself in. He does not: for, for that he proposes himself. The words immediately before the text are, *God is a refuge*; and, in comparison of him, *To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.* *John Donne.*

**Verse 9.** *Surely men of low degree are vanity.*

"Who over the herd would wish to reign,  
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!  
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,  
And fickle as a changeful dream;  
Fantastic as a woman's mood,  
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood,  
Thou many headed monster thing,  
O, who would wish to be thy king!"

—*Walter Scott (1771-1832).*

**Verse 9.** *Surely men of low degree are vanity, etc.* Or, *sons of Adam*; of the earthly man; of fallen Adam; one of his immediate sons was called Hebel, *vanity*; and it is true of all his sons, but here it designs only one sort of them; such as are poor and low in the world; mean men, as the phrase is rendered in Isa 2:9; these are subject to sinful vanity; their thoughts are vain, their affections vain, their minds vain, their conversation vain, sinful, foolish, fallacious, and inconstant. *John Gill.*

**Verse 9.** *Men... are a lie.* An active lie—they deceive others; and a passive lie—they are deceived by others; and they who are most actively a lie, are most usually and most deservedly a passive lie, or fed with lies. *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 9.** *Lighter than vanity.* If there were any one among men immortal, not liable to sin, or change, whom it were impossible for any one to overcome, but who was strong as an angel, such a one might be something; but inasmuch as every one is a man, a sinner, mortal, weak, liable to sickness and death, exposed to pain and terror, like Pharaoh, even from the most insignificant animals, and liable to so many miseries that it is impossible to count them, the conclusion must be a valid one: "Man is nothing." *Arndt.*

**Verse 10.** *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery.* Now this robbery and wrong is done two manner of ways—to God and to man. He that putteth his trust for salvation in any other, save in God, loses not only his salvation, but also robs God of his glory, and does God manifest wrong, as much as lieth in him; as the wicked people amongst the Jews did, who said as long as they honoured and trusted unto the queen of heaven, all things prospered with them; but when they hearkened to the true preachers of God's word, all things came into a worse state, and they were

overwhelmed with scarcity and trouble. Hosea 2; Jeremiah 44. He also that puts his trust and confidence in any learning or doctrine beside God's word, not only falls into error and loses the truth; but also, as much as lies in him, he robs God's book of his sufficient truth and verity, and ascribes it to the book of men's decrees; which is as much wrong to God and his book as may be thought or done. In which robbery, or rather sacrilege, no man should put his trust, as the prophet saith. *John Hooper.*

**Verse 10.** *Become not vain in robbery.* What? would he have them serious in robbery? No; the meaning is this: do not trust in a thing of nought; if you rob, oppress, deceive, or wrong others, you trust in a vain thing—in a thing that is not—in a thing that will never do you good: there will be no tack, no hold in anything got in such a manner. When you think to get riches by wrong dealing, or closely circumventing others, you *become vain in robbery.* *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 10.** *If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.* We naturally love riches, and therefore as naturally spend many thoughts, both how to get and how to keep them. If a man have riches, or an increase in riches, it is not unlawful for him to think of them (yet we should be as sparing of our thoughts that way as may be, our thoughts and the bent of our souls should always be upon God), but that which the psalmist forbids is the settling of our hearts; as if he had said, Let not your thoughts stay or dwell here. Riches are themselves transient things, therefore they should have but our transient thoughts. *Set not your hearts upon them,* for they may quickly be unsettled. Samuel bespoke Saul in the same language about a worldly concernment, when he went out to seek his father's asses: "Set not thy mind on them." 1Sa 9:20. It is like Saul was overburdened with this thought, "What's become of, or what shall I do for, my father's asses?" "Be not solicitous about them," saith Samuel, "greater things are towards thee." *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 10.** *If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.* Consider what is here meant by "riches." Indeed, some may imagine that it is hardly possible to mistake the meaning of this common word. Yet, in truth, there are thousands in this mistake; and many of them quite innocently. A person of note hearing a sermon preached upon this subject several years since, between surprise and indignation, broke out aloud, "Why does he talk about riches here? There is no rich man at Whitehaven, but Sir James L——r." And it is true there was none but he that had forty thousand pounds a year, and some millions in ready money. But a man may be rich that has not a hundred a year—not even one thousand pounds in cash. Whosoever has food to eat, and raiment to put on, with something over, is rich. Whoever has the necessaries and conveniences of life for himself and his family, and a little to spare for them that have not, is properly a rich man, unless he is a miser, a lover of money, one that hoards up what he can and ought to give to the poor. For if so, he is a poor man still, though he has millions in the bank; yea, he is the poorest of men; for

"The beggars but a common lot deplore;  
The rich poor man's emphatically poor."

...O! who can convince a rich man that he sets his heart upon riches? For considerably above half a century I have spoken on this head, with all the plainness that was in my power. But with how little effect! I doubt whether I have in all that time convinced fifty misers of covetousness. When the lover of money was described ever so clearly, and painted in the strongest colours, who applied it to himself? To whom did God and all that knew him say, "Thou art the man?" If he speaks to any of you that are present, O do not stop your ears! Rather say, with Zacchaeus, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore him fourfold." He did not mean that he had done this in time past; but that he determined to do so for the time to come. I charge thee before God, thou lover of money, to "go and do likewise.!" I have a message from God unto thee, O rich man! whether thou wilt hear or whether thou wilt forbear. Riches have increased with thee; at the peril of thy soul, "set not thine heart upon them!" Be thankful to him that gave thee such a talent, so much power of doing good. Yet dare not rejoice over them but with fear and trembling. *Cave ne inhaereas*, says pious Kempis, *ne capiaris et pereas*; "Beware thou cleave not unto them, lest thou be entangled and perish." Do not make them thy end, thy chief delight, thy happiness, thy god! See that thou expect not happiness in money, nor anything that is purchasable thereby; in gratifying either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life. *John Wesley's Sermon "On the Danger of Increasing Riches."*

**Verse 10.** *If riches increase*, etc. "The lust of riches," says Valerian, "stirs with its stimulus the hearts of men, as oxen perpetually plough the soil." Hugo, on Isaiah, says: "The more deeply riches are sown in the heart through love, the more deeply will they pierce through grief." *Thomas Le Blanc*.

**Verse 10.** *If riches increase bwg—literally*, "sprout up" *of their own accord*, as distinguished from riches acquired by "oppression" and "robbery." *A. R. Faussett*.

**Verse 10.** Riches have in them uncertainty and deceitfulness. Riches have never been true to those that trusted in them, but have ever proved "a lie in their right hand." Isa 44:20. Hence they are called "lying vanities," Jon 2:8; and compared to a flock of birds sitting upon a man's ground, which upon the least fright, take wing and fly away. Riches have "wings," saith Solomon; and rather than want they will "Make to themselves wings." Pr 23:5. Yea, though they have not the wings so much as of a little sparrow, wherewith to fly to you; yet will they make to themselves the large wings of a great eagle, wherewith to fly from you. Oh, how many have riches served as Absalom's mule served her master, whom she lurched, and left, in his greatest need, hanging betwixt heaven and earth, as if rejected of both! A spark of fire may set them on flying, a thief may steal them, a wicked servant may embezzle and purloin them, a pirate or shipwreck at sea, a robber or bad debtor at land; yea, an hundred ways sets them packing. They are as the apples of Sodom, that look fair yet crumble away with the least touch—golden delusions, a mere mathematical scheme or fancy of man's brain, 1Co 7:31; the semblances and empty show of good without any reality or solid consistency; *nec vera, nec vestra*:

as they are slippery upon the account of verity, so they are no less in respect of prosperity and possession, for they are winged birds, especially in this, that they fly from man to man (as the birds do from tree to tree), and always from the owner of them. This is a sore deceit and cozenage, yet your heart is more deceitful, inasmuch as it will deceive you with these deceitful riches, *a quo aliquid tale est, illus est magis tale*: they are so, because the heart is so. *Christopher Love (1618-1651), in "A Crystal Mirror, or Christian Looking glass," 1679.*

**Verse 10.** *Set not your heart upon them.* The word *tyv* properly is *to place*, to arrange in a fixed firm order, is specially used of the foundation stones of a building being placed fitly and firmly together... Therefore *to set the heart* upon riches is, to fix the mind closely and firmly upon them, to give it wholly up to them with all its powers; at the same time to be puffed up with confidence and arrogance, as Cl. Schultens observes. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verses 10-12.** Our estimate of man depends upon our estimate of God. David knows that men of low and high degree, if separated from the primal fount of every good, weigh *nothing*, and are less than nothing. Riches are nothing, especially ill gotten ones. Man is not to get proud when riches increase. But such is the course of things, that in proportion as the gifts of God are rich, men confide more in the gifts than in the rich giver. But holy David is better instructed. Once and again he has heard the divine voice in his soul, "that power belongeth unto God only." Job 33:14. This powerful God is merciful: can then any merit attach to our poor works? and yet the Lord rendereth to every pious man according to his imperfect pious work. *Agustus F. Tholuck.*

**Verse 12.** *Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.* Something more is necessary to invite us to a dependence on God than his bare *power* and ability to help us. There must be also a firm persuasion of the promptitude and readiness of his will to do what he is able; and this we have in the other attribute of his *mercy*.... "Unto thee, "unto thee *alone*, and unto none else. The most tender mercy amongst the creatures is none at all, being compared with the divine mercy. It belongeth *unto thee*, as thy prerogative and peculiar excellency. Mercy is a peculiar jewel of his crown. Or, *thine, O Lord, is mercy*. Nothing amongst the creature deserves the name of mercy but his own. Nothing is worthy to be so called, but what is proper and peculiar to God. Or, *with thee is mercy*, as it is expressed elsewhere. Ps 130:4,7. It is *with him*; that is, it is inseparable from his nature. He is merciful in a way peculiar to himself, "the Father of mercies." 2Co 1:3. *William Wisheart.*

**Verse 12.** *For thou rendest rest to every man according to his work;* namely—judgment to the wicked, and mercy to the righteous; where the Syriac interpreter giveth the good note: *Est gratia Dei ut reddat homini secunda opera bona, quia merces bonorum operum est ex gratia*: It is mercy in God to set his love on them that keep his commandments. Ex 20:6. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 12.** *Thou renderest to every man according to his work.* Learn to admire the grace of God in rewarding your works. It is much that he accepts them; and what is it, then, that he rewards them? It

is much that he doth not damn you for them, seeing they are all defiled, and have something of sin cleaving to them; and what is it, then, that he crowns them? You would admire the bounty and munificence of a man that should give you a kingdom for taking up a straw at his foot, or give you a hundred thousand pounds for paying him a penny rent you owed him: how, then, should you adore the rich grace and transcendent bounty of God in so largely recompensing such mean services, in setting a crown of glory upon your heads, as the reward of those works which you can scarcely find in your hearts to call good ones! You will even blush one day to see yourselves so much honoured for what you are ashamed of, and are conscious to yourselves that you have deserved nothing by. You will wonder then to see God recompensing you for doing what was your duty to do, and what was his work in you; giving you grace, and crowning that grace; enabling you to do things acceptable to him, and then rewarding you as having done them. *Edward Veal (1708), in "The Morning Exercises."*

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

##### **Verse 1.**

1. *What he did? Waited upon God.* Believed, was patient, was silent in resignation, was obedient.
2. To whom he did it? To his God, who is true, a sovereign, gracious, etc.
3. How he did it? With his soul, truly and only.
4. What came of it? Salvation present, personal, eternal, etc.

**Verse 2.** *God a rock.* David speaks of him as high and strong, and as a rock to stand upon, a rock of defence and refuge, a rock of habitation (Ps 71:3, in Hebrew), and a rock to be praised. Ps 95:1. See the Concordance for many hints. "Christ the Rock:" a Sermon on 1Co 10:4. By RALPH ROBINSON, in "*Christ All and in All.*"

**Verse 2.** (*first clause*). See "SPURGEON'S Sermons", No. 80, "*God alone the Salvation of His People.*"

**Verse 2, 6.** I shall not be greatly moved. I shall not be moved. Growth in faith. How it is produced, preserved, and evidenced.

**Verse 4.** Wherein lies a believer's excellency? Who would cast him down, and why, and how they seek to do it?

**Verse 4.** *They delight in lies.* Those who invent them, or spread them, or laugh at them, or readily believe them. Romanists, self righteous persons, the presumptuous, persecutors, zealous errorists, etc.

**Verse 5.** (*first clause*). See "SPURGEON'S Sermons, "No. 144, "*Waiting only upon God.*"

**Verse 5.** (*second clause*). Great expectations from a great God; because of great promises, great provisions, and great foretastes.

**Verse 5.** (*last clause*). What we expect from God, and why and when?

**Verse 2, 6.** I shall not be greatly moved. I shall not be moved. Growth in faith. How it is produced, preserved, and evidenced.

**Verse 10.** Evils usually connected with the love of riches. Idolatry, covetousness, carking, care, meanness, forgetfulness of God and spiritual truth, neglect of charity, hardness of heart, tendency to injustice, etc. Means for escaping this seductive sin.

**Verse 11.**

1. How God speaks. *"Once,* "plainly, powerfully, immutably, etc.

2. How we should hear. *Twice,* continually, in heart as well as ear, observantly in practice, in spirit as well as in letter.

**Verses 11-12.** The constant union of power and mercy in the language of Scripture.

---

#### WORKS UPON THE SIXTY-SECOND PSALM

An Exposition upon some Select Psalmes of David. Containing *great store of most excellent and comfortable doctrine and instruction for all those that (under the burden of sinne), thirst for comfort in Christ Jesus.* Written by that faithful servant of God, M. ROBERT ROLLOK, sometime pastor in the Church of Edinburgh: and translated out of Latin into English, by CHARLES LUMISDEN. Minister of the Gospel of Christ at Dudingstoun... 1600. (Contains an Exposition of Psalm 62.)

Certain Comfortable Expositions of the constant Martyr of Christ, *John Hooper, bishop of Gloucester and Worcester...* Written in the time of tribulation and imprisonment, upon the Twenty-third, Sixty-second, Seventy-third, and Seventy-seventh Psalms of the prophet David.

#### **Psalm 63**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

---

**TITLE.** *A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.* This was probably written while David was fleeing from Absalom; certainly at the time he wrote it he was king (Ps 63:11), and hard pressed by those who sought his life. David did not leave off singing because he was in the wilderness, neither did he in slovenly idleness go on repeating Psalms intended for other occasions; but he carefully made his worship suitable to his circumstances, and presented to his God a wilderness hymn when he was in the wilderness. There was no desert in his heart, though there was a desert around him. We too may expect to be cast into rough places ere we go hence. In such seasons, may the Eternal Comforter abide with us, and cause us to bless the Lord at all times,

making even the solitary place to become a temple for Jehovah. The distinguishing word of this Psalm is *EARLY*. When the bed is the softest we are most tempted to rise at lazy hours; but when comfort is gone, and the couch is hard, if we rise the earlier to seek the Lord, we have much for which to thank the wilderness.

**DIVISION.** In Ps 63:1-8 verses the writer expresses his holy desires after God, and his confidence in him, and then in Ps 63:9-11 remaining three verses he prophesies the overthrow of all his enemies. This Psalm is peculiarly suitable for the bed of sickness, or in any constrained absence from public worship.

#### EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *O God, thou art my God; or, O God, thou art my Mighty One.* The last Psalm left the echo of *power* ringing in the ear, and it is here remembered. Strong affiance bids the fugitive poet confess his allegiance to the only living God; and firm faith enables him to claim him as his own. He has no doubts about his possession of his God; and why should other believers have any? The straightforward, clear language of this opening sentence would be far more becoming in Christians than the timorous and doubtful expressions so usual among professors. How sweet is such language! Is there any other word comparable to it for delights? *Meus Deus*. Can angels say more? Early will I seek thee. Possession breeds desire. Full assurance is no hindrance to diligence, but is the mainspring of it. How can I seek another man's God? but it is with ardent desire that I seek after him whom I know to be my own. Observe the eagerness implied in the time mentioned; he will not wait for noon or the cool eventide; he is up at cockcrowing to meet his God. Communion with God is so sweet that the chill of the morning is forgotten, and the luxury of the couch is despised. The morning is the time for dew and freshness, and the psalmist consecrates it to prayer and devout fellowship. The best of men have been betimes on their knees. The word *early* has not only the sense of early in the morning, but that of eagerness, immediateness. He who truly longs for God longs for him now. Holy desires are among the most powerful influences that stir our inner nature; hence the next sentence,

My soul thirsteth for thee. Thirst is an insatiable longing after that which is one of the most essential supports of life; there is no reasoning with it, no forgetting it, no despising it, no overcoming it by stoical indifference. Thirst will be heard; the whole man must yield to its power; even thus is it with that divine desire which the grace of God creates in regenerate men; only God himself can satisfy the craving of a soul really aroused by the Holy Spirit. My flesh longeth for thee; by the two words *soul* and *flesh*, he denotes the whole of his being. The *flesh*, in the New Testament sense of it, never longs after the Lord, but rather it lusteth against the spirit; David only refers to that sympathy which is sometimes created in our bodily frame by vehement emotions of the soul. Our corporeal nature



usually tugs in the other direction, but the spirit when ardent can compel it to throw in what power it has upon the other side. When the wilderness caused David weariness, discomfort, and thirst, his flesh cried out in unison with the desire of his soul. In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. A weary place and a weary heart make the presence of God the more desirable: if there be nothing below and nothing within to cheer, it is a thousand mercies that we may look up and find all we need. How frequently have believers traversed in their experience this *dry and thirsty land*, where spiritual joys are things forgotten! and how truly can they testify that the only true necessity of that country is the near presence of their God! The absence of outward comforts can be borne with serenity when we walk with God; and the most lavish multiplication of them avails not when he withdraws. Only after God, therefore, let us pant. Let all desires be gathered into one. Seeking first the kingdom of God—all else shall be added unto us.

**Verse 2.** *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* He longed not so much to see the sanctuary as to see his God; he looked through the veil of ceremonies to the invisible One. Often had his heart been gladdened by communion with God in the outward ordinances, and for this great blessing he sighs again; as well he might, for it is the weightiest of all earth's sorrows for a Christian man to lose the conscious presence of his covenant God. He remembers and mentions the two attributes which had most impressed themselves upon his mind when he had been rapt in adoration in the holy place; upon these his mind had dwelt in the preceding Psalm, and the savour of that contemplation is evidently upon his heart when in the wilderness: these he desires to behold again in the place of his banishment. It is a precious thought that the divine power and glory are not confined in their manifestation to any places or localities; they are to be heard above the roaring of the sea, seen amid the glare of the tempest, felt in the forest and the prairie, and enjoyed wherever there is a heart that longs and thirsts to behold them. Our misery is that we thirst so little for these sublime things, and so much for the mocking trifles of time and sense. We are in very truth always in a weary land, for this is not our rest; and it is marvellous that believers do not more continuously thirst after their portion far beyond the river where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; but shall see the face of their God, and his name shall be in their foreheads. David did not thirst for water or any earthly thing, but only for spiritual manifestations. The sight of God was enough for him, but nothing short of that would content him. How great a friend is he, the very sight of whom is consolation. Oh, my soul, imitate the psalmist, and let all thy desires ascend towards the highest good; longing here to see God, and having no higher joy even for eternity.

**Verse 3.** *Because thy lovingkindness is better than life.* A reason for that which went before, as well as for that which follows. Life is dear, but God's love is dearer. To dwell with God is better than life at its best; life at ease, in a palace, in health, in honour, in wealth, in pleasure; yea, a thousand lives are not equal to the eternal life which abides in Jehovah's smile. In him we truly live, and move, and have

our being; the withdrawal of the light of his countenance is as the shadow of death to us: hence we cannot but long after the Lord's gracious appearing. Life is to many men a doubtful good: lovingkindness is an unquestioned boon: life is but transient, mercy is everlasting: life is shared in by the lowest animals, but the lovingkindness of the Lord is the peculiar portion of the chosen. My lips shall praise thee. Openly, so that thy glory shall be made known, I will tell of thy goodness. Even when our heart is rather desiring than enjoying we should still continue to magnify the Most High, for his love is truly precious; even if we do not personally, for the time being, happen to be rejoicing in it. We ought not to make our praises of God to depend upon our own personal reception of benefits; this would be mere selfishness; even publicans and sinners have a good word for those whose hands are enriching them with gifts; it is the true believer only who will bless the Lord when he takes away his gifts or hides his face.

**Verse 4.** *Thus will I bless thee while I live.* As I now bless thee so will I ever do; or rather, so as thou shalt reveal thy lovingkindness to me, I will in return continue to extol thee. While we live we will love. If we see no cause to rejoice in our estate, we shall always have reason for rejoicing in the Lord. If none others bless God, yet his people will; his very nature, as being the infinitely good God, is a sufficient argument for our praising him as long as we exist. I will lift up my hands in thy name. For worship the hands were uplifted, as also in joy, in thanksgiving, in labour, in confidence; in all these senses we would lift up our hands in Jehovah's name alone. No hands need hang down when God draws near in love. The name of Jesus has often made lame men leap as a hart, and it has made sad men clap their hands for joy.

**Verse 5.** *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.* Though unable to feast on the sacrifice at thine altar, my soul shall even here be filled with spiritual joys, and shall possess a complete, a double contentment. There is in the love of God a richness, a sumptuousness, a fulness of soul filling joy, comparable to the richest food with which the body can be nourished. The Hebrews were more fond of fat than we are, and their highest idea of festive provision is embodied in the two words, *marrow and fatness*: a soul hopeful in God and full of his favour is thus represented as feeding upon the best of the best, the dainties of a royal banquet. And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. More joy, more praise. When the mouth is full of mercy, it should also be full of thanksgiving. When God gives us the marrow of his love, we must present to him the marrow of our hearts. Vocal praise should be rendered to God as well as mental adoration; others see our mercies, let them also hear our thanks.

**Verse 6.** *When I remember thee upon my bed.* Lying awake, the good man betook himself to meditation, and then began to sing. He had a feast in the night, and a song in the night. He turned his bedchamber into an oratory, he consecrated his pillow, his praise anticipated the place of which it is written, "There is no night there." Perhaps the wilderness helped to keep him awake, and if so, all the

ages are debtors to it for this delightful hymn. If day's cares tempt us to forget God, it is well that night's quiet should lead us to remember him. We see best in the dark if we there see God best. And meditate on thee in the night watches. Keeping up sacred worship in my heart as the priests and Levites celebrated it in the sanctuary. Perhaps David had formerly united with those "who by night stand in the house of the Lord, "and now as he could not be with them in person, he remembers the hours as they pass, and unites with the choristers in spirit, blessing Jehovah as they did. It may be, moreover, that the king heard the voices of the sentries as they relieved guard, and each time he returned with renewed solemnity to his meditations upon his God. Night is congenial, in its silence and darkness, to a soul which would forget the world, and rise into a higher sphere. Absorption in the most hallowed of all themes makes watches, which else would be weary, glide away all too rapidly; it causes the lonely and hard couch to yield the most delightful repose—repose more restful than even sleep itself. We read of beds of ivory, but beds of piety are better far. Some revel in the night, but they are not a tithe so happy as those who meditate in God.

**Verse 7.** *Because thou hast been my help.* Meditation had refreshed his memory and recalled to him his past deliverances. It were well if we oftener read our own diaries, especially noting the hand of the Lord in helping us in suffering, want, labour, or dilemma. This is the grand use of memory, to furnish us with proofs of the Lord's faithfulness, and lead us onward to a growing confidence in him. Therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. The very shade of God is sweet to a believer. Under the eagle wings of Jehovah we hide from all fear, and we do this naturally and at once, because we have aforesaid tried and proved both his love and his power. We are not only safe, but happy in God: we *rejoice* as well as repose.

**Verse 8.** *My soul followeth hard after thee,* or is glued to thee. We follow close at the Lord's heels, because we are one with him. Who shall divide us from his love? If we cannot walk with him with equal footsteps, we will at least follow after with all the strength he lends us, earnestly panting to reach him and abide in his fellowship. When professors follow hard after the world, they will fall into the ditch; but none are ever too eager after communion with the Lord. Thy right hand upholdeth me. Else he would not have followed the Lord with constancy, or even have longed after him. The divine power, which has so often been dwelt upon in this and the preceding Psalms, is here mentioned as the source of man's attachment to God. How strong are we when the Lord works in us by his own right hand, and how utterly helpless if he withhold his aid!

**Verse 9.** As David earnestly sought for God, so there were men of another order who as eagerly sought after his blood; of these he speaks: But those that seek my soul, to destroy it. At his life they aimed, at his honour, his best welfare; and this they would not merely injure but utterly ruin. The devil is a destroyer, and all his seed are greedy to do the same mischief; and as he has ruined himself by his crafty devices, so also shall they. Destroyers shall be destroyed. Those who hunt souls shall be

themselves the victims. Shall go into the lower parts of the earth. Into the pits which they digged for others they shall fall themselves. The slayers shall be slain, and the grave shall cover them. The hell which they in their curse invoked for others shall shut its mouth upon them. Every blow aimed against the godly will recoil on the persecutor; he who smites a believer drives a nail in his own coffin.

**Verse 10.** *They shall fall by the sword.* So David's enemies did. They that take the sword shall perish with the sword; bloody men shall feel their own life gushing forth from them, when their evil day shall at last come, and they shall be given up to feel in their own persons the horrors of death. They shall be a portion for foxes. Too mean to be fit food for the lions, the foxes shall sniff around their corpses, and the jackals shall hold carnival over their carcasses. Unburied and unhonoured they shall be meat for the dogs of war. Frequently have malicious men met with a fate so dire as to be evidently the award of retributive justice. Although the great assize is reserved for another world, yet even here, at the common sessions of providence, justice often bares her avenging sword in the eyes of all the people.

**Verse 11.** *But the king shall rejoice in God.* Usurpers shall fade, but he shall flourish; and his prosperity shall be publicly acknowledged as the gift of God. The Lord's anointed shall not fail to offer his joyful thanksgiving: his well established throne shall own the superior lordship of the King of kings; his rejoicing shall be alone in God. When his subjects sing, "*Io triumphe*," he will bid them chant, "*Te Deum.*" Every one that sweareth by him shall glory. His faithful followers shall have occasion for triumph; they shall never need to blush for the oath of their allegiance. Or, "swearing by *him*," may signify adherence to *God*, and worship paid to him. The heathen swore by their gods, and the Israelite called Jehovah to witness to his asseveration; those, therefore, who owned the Lord as their God should have reason to glory when he proved himself the defender of the king's righteous cause, and the destroyer of traitors. But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped. And the sooner the better. If shame will not do it, nor fear, nor reason, then let them be stopped with the sexton's shovelful of earth; for a liar is a human devil, he is the curse of men, and accursed of God, who has comprehensively said, "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." See the difference between the mouth that praises God, and the mouth that forges lies: the first shall never be stopped, but shall sing on for ever; the second shall be made speechless at the bar of God. O Lord, we seek thee and thy truth; deliver us from all malice and slander, and reveal to us thine own self, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

---

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**TITLE.** *When he was in the wilderness of Judah.* Even in Canaan, though a fruitful land, and the people numerous, yet there were wildernesses... It will be so in the world, in the church, but not in heaven... All the straits and difficulties of a wilderness must not put us out of tune for sacred songs;

but even then it is our duty and interest to keep up a cheerful communion with God. There are Psalms proper for a wilderness; and we have reason to thank God it is the wilderness of Judah we are in, not the wilderness of Sin. *Matthew Henry.*

**Title.** *The Wilderness of Judah* is the whole wilderness towards the east of the tribe of Judah, bounded on the north by the tribe of Benjamin, stretching southward to the south west end of the Dead Sea; westward, to the Dead Sea and the Jordan; and eastward to the mountains of Judah. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Title.** *The term wilderness* rkd, as distinguished from hdre, (a *steppe*) was given to a district which was not regularly cultivated and inhabited, but used for pasturage (from rbd, to *drive*), being generally without wood and defective in water, but not entirely destitute of vegetation. *J. P. Lange.*

**Title.** Hagar saw God in the wilderness, and called a well by the name derived from that vision, *Beerlahairoi*. Ge 16:13-14. Moses saw God in the wilderness. Ex 3:1-4. Elijah saw God in the wilderness. 1Ki 19:4-18. David saw God in the wilderness. The Christian church will see God in the wilderness. Re 12:6-14. Every devout soul which has loved to see God in his house will be refreshed by visions of God in the wilderness of solitude, sorrow, sickness, and death. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

**Whole Psalm.** This is unquestionably one of the most beautiful and touching Psalms in the whole Psalter. Donne says of it: "As the whole Book of Psalms is, *oleum offusun* (as the spouse speaks of the name of Christ), an ointment poured out upon all sort of sores, a cerecloth that supplies all bruises, a balm that searches all wounds; so are there some certain Psalms that are imperial Psalms, that command over all affections and spread themselves over all occasions—catholic, universal Psalms, that apply themselves to all necessities. This is one of these; for of those constitutions which are called apostolical, one is that the church should meet every day to sing this Psalm. And, accordingly, St. Chrysostom testifies, `That it was decreed and ordained by the primitive Fathers, that no day should pass without the public singing of this Psalm.'" *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Whole Psalm.** This Psalm is aptly described by Clauss as "A precious confession of a soul thirsting after God and his grace, and finding itself quickened through inward communion with him, and which knows how to commit its outward lot also into his hand." Its lesson is, that the consciousness of communion with God in trouble is the sure pledge of deliverance. This is the peculiar fountain of consolation which is opened up to the sufferer in the Psalm. The Berleb Bible describes it as a Psalm "which proceeds from a spirit really in earnest. It was the favourite Psalm of M. Schade, the famous preacher in Berlin, which he daily prayed with such earnestness and appropriation to himself, that it was impossible to hear it without emotion." *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Verse 1.** *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee* (or, I will diligently seek thee, as merchants precious stones that are of greatest value): *my soul thirsteth for thee.* He doth not say my soul thirsteth for water, but my soul thirsteth for *thee*; nor he doth say my soul thirsteth for the blood of my

enemies, but my soul thirsteth for *thee*; nor he doth not say my soul thirsteth for deliverance out of this dry and thirsty land, where no water is; nor he doth not say my soul thirsteth for a crown, a kingdom, but my soul thirsteth for *thee*, my flesh longeth for *thee*. These words are a notable metaphor, taken from women with child, to note his earnest, ardent, and strong affections towards God. *Thomas Brooks*.

**Verse 1.** *O God*. This is a serious word; pity it should ever be used as a byword. *Matthew Henry*.

**Verse 1.** *My God* in Hebrew is the same word with which the Lord cried out upon the cross to the Father about the ninth hour: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" For in Hebrew, this Psalm begins *Elohim, Eli*. Now, *Elohim* is plural, and *Eli* is singular, to express the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of the Unity, the distinct subsistence of the (three) hypostases, and their consubstantiality. *Psalterium Quin. Fabri stapulensis, 1513*.

**Verse 1.** (*first clause*). In David we have a notable example of a sensitive, tender, self analysing soul, living in sustained communion with God, while deeply sensible of the claims of the civil and religious polity of Israel, and, moreover, while externally devoted to a large round of exacting public duties. And in this Psalm public misfortunes do but force him back upon the central strength of the life of his spirit. For the time his crown, his palace, his honours, the hearts of his people, the love of his child, whom he loved, as we know, with such passing tenderness, are forfeited. The psalmist is alone with God. In his hour of desolation he looks up from the desert to heaven. *O God*, he cried, *thou art my God*. In the original language he does not repeat the word which is translated *God*. In *Elohim*, the true idea of the root is that of awe, while the adjectival form implies permanency. In *Eli*, the second word employed, the etymological idea is that of might, strength. We might paraphrase, "O thou Ever awful One, my Strength, or my Strong God art thou." But the second word, *Eli*, is in itself nothing less than a separate revelation of an entire aspect of the Being of God. It is, indeed, used as a proper and distinct name of God. The pronomial suffixes for the second and third persons are, as Gesenius has remarked, never once found with this name *Eli*; whereas *Eli*, the first person, occurs very frequently in the Psalter alone. We all of us remember it in the words actually uttered by our Lord upon the cross, and which he took from their Syriacised version of Psalm 22. The word unveils a truth unknown beyond the precincts of revelation. It teaches us that the Almighty and Eternal gives himself in the fulness of his Being to the soul that seeks him. Heathenism, indeed, in its cultus of domestic and local deities, of its penates, of its *Oeoi epicwrioi*, bore witness by these superstitions to the deep yearning of the human heart for the individualizing love of a higher power. To know the true God was to know that such a craving was satisfied. *My God*. The word represents not a human impression, or desire, or conceit, but an aspect, a truth, a necessity of the divine nature. Man can, indeed, give himself by halves; he can bestow a little of his thought, of his heart, of his endeavour, upon his brother man. In other words, man can be imperfect in his acts as he is imperfect and finite in his nature. But when

God, the Perfect Being, loves the creature of his hand, he cannot thus divide his love. He must perforce love with the whole directness, and strength, and intensity of his Being; for he is God, and therefore incapable of partial and imperfect action. He must give himself to the single soul with as absolute a completeness as if there were no other being besides it, and, on his side, man knows that this gift of himself by God is thus entire; and in no narrow spirit of ambitious egotism, but as grasping and representing the literal fact, he cries, "*My God.*" Therefore does this word enter so largely into the composition of Hebrew names. Men loved to dwell upon that wondrous relation of the Creator to their personal life which is so strikingly manifested. Therefore, when God had "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," we find St. Paul writing to the Galatians as if his own single soul had been redeemed by the sacrifice of Calvary: "He loved me, and gave himself for me." *Henry Parry Liddon, in "Some Words for God: being Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, 1863-1865."*

**Verse 1. (first clause).** There is a great deal more in it than men of the world are aware of; to say, *O God, thou art my God*, in this connection and conjunction: there is more in it in regard of excellency, and there is more in it in regard of difficulty likewise. It is not an unfruitful thing to say it, and it is not an easy thing to say it neither. It confers a great deal of benefit, and requires a great deal of grace, which belongs unto it, in the truth and reality of it. The benefit of it, first, is very great; yea, in effect all things else. To say God is ours, is to say the whole world is ours, and a great deal more; it is to give us title to everything which may be requisite or convenient for us. Whatever we can desire or stand in need of, it is all wrapped up in this, *Thou art my God*. But then, again, it is a matter of difficulty (as those things which are excellent are). It is a thing which is not so easily said as the world imagines it and thinks it to be. Indeed, it is easy to the mouth, but it is not easy to the heart. It is easy to have a fancy to say it, but it is not to have a faith to say it: this carries some kind of hardship with it, and is not presently attained unto; but the mind of man withdraws from it. There are two states and conditions in which it is very difficult to say, *O God, thou art my God*: the one is the state of nature and unregeneracy; and the other is the state of desertion, and the hiding of God's face from the soul. *Thomas Horton (1673).*

**Verse 1. (second clause).** The relations of God to his people are not bare and empty titles, but they carry some activity with them, both from him towards them, and from them also answerably towards him. Those whom God is a God to, he bestows special favours upon them; and those to whom God is a God, they return special services to him. And so we shall find it to be all along in Scripture, as this David in another place: "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my Lord, I will exalt thee." Ps 118:28. And so here: *Thou art my God; early will I seek thee*. While the servants of God have claimed any interest in him, they have also exhibited duty to him. The text is an expression not only of faith, but likewise of obedience, and so to be looked upon by us. *Thomas Horton.*

**Verse 1.** *Early; in the morning*, before all things, God is to be sought, otherwise he is sought in vain: as the manna, unless collected at early dawn, dissolves. *Simon de Muis.*

**Verse 1.** *My soul thirsteth for thee.* Oh that Christ would come near, and stand still, and give me leave to look upon him! for to look seemeth the poor man's privilege, since he may, for nothing and without hire, behold the sun. I should have a king's life, if I had no other thing to do than for evermore to behold and eye my fair Lord Jesus: nay, suppose I were holden out at heaven's fair entry, I should be happy for evermore, to look through a hole in the door, and see my dearest and fairest Lord's face. O great King! why standest thou aloof? Why remainest thou beyond the mountains? O Well beloved, why dost thou pain a poor soul with delays? A long time out of thy glorious presence is two deaths and two hells to me. We must meet. I must see him, I dow (Am not able to do without him.) not want him. Hunger and longing for Christ hath brought on such a necessity of enjoying Christ that I will not, I dow not want him; for I cannot master nor command Christ's love. *Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661).*

**Verse 1.** *My flesh*, that is, my bodily sensitive appetite, which thirsts, ardently longs for consolation, which it receives from the abounding of spiritual consolation to the soul. This meaning greatly pleases me. God giveth the upper and the nether springs. Rebekah, after drawing water in her pitcher, for Eliezer, Abraham's servant, added, "*I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking,*" Ge 24:19. Jacob dug a well near to Sychar, which was afterwards called Samaria, and as the woman of Samaria said, "*drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle,*" Joh 4:12. When Moses with the rod smote the rock twice, "*the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also,*" Nu 20:11. So God satisfies with this consolation both our higher and lower nature. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 1.** *My flesh longeth for thee.* The verb hmk is used only in this place, and therefore signification of it is rather uncertain, but it will receive light from the Arabic dialect. In Golius's Lexicon it signifies *caligavit oculus, alteratus colore, et mente debilitatus fuit.* His eye grew dim, his colour was changed, and his mind was weakened; and therefore, as used by the psalmist, implies the utmost intenseness of fervency of desire, as though it almost impaired his sight, altered the very hue of his body, and even injured his understanding; effects sometimes of eager and unsatisfied desires. *Samuel Chandler.*

**Verse 1.** *In a dry.* Here we must read uyrak (Keeretz), instead of nyrak (Beeretz), for it is, *like this*, and not, *in this* (which has no force), even like this dry, wearied, and waterless region; so am I for seeing thee in the sanctuary, for beholding thy power and thy glory. *Benjamin Weiss, in a "New Translation of the Book of the Psalms, with Critical Notes,*" etc. 1858. Weiss appears to have the authority of several MSS for this, but he seldom errs in the direction of too little dogmatism. *C. H. S.*

**Verses 1-2.** O God, thou art my God. He embraces him at first word, as we used to do friends at first meeting. *Early will I seek thee, says he: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh (that is, myself) longeth*



*for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.* Surely, David had some extraordinary business now with God to be done for himself, as it follows (Ps 63:2): *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary;* where God had met him, and manifested himself to him... The very sight of a friend rejoiceth a man (Pr 27:17): "As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the face of his friend." It alone whets up joy by a sympathy of spirits; and in answer hereunto it is characteristically to God's people called the seeking of God's face, that is, himself, for so his face is taken: "Thou shalt have no other gods before my face; "that is, thou shalt have myself, or none but myself. Personal communion with God is the end of our graces; for as reason and the intercourse of it makes men sociable one with another, so the divine nature makes us sociable with God himself: and the life we live by is but an engine, a glass to bring God down to us. *Thomas Goodwin.*

**Verses 1-2.** O God, thou art my God. See *Psalms on "Ps 63:1"* for further information.

**Verse 2.** *To see thy power, etc.*

1. It is, or should be, the desire of every Christian to see and enjoy more and more of the glory of God.
2. That the accomplishment of this design is to be sought by a devout and diligent attendance upon the worship of the sanctuary. How is God's character in the sanctuary manifested to believers?
  - (a) By the ministry of reconciliation—by the exhibition of gospel truth.
  - (b) Believers grow in their knowledge of the divine character in the sanctuary, by observing and feeling the application of those great doctrines to the souls of men, by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit.
3. The effects that result to the believer in his history and experience, from an increasing knowledge of the power and glory of God. The effects of this knowledge are great and manifold.
  - (a) The believer, by fresh displays of the divine glory, is disenchanted from the fascination of the world.
  - (b) Another effect of an increasing acquaintance with God, and of every view of the divine glory we obtain, is that the mind is disentangled from the embarrassments into which it is sometimes thrown by the aspect of providence.
  - (c) By seeing the divine power and glory in the sanctuary, we shall have our strength renewed to go on our Christian course afresh.
4. A view of the divine glory crucifies our lusts, and puts the corruptions of our heart to death.
5. Fresh views of the divine power and glory nourish our humility.
6. These views of the divine glory in the sanctuary arm us for our conflict with the last enemy.

Concluding remarks:

1. That it is a characteristic of every good man, that he is devoutly attached to the solemnities of public worship.

2. That his object in going to the sanctuary is definite and distinct. *John Angell James.*

**Verse 2.** *So as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* To converse with ordinances, and not to converse with God; to have to do with ordinances, and not to have to do with God, alas! they are but dry breasts, and a miscarrying womb that will never bring forth the fruits of holiness. Ordinances without God are but like bones that have no marrow in them; they are but like shells without a kernel. Your hearing will be in vain; and your praying will be in vain; there will be no spirit moving, no voice answering, no heart warnings, no soul refreshing, no God meetings. *William Strong (1654), in the "Saints' Communion."*

**Verse 2.** God's glory is in the firmament, in all the creatures, but more especially and fully in the church. Ps 29:9, "In his temple doth every one speak of his glory; "there it is most visible, affecting, and provoking of every one to speak. In the world few take notice of it, but in the temple every one sees it, and speaks of it. The world is God opened, and so glorious; the church is Christ opened, and so very glorious. This made David long to be in the sanctuary when he was in the wilderness; and why so? *To see thy power and thy glory.* Could not David see them in the heavens, in the mountains, in the goodly cedars, and other works of God? Yes, but not as in the sanctuary; and therefore he saith, *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary;* there I have seen thee otherwise than ever elsewhere; there he saw the king upon his throne and in his glory. *William Greenhill.*

**Verse 3.** *Thy lovingkindness is better than life; or, better than lives,* as the Hebrew hath it (chaiim). Divine favour is better than life; it is better than life with all its revenues, with all its appurtenances, as honours, riches, pleasures, applause, etc.; yea, it is better than many lives put together. Now you know at what a high rate men value their lives; they will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an estate, yea, with a limb, yea, limbs, to preserve their lives. As he cried out, "Give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life." Now, though life be so dear and precious to a man, yet a deserted soul prizes the returnings of divine favour upon him above life, yea, above many lives. Many men have been weary of their lives, as is evident in Scripture and history; but no man was ever yet found that was weary of the love and favour of God. No man sets so high a price upon the sun as he that hath long lain in a dark dungeon, etc. *Thomas Brooks.*

**Verse 3.** *Thy lovingkindness is better than life.* The love of life is a very frequent and pernicious snare, which a sense of God's love must deliver us from being entangled by. What so desirable as life, if a man have no place in the heart of God? This is the greatest temporal blessing, and nothing can outdo it, but the favour of the God of our life; and this excels indeed. What comparison is there between the breath in our nostrils, and the favour of an eternal God? any more than there is between an everlasting light and a poor vanishing vapour. Compare Isa 60:19, with Jas 4:14. Who would not, therefore, hate his own life, which hangs in doubt continually before him, and of which he can have

no assurance, when he knows that the living God is his certain portion? Who would not freely yield up and part with ten thousand such lives, one after another (if he had so many), rather than the wrath of God should be kindled but a little. *Timothy Cruso (1657-1697)*.

**Verse 3.** (*first clause*). God's *mercy is better than lives*. What lives? Those which for themselves men have chosen. One hath chosen for himself a life of business, another a country life, another a life of usury, another a military life; one this, another that. Divers are the lives, but *better is thy life than our lives*. Better is that which thou givest to men amended, than that which perverse men choose? One life thou givest, which should be preferred to all our lives, whatsoever in the world we might have chosen. *Augustine*.

**Verse 3.** *Life is an impure good*. It is a good which is implicated and involved with abundance of evils. There are many crosses, and troubles, and calamities, which the life of man is subject unto; which, though it have some comfort in it, yet that comfort is much troubled and mixed yea, but now the favour of God it is good, and nothing but good. As it is said of his blessing, it adds no sorrow with it, nor has it any inconvenience in it, nor has it any evil attendant upon it. *Thomas Horton*.

**Verse 3.** *My lips shall praise thee*. Is it possible that any man should love another and not commend him, nor speak of him? If thou hast but a hawk or a hound that thou lovest, thou wilt commend it; and can it stand with love to Christ, yet seldom or never to speak of him nor of his love, never to commend him unto others, that they may fall in love with him also? You shall see the Spouse (Canticles 5:9, 16) when she was asked, *what her beloved was above others?* she sets him out in every part of him, and concludes with this: "*he is altogether lovely:*" *because thy lovingkindness* (saith David) *is better than life, my lips shall praise thee, and I will bless thee while I live*. Can it stand with this life of love, to be always speaking about worldly affairs, or news at the best; both weekday and Sabbath day, in bed and at board, in good company and in bad, at home and abroad? I tell you, it will be one main reason why you desire to live, that you may make the Lord Jesus known to your children, friends, acquaintance, that so in the ages to come his name might ring, and his memorial might be of sweet odour, from generation to generation. Ps 71:18. If before thy conversion, especially, thou hast poisoned others by thy vain and corrupt speeches, after thy conversion thou wilt seek to season the hearts of others by a gracious, sweet, and wise communication of savoury and blessed speeches; what the Lord hath taught thee thou wilt talk of it unto others, for the sake of him whom thou lovest. *Thomas Sheppard (1605-1649), in "The Sound Believer."*

**Verses 3-6.** David exalts *lovingkindness* as a queen above all other, even the most precious, blessings bestowed upon him, *because thy lovingkindness is better than (above) life*. Around her throne he places seven members of his body and faculties of his mind, as the seven chief angels... who stand before the Lord, that they may praise and admire her; these are his lips, his tongue, his hands, his will, his mouth, his memory, and his intellect. For first, he extols the lovingkindness of God

with his lips (Ps 63:3): *My lips shall praise thee*. Secondly, with his tongue (Ps 63:4): *Thus will I bless thee while I live*. Thirdly, with his hands: *I will lift up my hands in thy name*. Fourthly, with his will (Ps 63:5): *MY soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness*. Fifthly, with his mouth: *And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips*. Sixthly, with his memory (Ps 63:6): *When I remember thee upon my bed*. Seventhly, and lastly, with his intellect: *And meditate on thee in the night watches*. Thomas Le Blanc.

**Verse 6.** *When I remember thee upon my bed, (and) meditate on thee in the night watches*. Thus the English version connects this verse with Ps 63:5. But the division of the strophes renders the following translation preferable, which, moreover, obviates the need of supplying "and:" *Whenever I remember thee upon my bed, I meditate on thee in the night watches*. The remembrance of thee on my bed so engrosses me, that I cannot draw my mind off the thought, so as to fall into the obliviousness of sleep; I often meditate on thee through the whole night watches. So Ps 119:55,148 1:2. The Hebrew is *beds*; probably alluding to the fact that in his unsettled life in exile, he seldom slept for many nights in the same bed, but through fear of adversaries slept in different places. There were three night watches: *the first* (La 2:19); *the middle* (Jud 7:19); *the third, or morning watch* (Ex 19:24 1Sa 2:11). In the New Testament, the Roman usage of four prevails. A. R. Faussett.

**Verse 6.** *Remember—and meditate*. The *meditation* of anything hath more sweetness in it than bare remembrance. The memory is the chest to lay up a truth, but meditation is the palate to feed upon it. The memory is like the ark in which the manna was laid up; meditation is like Israel's eating of the manna. When David began to meditate upon God, it *was sweet* to him as marrow. There is as much difference between a truth remembered and a truth meditated, as between a cordial in the glass and a cordial drunk down. John Wells (1668), in "*Sabbath Holiness*."

**Verse 6.** *Upon my bed*. The *bed* may be looked upon as a place for the remembrance of God in it, according to a threefold notion.

1. As a *place of choice*. In the bed, of choice, rather than anywhere else, where I am left to my liberty. David when he had a mind to remember God, he would make choice of his bed for it, as most suitable and agreeable to it. In case of excessive weariness contracted to the body from some occasion (this is often put accidentally in Scripture), "To commune with our hearts upon our bed," etc., the occasion of it here; it may fall out that the bed may be the fittest place for such a duty as this. Ps 4:4.

2. As it is a *place of necessity*. In my bed at least, when I cannot anywhere else, as having restraints upon me. David, when (as now it was with him) he was detained from the public ordinances, whether by sickness, or any other impediment which he could not withstand, yet he would not now wholly forget God; he would remember him even in his bed. This is another notion in which we may take it.

3. As a *place of indifference*; that is, there as well as anywhere besides. I will not only remember thee

when I am up, when I shall make it my business to remember thee, but even in my bed too. I will take an occasion and opportunity to remember thee there. By commending myself to thee, when I lie down to rest, and acknowledging and owning of thee when I first awake. *Thomas Horton*.

**Verse 6.** There were *night watches* kept in the tabernacle, for praising God (Ps 134:1), which it is probable David, when he had liberty, joined with the Levites in: but now he could not keep place with them, he kept time with them, and wished himself among them. *Matthew Henry*.

**Verse 8.** *My soul followeth hard after thee.* This is the language of a good man in his worst frames; for when he has lost his nearness to God, he will be uneasy till he has again obtained it, and will follow after it with all his might. It is also his language in his best frames; for when he knows and enjoys most of God, he wants to know and enjoy more. But it may especially be considered as the language of an afflicted and seeking soul, not sinking under its burden, but earnestly breathing after deliverance, and supported by the prospect of obtaining it. Hence it follows, *Thy right hand upholdeth me...*

I shall consider what is implied in the soul's following hard after God, and then enquire the reason of it.

1. Following hard after God supposes,

(a) A previous acquaintance with him. An unknown good, be it ever so desirable in itself, cannot be the object of desire. Hence, when God shines into the heart, it is to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as the foundation of all gracious exercises, and especially as the source of all fervent desires after him.

(b) Following hard after God is expressive of ardent and intense desires. It does not consist in cold and languid wishes, but insatiable longings after communion with God and conformity to his will.

(c) It implies laborious exertion. *My soul followeth, it followeth hard after thee.* Not earth nor heaven merely is the object of pursuit, but God himself. And the desires of a truly renewed soul are not sluggish and ineffectual; they lead him to the use of all appointed means, and to the exertion of his utmost endeavours till the object be attained.

(d) Perseverance in seeking. *To follow* implies this, and to follow *hard* implies it more strongly. It is as if the psalmist had said, "Does God retire? I will pursue. Does he withhold the blessing? I will wrestle with him till I obtain it. He long waited to be gracious, and I will now wait till he is so."

2. We are to enquire the reason why David thus followed hard after God.

(a) Guilt and distress followed hard after him.

(b) His enemies also followed hard after him. Satan did so, and once and again caused him to stumble and fall.

(c) He had followed hard after other things to no purpose.

(d) We may add the powerful attractions of divine grace. *Condensed from Benjamin Beddome's*

Sermon, "The Christian's Pursuit, " in "Short Discourses," 1809.

**Verse 8.** *My soul followeth hard after thee.* kyrha hqbd The primary sense of qbd is *agglutnavit*, to glue together; from thence it signifies figuratively to *associate*, to adhere to, to be united with; and particularly to be firmly united with strong affection. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, wyvak qbdw, and cleave to his wife; "properly, be closely united and compacted with his wife, with the most permanent affection. Ge 2:24. The psalmist, therefore, means that his soul adhered to God with the warmest affection, and longed to offer up his sacrifice of praise in his sanctuary. *Samuel Chandler.*

**Verse 8.** *My soul followeth hard after thee.* tqkd, *adhaesit, adherescit anima mea post te:* My soul cleaves after thee, as do things which hang by another; the root is of so great frequency in Scripture, as of enquiry amongst critics; it imports here the posture of David's spirit, and speaketh it close to God; and so depending upon him, as nothing could loosen it from him: Satan's subtlety, Saul's cruelty, his own personal loss and indemnity, are not all of them of any force or dexterity, to cut asunder or untie the Gordian knot of this unity. The cleaving of David's spirit was a gluing of the Lord's spirit: a marriage of the Lord's making is altogether incapable of the devil's breaking. It is no wonder David's words report him so much devoted to God, seeing with the same breath they speak him supported by God; *Thy right hand upholdeth me,* saith he. *Alexander Pringle, in "A Stay in Trouble; or the Saint's Rest in the Evil Day," 1657.*

**Verse 8.** *My soul followeth hard after thee.* The original is kyrxa yvkg *My soul cleaves after thee.* As if he had said, Go, lead on, my God! Behold, I follow as near, as close, as I can; *e vestigio;* I would not leave any distance, but pursue thy footsteps, step by step, leaning upon thine everlasting arms, that are underneath me, and following thy manuduction. *John Gibbon, in "The Morning Exercises," 1661.*

**Verse 8.** The *soul's* following, and following *hard* after God—what means this? Surely it intends much more than a languid, inert inclination; or "the desire of the slothful which killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour." It evinces an intenseness of concern that quickens and rouses the man into life and earnestness; that draws his very soul along with it; that reconciles him to every needful exertion and sacrifice, however trying; and urges him to persevere, whatever difficulties or discouragements he meets with in his course. And sometimes the distance is long, and the progress up hill, and the road rough, and the weather unfriendly, and enemies would thrust us back; and sometimes we lose sight of him, and ask those we meet: "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" and when we spy him again, he seems to advance as we advance, and when we gain upon him and get nearer, he seems to look back and frown, and tell us to retire. The exercises and feelings of Christians in the divine life will enable them to explain these allusions. Who among them all has not, like the Jews, been sometimes "discouraged because of the way?" Who has not resembled Barak's adherents—"Faith, yet pursuing?" Who has not frequently said, *My soul followeth hard after thee?*

*William Jay.*

**Verses 9-10.** If the psalmist's divine longing was unquenched, so also was his faith; and in the latter part of the psalm he foretells with full assurance the final overthrow of his enemies. Nor did his denunciations fail to meet with a certain accuracy of fulfilment even in the battle by which his own deliverance was effected. The armies encountered in the wood of Ephraim, across the Jordan; there was "a greater slaughter that day of twenty thousand men; "and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured." That David's words concerning the *lower parts of the earth*, and the *sword*, and the *foxes*, had not been idly spoken: the pitfalls of the forest, and the swords of the royal pursuers, and the wild beasts that had there made their lairs, all effectually did their work; and the fate of the rebel army was shared by their leader, who, caught in the thick boughs of the oak, pierced through the heart by Joab, and cut down by his attendants, received no further funeral honours than to be cast "into a great pit in the wood, "and have "a very great heap of stones" laid upon him to cover him. *Joseph Francis Thrupp, in "An Introduction to the Study and Use of the Psalms," 1860.*

**Verse 10.** *They shall fall.* The word is ordinarily applied to *water*. 2Sa 14:14 La 3:49. But here, by the immediate mention of the *sword*, it is restrained to the *effusion of blood*, and being in the third person plural, in the active sense, it is after the Hebrew idiom to be interpreted in the passive sense, *they shall pour out by the hand of the sword, i.e., they shall be poured out by the sword*, the *hand* of the *sword* being no more than the edge of the sword. *Henry Hammond.*

**Verse 10.** *They shall be a portion for foxes.* Beasts were given to men for their food, but here men are given to beasts for a prey. A lamentable spectacle to see the vilest of all creatures ravenously feast themselves with the flesh of the noblest, and irrespectively hale and tear in pieces the caskets which whilome enclosed the richest jewel in the world. Is it not against the law of nature that men should become beasts' meat; yea, the meat of such beasts as are carrion, and not man's meat? Questionless it is, yet nature giveth her consent to this kind of punishment of unnatural crimes. For it is consonant to reason, that the law of nature should be broken in their punishment who brake it in their sin; that they who devoured men like beasts should be devoured of beasts like men, that they who with their hands offered unnatural violence to their sovereign should suffer the like by the claws and teeth of wild beasts, their slaves; that they who bear a fox in their breast in their life, should be entombed in the belly of a fox at their death. St. Austin, expounding this whole prophecy of Christ, yieldeth a special reason of this judgment of God by which the Jews were condemned to foxes. The Jews, saith he, therefore killed Christ that they might not lose their country; but, indeed, they therefore lost their country because they killed Christ; because they refused the Lamb, and chose Herod the fox before him, therefore by the just retribution of the Almighty, they were allotted to the foxes for their portion. Notwithstanding this allusion of St. Austin to foxes in special, Jansenius and

other expositors extend this grant in my text to all wild beasts and fowls, which are, as it were, impatient with the fox, and have full power and liberty given them to seize upon the corpses of traitors to God and their country; but foxes bear the name because they abound in those parts where was such store of them, that Samson in a short time, with a wet finger, caught three hundred. *Daniel Featley, D.D., in "Clavis Mystica," 1636.*

**Verse 10.** *They shall be a portion for foxes.* If the body of a human being were to be left on the ground, the *jackals* would certainly leave but little traces of it; and in the olden times of warfare, they must have held high revelry in the battle fields after the armies had retired. It is to this propensity of the *jackal* that David refers—himself a man of war, who had fought on many a battle field, and must have seen the carcasses of the slain mangled by those nocturnal prowlers. *J. G. Wood.*

**Verse 10.** What a doom is that which David pronounces upon those who seek the soul of the righteous to destroy it: *They shall be a portion for foxes;* by which *jackals* are meant, as I suppose. These sinister, guilty, woebegone brutes, when pressed with hunger, gather in gangs among the graves, and yell in rage, and fight like fiends over their midnight orgies; but on the battle field is their great carnival. Oh! let me never even dream that any one dear to me has *fallen by the sword*, and lies there to be torn, and gnawed at, and dragged about by these hideous howlers. *W. M. Thomson, D.D., in "The Land and the Book," 1861.*

**Verse 11.** *Every one that sweareth by him, i.e., to David, that comes into his interest, and takes an oath of allegiance to him, shall glory in his success. Or, that swears by him, i.e., by the blessed name of God, and not by any idol. De 6:15.* And then it means all good people that make a sincere and open profession of God's name: they shall glory in God; they shall glory in David's advancement: "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me." They that heartily espouse the cause of Christ, shall glory in its victory at last. "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." *Matthew Henry.*

---

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Verse 1. (first clause).** While the Atheist says, "No God, "and the heathen worship "gods many, "the true believer says, "O God, thou art my God." He is so,

1. By choice.
2. By covenant.
3. By confession.

**Verse 1. (second clause).** Seeking God *early*.

1. Early in respect of *life*.
2. Early in respect of *diligence*.
3. Early in respect of (*fervour*.)
4. Early in respect of *times* or *continuance*. *Alexander Shanks.*



**Verse 1.** (*second clause*). *Earnest seeking*. That which is longed for will be eagerly sought.

1. The soul is *resolute*. *I will seek*.
2. The soul is *reasonable*. *I will seek*.
3. The soul is *ready*. *Early will I*.
4. The soul is *persevering*.

Let this be the resolution of both saved and unsaved. *G. J. K.*

**Verse 3.**

1. *Love's resolution*. *My lips shall praise thee*.

(a) *To praise*. This is congenial to the renewed nature. It delights not in grumbling, reproaching, or scolding. Praise expresses appreciation, gratitude, happiness, affection.

(b) *To praise God*.

(c) *To praise God practically*. *My lips*. By speaking well *to* him; by speaking well *of* him; of his wisdom, justice, love, grace, etc.

(d) *To praise God continually*. *As long as I live, etc*.

2. *Love's reason*. *Because thy lovingkindness*. Love must praise God because—

(a) It owes its existence to him. "We love him because he first loved us."

(b) Because it is fostered by him. "The love of God is shed abroad, "etc.

(c) Because the expressions of his love demand praise. "Kindness" to needy, helpless, lost. *Lovingkindness*, not wounding our natures. *Better than life*; either the principle, pleasures, or pursuits of life. *G. J. K.*

**Verse 3.** *Thy lovingkindness is better than life*.

1. *Love enjoyed with life*.
2. *Love compared with life*.
3. *Love preferred to life*. *G. J. K.*

**Verses 5-6.**

1. *The empty vessel filled*. How? By meditation. With what? God's goodness as marrow and fatness. To what extent? Satisfaction.

2. *The full vessel running over*. *My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips*. The soul overflows with praise—joyful praise. *G. J. K.*

**Verses 5-6.** Describe the nature of, and show the intimate connection between 1. the believer's employments and 2. his enjoyments. *J. S. Bruce*.

**Verse 7.** A well founded resolve.

1. Upon what based.
2. How expressed. *J. S. B.*

**Verse 8.**

1. *The soul's pursuit after God.* It follows, (a) In desire. (b) In action. (c) Earnestly. (d) Quickly. (e) Closely.

2. *The soul's support. Thy right hand upholdeth me,* the arm of strength. In doing and bearing. G. J. K.

**Verse 8.** "A mighty hunter before the Lord."

1. The object of pursuit: *Thee.*

2. The manner of pursuit: *Hard after.*

3. The dangers encountered. J. S. B.

**Verse 8.** (*second clause*). God's right hand upholds his people three ways.

1. As to *sin*; lest they should fall by it.

2. As to *suffering*; lest they should sink under it.

3. As to *duty*; lest they should decline from it. W. Jay.

**Verses 9-10.**

1. The enemies of the Christian. Evil spirits, evil men, evil habits, etc., etc.

2. Their intent. To destroy the soul.

3. Their fall. Certain, shameful, destructive.

4. Their future. Hell is reserved for them G. J. K.

**Verse 11.** Three topics.

1. Royal rejoicing.

2. Lawful swearing.

3. Evil speaking.

---

WORKS UPON THE SIXTY-THIRD PSALM

CHANDLER'S "*Life of David*" contains an Exposition of this Psalm. Vol. 1, pp. 130-4.

"An Exposition of the 63 Psalm, "in eight Sermons, in "*Choice and Practical Expositions on four Select Psalms...* By THOMAS HORTON, D.D., 1675." (Folio.)

Twelve Sermons (on Ps 63:1-8) in "*Sermons on various Practical Subjects.* By ALEXANDER SHANKS (1731-1799), late Minister of the Associate Congregation of Jedburgh, Edinburgh, 1081."

**Psalm 64**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

---

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician.* The leader of the choir, for the time being, is charged with this song. It

were well if the chief musicians of all our congregations estimated their duty at its due solemnity, for it is no mean thing to be called to lead the sacred song of God's people, and the responsibility is by no means light. *A Psalm of David.* His life was one of conflict, and very seldom does he finish a Psalm without mentioning his enemies; in this instance his thoughts are wholly occupied with prayer against them.

**DIVISION.** From Ps 64:1-6 he describes the cruelty and craftiness of his foes, and from Ps 64:7-10 he prophesies their overthrow.

#### EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer.* It often helps devotion if we are able to use the voice and speak audibly; but even mental prayer has a voice with God which he will hear. We do not read that Moses had spoken with his lips at the Red Sea, and yet the Lord said to him, "Why criest thou unto me?" Prayers which are unheard on earth may be among the best heard in heaven. It is our duty to note how constantly David turns to prayer; it is his battle axe and weapon of war; he uses it under every pressure, whether of inward sin or outward wrath, foreign invasion or domestic rebellion. We shall act wisely if we make prayer to God our first and best trusted resource in every hour of need. Preserve my life from fear of the enemy. From harm and dread of harm protect me; or it may be read as an expression of his assurance that it would be so; "from fear of the foe thou wilt preserve me." With all our sacrifices of prayer we should offer the salt of faith.

**Verse 2.** *Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked.* From their hidden snares hide me. Circumvent their counsel; let their secrets be met by thy secret providence, their counsels of malice by thy counsels of love. From the insurrection of the workers of iniquity. When their secret counsels break forth into clamorous tumults, be thou still my preserver. When they think evil, let thy divine thoughts defeat them; and when they do evil, let thy powerful justice overthrow them: in both cases, let me be out of reach of their cruel hand, and even out of sight of their evil eye. It is a good thing to conquer malicious foes, but a better thing still to be screened from all conflict with them, by being hidden from the strife. The Lord knows how to give his people peace, and when he wills to make quiet, he is more than a match for all disturbers, and can defeat alike their deep laid plots and their overt hostilities.

**Verse 3.** *Who whet their tongue like a sword.* Slander has ever been the master weapon of the good man's enemies, and great is the care of the malicious to use it effectively. As warriors grind their swords, to give them an edge which will cut deep and wound desperately, so do the unscrupulous invent falsehoods which shall be calculated to inflict pain, to stab the reputation, to kill the honour of the righteous. What is there which an evil tongue will not say? What misery will it not labour to inflict? And bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words. Far off they dart their calumnies, as

archers shoot their poisoned arrows. They studiously and with force prepare their speech as bent bows, and then with cool, deliberate aim, they let fly the shaft which they have dipped in bitterness. To sting, to inflict anguish, to destroy, is their one design. Insult, sarcasm, taunting defiance, nicknaming, all these were practised among Orientals as a kind of art; and if in these Western regions, with more refined manners, we are less addicted to the use of rough abuse, it is yet to be feared that the less apparent venom of the tongue inflicts none the less poignant pain. However, in all cases, let us fly to the Lord for help. David had but the one resource of prayer against the twofold weapons of the wicked, for defence against sword or arrow he used the one defence of faith in God.

**Verse 4.** *That they may shoot in secret at the perfect.* They lie in ambush, with bows ready bent to aim a coward's shaft at the upright man. Sincere and upright conduct will not secure us from the assaults of slander. The devil shot at our Lord himself, and we may rest assured he has a fiery dart in reserve for us; He was absolutely perfect, we are only so in a relative sense, hence in us there is fuel for fiery darts to kindle on. Observe the meanness of malicious men; they will not accept fair combat, they shun the open field, and skulk in the bushes, lying in ambush against those who are not so acquainted with deceit as to suspect their treachery, and are too manly to imitate their despicable modes of warfare. Suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not. To secrecy they add suddenness. They give their unsuspecting victim no chance of defending himself; they pounce on him like a wild beast leaping on its prey. They lay their plans so warily that they fear no detection. We have seen in daily life the arrow of calumny wounding its victim sorely; and yet we have not been able to discover the quarter from which the weapon was shot, nor to detect the hand which forged the arrowhead, or tinged it with the poison. Is it possible for justice to invent a punishment sufficiently severe to meet the case of the dastard who defiles my good name, and remains himself in concealment? An open liar is an angel compared with this demon. Vipers and cobras are harmless and amiable creatures compared with such a reptile. The devil himself might blush at being the father of so base an offspring.

**Verse 5.** *They encourage themselves in an evil matter.* Good men are frequently discouraged, and not infrequently discourage one another, but the children of darkness are wise in their generation and keep their spirits up, and each one has a cheering word to say to his fellow villain. Anything by which they can strengthen each other's hands in their one common design they resort to; their hearts are thoroughly in their black work. They commune of laying snares privily. Laying their heads together they count and recount their various devices, so as to come at some new and masterly device. They know the benefit of cooperation, and are not sparing in it; they pour their experience into one common fund, they teach each other fresh methods. They say, Who shall see them? So sedulously do they mask their attacks, that they defy discovery; their pitfalls are too well hidden, and themselves too carefully concealed to be found out. So they think, but they forget the all seeing eye, and the all

discovering hand, which are ever hard by them. Great plots are usually laid bare. As in the Gunpowder Plot, there is usually a breakdown somewhere or other; among the conspirators themselves truth finds an ally, or the stones of the field cry out against them. Let no Christian be in bondage through fear of deep laid Jesuitical schemes, for surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel; the toils of the net are broken, the arrows of the bow are snapped, the devices of the wicked are foiled. Therefore, fear not, ye tremblers; for the Lord is at your right hand, and ye shall not be hurt of the enemy.

**Verse 6.** *They search out iniquities.* Diligently they consider, invent, devise, and seek for wicked plans to wreak their malice. These are no common villains, but explorers in iniquity, inventors and concoctors of evil. Sad indeed it is that to ruin a good man the evil disposed will often show as much avidity as if they were searching after treasure. The Inquisition could display instruments of torture, revealing as much skill as the machinery of our modern exhibitions. The deep places of history, manifesting most the skill of the human mind, are those in which revenge has arranged diplomacy, and used intrigue to compass its diabolical purposes. They accomplish a diligent search. Their design is perfected, consummated, and brought into working order. They cry "Eureka; "they have sought and found the sure method of vengeance. Exquisite are the refinements of malice! hell's craft furnishes inspiration to the *artistes* who fashion deceit. Earth and the places under it are ransacked for the *material* of war, and profound skill turns all to account. Both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is *deep*. No superficial wit is theirs; but sagacity, sharpened by practice and keen hatred. Wicked men have frequently the craft to hasten slowly, to please in order to ruin, to flatter that ere long they may devour, to bow the knee that they may ultimately crush beneath their foot. He who deals with the serpent's seed has good need of the wisdom which is from above: the generation of vipers twist and turn, wind and wiggle, yet evermore they are set upon their purpose, and go the nearest way to it when they wander round about. Alas! how dangerous is the believer's condition, and how readily may he be overcome if left to himself. This is the complaint of reason and the moan of unbelief. When faith comes in, we see that even in all this the saints are still secure, for they are all in the hands of God.

**Verse 7.** *But God shall shoot at them with an arrow.* They shot, and shall be shot. A greater archer than they are shall take sure aim at their hearts. One of his arrows shall be enough, for he never misses his aim. The Lord turns the tables on his adversaries, and defeats them at their own weapons. Suddenly shall they be wounded. They were looking to surprise the saint, but, lo! they are taken at unawares themselves; they desired to inflict deadly wounds, and are smitten themselves with wounds which none can heal. While they were bending their bows, the great Lord had prepared his bow already, and he let slip the shaft when least they looked for such an unsparing messenger of justice. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." The righteous need not learn the arts of self

defence or of attack, their avenging is in better hands than their own.

**Verse 9.** *And all men shall fear.* They shall be filled with awe by the just judgments of God, as the Canaanites were by the overthrow of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. Those who might have been bold in sin shall be made to tremble and to stand in awe of the righteous Judge. And shall declare the work of God. It shall become the subject of general conversation. So strange, so pointed, so terrible shall be the Lord's overthrow of the malicious, that it shall be spoken of in all companies. They sinned secretly, but their punishment shall be wrought before the face of the sun. For they shall wisely consider of his doing. The judgments of God are frequently so clear and manifest that men cannot misread them, and if they have any thought at all, they must extract the true teaching from them. Some of the divine judgments are a great deep, but in the case of malicious persecutors the matter is plain enough, and the most illiterate can understand.

**Verse 10.** *The righteous shall be glad in the Lord.* Admiring his justice and fully acquiescing in its displays, they shall also rejoice at the rescue of injured innocence yet, their joy shall not be selfish or sensual, but altogether in reference to the Lord. And shall trust in him. Their observation of providence shall increase their faith; since he who fulfils his threatenings will not forget his promises. And all the upright in heart shall glory. The victory of the oppressed shall be the victory of all upright men; the whole host of the elect shall rejoice in the triumph of virtue. While strangers fear, the children are glad in view of their Father's power and justice. That which alarms the evil, cheers the good. Lord God of mercy, grant to us to be preserved from all our enemies, and saved in thy Son with an everlasting salvation.

---

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Whole Psalm.** This Psalm is applied by R. Obadiah to Haman and Mordecai. The enemy is Haman, the perfect man shot at is Mordecai; about whom Haman communed with his friends to lay snares for him, and search diligently for occasions against him and his people, which issued in his own destruction. The ancient Midrash of the Jews applies it to Daniel, when cast into the den of lions; and Jarchi supposes that David, by a spirit of prophecy, foresaw it, and prayed for him who was of his seed; and that everything in the Psalm beautifully falls in with that account. Daniel is the perfect man aimed at; the enemy are the princes of Darius's court, who consulted against him, communed of laying snares for him, and gained their point, which proved their own ruin. But the Psalm literally belongs to David, by whom it was composed. *John Gill.*

**Whole Psalm.** A cry of God's elect, when persecuted for righteousness' sake, to their Deliverer and sure Avenger. The general principle stated is very clear. The Psalm will adjust itself, as an experimental utterance, to the lips of Christian faith wherever brought into contact with the evil forces of the prince of this world, so as to suffer affliction for the gospel's sake; for it expresses the condition

and the hope of one actually imperilled for the truth. How aptly a portion of this Psalm applies to the suffering Truth Himself in the days of his affliction, when, pierced in his spirit by lying words, he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, needs not be pointed out. *Arthur Pridham, in "Notes and Reflections on the Psalms," 1869.*

**Verse 1.** *Preserve my life.* Hebrew, *lives*; so called for the many faculties, operations, revolutions, and commodities of life. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 3.** *Who whet their tongue,* etc. The verb means, says Parkhurst, "to whet, sharpen, "which is performed by *reiterated* motion of friction; and by a beautiful metaphor it is applied to a wicked tongue. It has, however, been rendered, *vibrate*, as it is certain a serpent does his tongue. *Richard Mant.*

**Verse 3.** The ingenuity of man has been wonderfully tasked and exercised in two things, inventing destructive weapons of war, and devising various methods of ruining men by wicked words. The list of the former is found in military writings. But the various forms of evil speaking can hardly be catalogued. Evil speakers have arrows, sharp, barbed, dipped in poison. They have "swords, flaming swords, two edged swords, drawn swords, drawn in anger, with which they cut, and wound, and kill the good name of their neighbour." Sins of the tongue are commonly very cruel. When slander is secret, as it commonly is, you cannot defend yourself from its assaults. Its canons are infernal. One of them is, "If a lie will do better than the truth, tell a lie." Another is, "Heap on reproach; some of it will stick." *William S. Plumer.*

**Verses 3-4.** We saw in the Museum at Venice an instrument with which one of the old Italian tyrants was accustomed to shoot poisoned needles at the objects of his wanton malignity. We thought of gossips, backbiters, and secret slanderers, and wished that their mischievous devices might come to a speedy end. Their weapons of innuendo, shrug, and whisper, appear to be as insignificant as needles: but the venom which they instil is deadly to many a reputation. *C. H. Spurgeon, in "Feathers for Arrows; or, Illustrations for Preachers and Teachers," 1870.*

**Verses 3-4.** David, upon sad experience, compares a wicked, reviling tongue to three fatal weapons—a *razor*, a *sword*, and an *arrow*. To a *razor*, such a one as will take off every little hair: so a reviling tongue will not only take advantage of every gross sin committed by others, but those peccadilloes, the least infirmities which others better qualified cannot so much as discern; secondly, to a *sword* that wounds: so the tongues of reproaching men cut deeply into the credits and reputations of their brethren, but a sword doth mischief only near hand, not afar off; and, therefore, it is in the third place compared to an *arrow*, that can hit at a distance: and so revilers do not ill offices to those only in the parish or town where they live, but to others far remote. How much, then, doth it concern every man to walk circumspectly; to give no just cause of reproach, not to make himself a scorn to the fools of the world; but, if they will reproach (as certainly they will), let it be for forwardness

in God's ways, and not for sin, that so the reproach may fall upon their own heads, and their scandalous language into their own throats. *Jeremiah Burroughs*.

**Verses 3, 7-8.** The most mischievous weapons of the wicked are *words, even bitter words*; but *the Word* is the chief weapon of the Holy Spirit: and as with this sword the great Captain foiled the tempter in the wilderness, so may we vanquish "the workers of iniquity" with the true Jerusalem blade. *J. L. K.*

**Verse 4.** *That they may shoot in secret.* The wicked are said to shoot their arrows *in secret* at the perfect; and then "they say, Who shall see them?" Ps 64:5. Thus Satan lets fly a temptation so secretly, that he is hardly suspected in the thing. Sometimes he useth a wife's tongue to do his errand; another while he gets behind the back of a husband, friend, servant, etc., and is not seen all the while he is doing his work. Who would have thought to have found a devil in Peter, tempting his Master, or suspected that Abraham should be the instrument to betray his beloved wife into the hands of a sin? yet it was so. Nay, sometimes he is so secret, that he borrows God's bow to shoot his arrows from, and the poor Christian is abused, thinking it is God chides and is angry, when it is the devil tempts him to think so, and only counterfeits God's voice. *William Gurnall*.

**Verse 8.** (*first clause*).

In these cases,

We still have judgment here, that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor: This even handed justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice  
To our own lips. *William Shakespeare*.

**Verse 8.** *Their own tongue to fall upon themselves.* That is, their own words shall be brought as a testimony against them, and condemn them. "The tongue is a little member" (Jas 3:5), and therefore a light member; yet it falls heavy, as heavy as lead. A man were better have his house fall upon him, than that, in this sense, his tongue should fall upon him. Some have been pressed to death because they would not speak, but stood mute before the judge; but more have been pressed to death by their sinful freedom, or rather licentiousness in speaking; this hath brought them to judgment, and cast them in judgment... A strange thing, that the fall of a man's tongue should oppress his body and whole estate; yet so it is, the weight of a man's tongue falling upon him crushes him to powder. *Joseph Caryl*.

**Verse 8.** *Their own tongue to fall upon themselves.* The arrows of idle words, though shot out of sight, and possibly quite forgotten, will hereafter drop down upon the heads of such as drew the bow. Words are but wind, is the common saying, but they are such wind as will either blow the soul to its haven of rest, if holy, wholesome, savoury, spiritual, and tending to edification, or else sink it into the



Dead Sea and bottomless gulf of eternal misery, if idle, profane, frothy, and unprofitable. *Edward Reyner (1600-1670) in "Rules for the Government of the Tongue."*

**Verse 10.** *The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him.* That is, if they have failed in their trust heretofore, and not given God honour by confiding in him, yet these wonderful works of God (of which he speaks in the Psalm) work this hope. *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 10.** *All the upright in heart.* The word of this text, *jashar*, signifies *rectitudinem*, and *planitiem*, it signifies a direct way; for the devil's way was circular, compassing the earth; but the angel's way to heaven upon Jacob's ladder was a straight, a direct way. And then it signifies, as a direct and straight, so a plain, a smooth, an even way, a way that hath been beaten into a path before, a way that the fathers and the church have walked in before, and not a discovery made by our curiosity, or our confidence, in venturing from ourselves, or embracing from others, new doctrines and opinions. The persons, then, whom God proposes to be partakers of his retributions, are first, *recti* (that is, both direct men, and plain men), and then *recti corde*, this qualification, this straightness and smoothness must be in the heart; all the upright in heart shall have it. Upon this earth, a man cannot possibly make one step in a straight and a direct line. The earth itself being round, every step we make upon it must necessarily be a segment, an arc of a circle. But yet, though no piece of a circle be a straight line, yet if we take any piece, nay, if we take the whole circle, there is no corner, no angle in any place, in any entire circle. A perfect rectitude we cannot have in any way in this world; in every calling there are some inevitable temptations. But, though we cannot make up one circle of a straight line (that is impossible to human frailty), yet we may pass on without angles and corners, that is, without disguises in our religion, and without the love of craft, and falsehood, and circumvention, in our civil actions. A compass is a necessary thing in a ship, and the help of that compass brings the ship home safe, and yet that compass hath some variations, it doth not look directly north; neither is that star which we call the north pole, or by which we know the north pole, the very pole itself; but we call it so, and we make our uses of it, and our conclusions by it, as if it were so, because it is the nearest star to that pole. He that comes as near uprightness as infirmities admit, is an upright man, though he love some obliquities. *John Donne.*

**Verse 10.** *All the upright in heart shall glory.* The Psalm began in the first person singular, *Hear my voice, O God*, but it ends by comprehending all the righteous. He who is most anxious about his own salvation will be found to be the man of the truest and widest love to others; while he who talks most of unselfishness in religion is generally the most selfish. We cannot take a more efficient method for benefiting others than by being earnestly prayerful for ourselves that we may be preserved from sin. Our example will in itself be useful, and our godliness, by putting power into our testimony, will increase the value of every rebuke, exhortation, or encouragement we may utter. Our sin is or will be the church's sorrow, and the way to make all the upright rejoice is to be upright ourselves. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 10. Shall glory.** This retribution is expressed in the original in the word *halal*; and *halal*, to those translators that made our Book of Common Prayer, presented the signification of gladness, for so it is there: *They shall be glad*. So it did to the translators that came after, for there it is, *They shall rejoice*; and to our last translators it seemed to signify glory, *They shall glory*, say they. But the first translation of all into our language (which was long before any of these three), calls it *praise*, and puts it into the passive: *All men of rightful heart shall be praised*. And so truly *jithhalelu*, in the original, bears it, nay, requires it; which is not of praise which they shall give to God, but of a praise that they shall receive for having served God with an upright heart; not that they shall praise God in doing so, but that godly men shall praise them for having done so. All this shall grow naturally out of the root; for the root of this word is *lucere, splendere*, to shine out in the eyes of men, and to create in them a holy and a reverential admiration; as it was John Baptist's praise, that he was "*A burning and a shining lamp*." Properly it is, by a good and a holy exemplary life, to occasion others to set a right value upon holiness, and to give a due respect for holy men... *Shall glory*. It is so far from diminishing this glory, as that it exalts our consolation that God places this retribution in the future; if they do not yet, certainly they *shall* glory, and if they do now, that glory shall not go out, still they shall, they shall for ever glory. *John Donne*.

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

##### **Verse 1.**

1. *The preservation of life desired.*

- (a) The desire expressed.
- (b) Qualified—from violent death, from fear of, etc.

2. *The preservation of life prayed for.*

- (a) For self improvement.
- (b) For usefulness.
- (c) For the divine glory. *G. R.*

**Verse 2. (first clause).** Applied to Satan.

1. *The danger considered.*

- (a) The enemy, wicked, mighty, malicious, experienced.
- (b) His counsel. He tempts cunningly, and with deliberation.
- (c) The secrecy of it. He may be exciting others against me, or sowing evil in myself.

2. *The deliverance implored. Hide me.*

- (a) Keep me from being tempted.
- (b) Keep me from evil when tempted.
- (c) Bring me out of it all unharmed.

(d) Meanwhile, let me be in thy secret place.

3. *The consolation of faith.*

(a) God does preserve praying ones.

(b) Our enemy is *his* enemy.

(c) He has preserved us.

(d) We are his own.

(e) His honour is involved.

**Verse 3.** *Bitter words.* An excellent topic in reference both to the sinner and to professed saints.

**Verse 3.** *The whetting of the tongue.* Fresh faults discovered, evil motives imputed, exaggerations invented, lies forged, innuendoes suggested, old slanders furnished, and ancient hatreds rekindled.

**Verse 6.** (*two first clauses*). The fault hunter; his motive, his character, his pretences, and his punishment.

**Verse 9.**

1. *The subject for consideration*—Judgments upon the wicked.

(a) As Judgments.

(b) As judgments from God—that work of God—his doing.

2. *The consideration of the subject.*

(a) They are intended to be considered by others.

(b) They are to be considered wisely.

3. *The effect of this consideration.*

(a) Fear of God.

(b) Praise to God; shall declare, etc. *G. R.*

**Verses 9-10.**

1. An act of God; something of his doing.

2. Its effect upon men in general: *All men shall fear, and shall declare, etc.*

3. A special duty resulting from it, incumbent on good men: *The righteous, etc. H. Dove.*

**Verse 10.**

1. *The persons.*

(a) What they are, in distinction from others; the righteous; the justified.

(b) What they are in themselves; upright in heart; not perfect, but sincere.

2. *Their privilege.*

(a) Amidst all their persecutions to joy in God.

(b) Amidst all their dangers to trust in God. *G. R.*

**Psalm 65**

## Exposition

### Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

#### Hints to the Village Preacher

**TITLE.** This title is very similar to many we have before studied. *To the Chief Musician*. It is consigned to the care of the usual overseer of song. When a man does his work well, there is no use in calling in others for novelty's sake. *A Psalm and song of David*. The Hebrew calls it a *Shur and Mizmor*, a combination of psalm and song, which may be best described by the term, "A Lyrical Poem." In this case the Psalm may be said or sung, and be equally suitable. We have had two such Psalms before, Psalms 30 and 48, and we have now the first of a little series of four following each other. It was meant that Psalms of pleading and longing should be followed by hymns of praise.

**SUBJECT AND DIVISION.** David sings of the glory of God in his church, and in the fields of nature: here is the song both of grace and providence. It may be that he intended hereby to commemorate a remarkably plentiful harvest, or to compose a harvest hymn for all ages. It appears to have been written after a violent rebellion had been quelled, Ps 65:7, and foreign enemies had been subdued by signal victory, Ps 65:8. It is one of the most delightful hymns in any language. We shall view in Ps 65:1-4 the way of approach to God, then from Ps 65:5-8 we shall see the Lord in answer to prayer performing wonders for which he is praised, and then from Ps 65:9-13 we shall sing the special harvest song.

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion.* Though Babylon adores Antichrist, Zion remains faithful to her King; to him, and to him only, she brings her perpetual oblation of worship. Those who have seen in Zion the blood of sprinkling, and know themselves to belong to the church of the firstborn, can never think of her without presenting humble praise to Zion's God; his mercies are too numerous and precious to be forgotten. The praises of the saints wait for a signal from the divine Lord, and when he shows his face they burst forth at once. Like a company of musicians gathered to welcome and honour a prince, who wait till he makes his appearance, so do we reserve our best praises till the Lord reveals himself in the assembly of his saints; and, indeed, till he shall descend from heaven in the day of his appearing. Praise also waits like a servant or courtier in the royal halls—gratitude is humble and obedient. Praise attends the Lord's pleasure, and continues to bless him, whether he shows tokens of present favour or no; she is not soon wearied, but all through the night she sings on in sure hope that the morning cometh. We shall continue to wait on, tuning our harps, amid the tears of earth; but O what harmonies will those be which we will pour forth, when the home bringing is come, and the King shall appear in his glory. The passage may be rendered "praise

is silent for thee; "it is calm, peaceful, and ready to adore thee in quietness. Or, it may mean, our praise is but silence compared with thy deservings, O God. Or, in solemn silence we worship thee, because our praise cannot be uttered; accept, therefore, our silence as praise. Or, we are so engrossed in thy praise, that to all other things we are dumb; we have no tongue for anything but thee. Perhaps the poet best expressed the thought of the psalmist when he said—

"A sacred reverence checks our songs,  
And praise sits silent on our tongues."

Certainly, when the soul is most filled with adoring awe, she is least content with her own expressions, and feels most deeply how inadequate are all mortal songs to proclaim the divine goodness. A church, bowed in silent adoration by a profound sense of divine mercy, would certainly offer more real praise than the sweetest voices aided by pipes and strings; yet, vocal music is not to be neglected, for this sacred hymn was meant to be sung. It is well before singing to have the soul placed in a waiting attitude, and to be humbly conscious that our best praise is but silence compared with Jehovah's glory. And unto thee shall the vow be performed. Perhaps a special vow made during a season of drought and political danger. Nations and churches must be honest and prompt in redeeming their promises to the Lord, who cannot be mocked with impunity. So, too, must individuals. We are not to forget our vows, or to redeem them to be seen of men—*unto God* alone must they be performed, with a single eye to his acceptance. Believers are all under covenant, which they made at conversion, and have renewed upon being baptised, joining the church, and coming to the table, and some of them are under special pledges which they entered into under peculiar circumstances; these are to be piously and punctually fulfilled. We ought to be very deliberate in promising, and very punctilious in performing. A vow unkept will burn the conscience like a hot iron. Vows of service, of donation, of praise, or whatever they may be, are no trifles; and in the day of grateful praise they should, without fail, be fulfilled to the utmost of our power.

**Verse 2.** *O thou that hearest prayer.* This is thy name, thy nature, thy glory. God not only has heard, but is now hearing prayer, and always must hear prayer, since he is an immutable being and never changes in his attributes. What a delightful title for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Every right and sincere prayer is as surely heard as it is offered. Here the psalmist brings in the personal pronoun *thou*, and we beg the reader to notice how often "thou," "thee," and "thy," occur in this hymn; David evidently believed in a personal God, and did not adore a mere idea or abstraction. Unto thee shall all flesh come. This shall encourage men of all nations to become suppliants to the one and only God, who proves his Deity by answering those who seek his face. Flesh they are, and therefore weak; frail and sinful, they need to pray; and thou art such a God as they need, for thou art touched with compassion, and dost condescend to hear the cries of poor flesh and blood. Many come to thee now in humble faith, and are filled with good, but more shall be drawn to thee by the

attractiveness of thy love, and at length the whole earth shall bow at thy feet. To come to God is the life of true religion; we come weeping in conversion, hoping in supplication, rejoicing in praise, and delighting in service. False gods must in due time lose their deluded votaries, for man when enlightened will not be longer be fooled; but each one who tries the true God is encouraged by his own success to persuade others also, and so the kingdom of God comes to men, and men come to it.

**Verse 3.** *Iniquities prevail against me.* Others accuse and slander me, and in addition to my own sins rise up and would beset me to my confusion, were it not for the remembrance of the atonement which covers every one of my iniquities. Our sins would, but for grace, prevail against us in the court of divine justice, in the court of conscience, and in the battle of life. Unhappy is the man who despises these enemies, and worse still is he who counts them his friends! He is best instructed who knows their deadly power, and flees for refuge to him who pardons iniquity. As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away. Thou dost cover them all, for thou hast provided a covering propitiation, a mercyseat which wholly covers thy law. Note the word *our*, the faith of the one penitent who speaks for himself in the first clause, here embraces all the faithful in Zion; and he is so persuaded of the largeness of forgiving love that he leads all the saints to sing of the blessing. What a comfort that iniquities that prevail against us, do not prevail against God. They would keep us away from God, but he sweeps them away from before himself and us; they are too strong for us, but not for our Redeemer, who is mighty, yea, and almighty to save. It is worthy of note that as the priest washed in the laver before he sacrificed, so David leads us to obtain purification from sin before we enter upon the service of song. When we have washed our robes and made them white in his blood, then shall we acceptably sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

**Verse 4.** *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee.* After cleansing comes benediction, and truly this is a very rich one. It comprehends both election, effectual calling, access, acceptance, and sonship. First, we are chosen of God, according to the good pleasure of his will, and this alone is blessedness. Then, since we cannot and will not come to God of ourselves, he works graciously in us, and attracts us powerfully; he subdues our unwillingness, and removes our inability by the almighty workings of his transforming grace. This also is no slight blessedness. Furthermore, we, by his divine drawings, are made nigh by the blood of his Son, and brought near by his spirit, into intimate fellowship; so that we have access with boldness, and are no longer as those who are afar off by wicked works: here also is unrivalled blessedness. To crown all, we do not come nigh in peril of dire destruction, as Nadab and Abihu did, but we approach as chosen and accepted ones, to become dwellers in the divine household: this is heaped up blessedness, vast beyond conception. But dwelling in the house we are treated as sons, for the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever. Behold what manner of love and blessedness the Father has bestowed upon us that we may dwell in his house, and go no more out for ever. Happy

men who dwell at home with God. May both writer and reader be such men. That he may dwell in thy courts. Acceptance leads to abiding: God does not make a temporary choice, or give and take; his gifts and calling are without repentance. He who is once admitted to God's courts shall inhabit them for ever; he shall be

"No more a stranger or a guest,  
But like a child at home."

Permanence gives preciousness. Terminating blessings are but half blessings. To dwell in the courts of the Great King is to be ennobled; to dwell there for ever is to be emparadised: yet such is the portion of every man whom God has chosen and caused to approach unto him, though once his iniquities prevailed against him.

**Verse 5.** *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation.* God's memorial is that he hears prayer, and his glory is that he answers it in a manner fitted to inspire awe in the hearts of his people. The saints, in the commencement of the Psalm, offered praise in reverential silence; and now, in the like awe stricken spirit, they receive answers to their prayers. The direct allusion here is, no doubt, to the Lord's overthrow of the enemies of his people in ways calculated to strike terror into all beholders; his judgments in their severe righteousness were calculated to excite fear both among friends and foes. Who would not fear a God whose blows are so crushing? We do not always know what we are asking for when we pray; when the answer comes, the veritable answer, it is possible that we may be terrified by it. We seek sanctification, and trial will be the reply: we ask for more faith, and more affliction is the result: we pray for the spread of the gospel, and persecution scatters us. Nevertheless, it is good to ask on, for nothing which the Lord grants in his love can do us any harm. Terrible things will turn out to be blessed things after all, where they come in answer to prayer. See in this verse how righteousness and salvation are united, the terrible things with the gracious answers. Where but in Jesus could they be blended? The God who saves may answer our prayers in a way which puts unbelief into a flutter; but when faith spies the Saviour, she remembers that "things are not what they seem," and she is of good courage. He who is terrible is also our refuge from terror when we see him in the Well beloved.

Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth. The dwellers in the far off isles trust in God; those most remote from Zion yet confide in the ever living Jehovah. Even those who dwell in countries, frozen or torrid, where nature puts on her varied terrors, and those who see dread wonders on the deep, yet fly from the terrors of God and place their confidence in the God of terrors. His arm is strong to smite, but also strong to save. And of them that are afar off upon the sea. Both elements have their elect band of believers. If the land gave Moses elders, the sea gave Jesus apostles. Noah, when all was ocean, was as calm with God as Abraham in his tent. All men are equally dependent upon God: the seafaring man is usually most conscious of this, but in reality he is not more so than the

husbandman, nor the husbandman than anyone else. There is no room for self confidence on land or sea, since God is the only true confidence of men on earth or ocean. Faith is a plant of universal growth, it is a tree of life on shore and a plant of renown at sea; and, blessed be God, those who exercise faith in him anywhere shall find that he is swift and strong to answer their prayers. A remembrance of this should quicken our devotions when we approach unto the Lord our God.

**Verse 6.** *Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains.* He, as it were, fixed them in their sockets, and preserved them from falling by earthquake or storm. The firmest owe their stability to him. Philosophers of the forget God school are too much engrossed with their laws of upheaval to think of the Upheaver. Their theories of volcanic action and glacier action, etc., etc., are frequently used as bolts and bars to shut the Lord out of his own world. Our poet is of another mind, and sees God's hand settling Alps and Andes on their bases, and therefore he sings in his praise. Let me for ever be just such an unphilosophical simpleton as David was, for he was nearer akin to Solomon than any of our modern theorists. Being girded with power. The Lord is so himself, and he therefore casts a girdle of strength around the hills, and there they stand, braced, belted, and bulwarked with his might. The poetry is such as would naturally suggest itself to one familiar with mountain scenery; power everywhere meets you, sublimity, massive grandeur, and stupendous force are all around you; and God is there, the author and source of all. Let us learn that we poor puny ones, if we wish for true establishment, must go to the strong for strength. Without him, the everlasting hills would crumble; how much more shall all our plans, projects, and labours come to decay. Repose, O believer, where the mountains find their bases—viz., in the undiminished might of the Lord God.

**Verse 7.** *Which stilleth the noise of the seas.* His soft breath smooths the sea into a glass, and the mountainous waves into ripples. God does this. Calms are of the God of peace; it needs not that we look for a hurricane when it is said that he cometh. He walked of old in the garden in the cool of the day; he is resting even now, for his great seventh day is not yet over, and he is always "the Lord and giver of peace." Let mariners magnify the God who rules the waves. The noise of their waves. Each separate brawler amid the riot of the storm is quieted by the divine voice. And the tumult of the people. Nations are as difficult to rule as the sea itself, they are as fitful, treacherous, restless, and furious; they will not brook the bridle nor be restrained by laws. Canute had not a more perilous seat by the rising billows than many a king and emperor has had when the multitude have been set on mischief, and have grown weary of their lords. God alone is King of nations. The sea obeys him, and the yet more tumultuous nations are kept in check by him. Human society owes its preservation to the continued power of God: evil passions would secure its instant dissolution; envy, ambition, and cruelty would create anarchy tomorrow if God did not prevent; whereof we have had clear proof in the various French revolutions. Glory be unto God who maintains the fabric of social order, and checks the wicked, who would fain overthrow all things. The child of God is seasons of trouble should fly at



once to him who stills the seas: nothing is too hard for him.

**Verse 8.** *They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid of thy tokens.* Signs of God's presence are not few, nor confined to any one region. Zembla sees them as well as Zion, and Terra del Fuego as surely as the Terra Sacra. These tokens are sometimes terrible phenomena in nature—such as earthquakes, pestilence, tornado, or storm; and when these are seen, even the most barbarous people tremble before God. At other times they are dread works of providence—such as the overthrow of Sodom, and the destruction of Pharaoh. The rumour of these judgments travels to earth's utmost verge, and impresses all people with a fear and trembling at such a just and holy God. We bless God that we are not afraid but rejoice at his tokens; with solemn awe we are glad when we behold his mighty acts. We fear, but not with slavish fear. Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. East and west are made happy by God's favour to the dwellers therein. Our rising hours are bright with hope, and our evening moments mellow with thanksgiving. Whether the sun go forth or come in we bless God and rejoice in the gates of the day. When the fair morning blushes with the rosy dawn we rejoice; and when the calm evening smiles restfully we rejoice still. We do not believe that the dew weeps the death of the day; we only see jewels bequeathed by the departing day for its successor to gather up from the earth. Faith, when she sees God, rounds the day with joy. She cannot fast, because the bridegroom is with her. Night and day are alike to her, for the same God made them and blessed them. She would have no rejoicing if God did not make her glad; but, blessed be his name, he never ceases to make joy for those who find their joy in him.

**Verse 9.** *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it.* God's visits leave a blessing behind; this is more than can be said of every visitor. When the Lord goes on visitations of mercy, he has abundance of necessary things for all his needy creatures. He is represented here as going round the earth, as a gardener surveys his garden, and as giving water to every plant that requires it, and that not in small quantities, but until the earth is drenched and soaked with a rich supply of refreshment. O Lord, in this manner visit thy church, and my poor, parched, and withering piety. Make thy grace to overflow towards my graces; water me, for no plant of thy garden needs it more.

"My stock lies dead and no increase

Doth my dull husbandry improve;

O let thy graces without cease

Drop from above."

Thou greatly enrichest it. Millions of money could not so much enrich mankind as the showers do. The soil is made rich by the rain, and then yields its riches to man; but God is the first giver of all. How truly rich are those who are enriched with grace; this is great riches. With the river of God, which is full of water. The brooks of earth are soon dried up, and all human resources, being finite, are liable to failure; but God's provision for the supply of rain is inexhaustible; there is no bottom or shore to his

river. The deluge poured from the clouds of yesterday may be succeeded by another tomorrow, and yet the waters above the firmament shall not fail. How true this is in the realm of grace; there *the river of God is full of water*, and "of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." The ancients in their fables spake of Pactolus, which flowed over sands of gold; but this river of God, which flows above and from which the rain is poured, is far more enriching; for, after all, the wealth of men lies mainly in the harvest of their fields, without which even gold would be of no value whatever.

Thou preparest them corn. Corn is specially set apart to be the food of man. In its various species it is a divine provision for the nutriment of our race, and is truly called the staff of life. We hear in commerce of "prepared corn flour," but God prepared it long before man touched it. As surely as the manna was prepared of God for the tribes, so certainly is corn made and sent by God for our daily use. What is the difference whether we gather wheat ears or manna, and what matters it if the first come upward to us, and the second downward? God is as much present beneath as above; it is as great a marvel that food should rise out of the dust, as that it should fall from the skies. When thou hast so provided for it. When all is prepared to produce corn, the Lord puts the finishing stroke, and the grain is forthcoming; not even, when all the material is prepared, will the wheat be perfected without the continuous and perfecting operation of the Most High. Blessed be the Great Householder; he does not suffer the harvest to fail, he supplies the teeming myriads of earth with bread enough from year to year. Even thus does he vouchsafe heavenly food to his redeemed ones: "He hath given meat unto them that fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant."

**Verse 10.** *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof.* Ridge and furrow are drenched. The ridges beaten down and settled, and the furrows made to stand like gutters flooded to the full. Thou makest it soft with showers. The drought turned the clods into iron, but the plenteous showers dissolve and loosen the soil. Thou blessest the springing thereof. Vegetation enlivened by the moisture leaps into vigour, the seed germinates and sends forth its green shoot, and the smell is that as of a field which the Lord has blessed. All this may furnish us with a figure of the operations of the Holy Spirit in beating down high thoughts, filling our lowly desires, softening the soul, and causing every holy thing to increase and spread.

**Verse 11.** *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.* The harvest is the plainest display of the divine bounty, and the crown of the year. The Lord himself conducts the coronation, and sets the golden coronal upon the brow of the year. Or we may understand the expression to mean that God's love encircles the year as with a crown; each month has its gems, each day its pearl. Unceasing kindness girdles all time with a belt of love. The providence of God in its visitations makes a complete circuit, and surrounds the year. And thy paths drop fatness. The footsteps of God, when he visits the land with rain, create fertility. It was said of the Tartar hordes, that grass grew no more where their horses' feet had trodden; so, on the contrary, it may be said that the march of Jehovah, the Fertiliser, may be

traced by the abundance which he creates. For spiritual harvests we must look to him, for he alone can give "times of refreshing" and feasts of Pentecost.

**Verse 12.** *They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness.* Not alone where man is found do the showers descend, but away in the lone places, where only wild animals have their haunt, there the bountiful Lord makes the refreshing rain to drop. Ten thousand oases smile while the Lord of mercy passes by. The birds of the air, the wild goats, and the fleet stags rejoice as they drink from the pools, new filled from heaven. The most lonely and solitary souls God will visit in love. And the little hills rejoice on every side. On all hands the eminences are girt with gladness. Soon they languish under the effects of drought, but after a season of rain they laugh again with verdure.

**Verse 13.** *The pastures are clothed with flocks.* The clothing of man first clothes the fields. Pastures appear to be quite covered with numerous flocks when the grass is abundant. The valleys also are covered over with corn. The arable as well as the pasture land is rendered fruitful. God's clouds, like ravens, bring us both bread and flesh. Grazing flocks and waving crops are equally the gifts of the Preserver of men, and for both praise should be rendered. Sheep shearing and harvest should both be holiness unto the Lord. They shout for joy. The bounty of God makes the earth vocal with his praise, and in opened ears it lifts up a joyous shout. The cattle low out the divine praises, and the rustling ears of grain sing a soft sweet melody unto the Lord.

"Ye forests bend, ye harvests wave to him;  
Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,  
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.  
Bleat out afresh, ye hills; ye mossy rocks  
Retain the sound; the broad responsive low  
Ye valleys raise; for the GREAT SHEPHERD reigns,  
And his *unsuffering* kingdom yet will come."

They also sing. The voice of nature is articulate to God; it is not only a shout, but a song. Well ordered are the sounds of animate creation as they combine with the equally well tuned ripple of the waters, and sighings of the wind. Nature has no discords. Her airs are melodious, her chorus is full of harmony. All, all is for the Lord; the world is a hymn to the Eternal, blessed is he who, hearing, joins in it, and makes one singer in the mighty chorus.

---

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

From Psalm 65 onwards we find ourselves in the midst of a series of Psalms which, with a varying arrangement of the words, are inscribed both kwmzm and wyv (65-68.) The two words signify a *Psalm song*. This series, as is universally the case, is arranged according to the community of prominent watch words. In Ps 65:2 we read: *To thee is the vow paid*; and in Ps 66:13: *I will pay thee*

my vows; in Ps 66:20: *Blessed be Elohim*; and in Ps 67:8: *Elohim shall bless us*. Besides Psalm 66 and 67 have this feature in common, that *tugml*, which occurs fifty-five times in the Psalter, is accompanied by the name of the poet in every instance, with the exception of these two anonymous Psalms. The frequently occurring *Sela* of both Psalms also indicates that they were intended to have a musical accompaniment. *Franz Delitzsch*.

**Title.** *A Psalm of Jeremiah and Ezekiel*. The Psalm is assigned to them, not as being its authors, but because it is supposed that it was often rehearsed by them at the beginning of the return from captivity, to teach us that those things ought especially to be sung concerning that happy restoration which these prophets were wont to sing about. But this inscription is not in the Hebrew text, nor in some translations, but only in certain versions. Jeremiah was not carried away to Babylon; see Jer 39:11, etc. Moreover, both he and Ezekiel died before the return. *Poole's Synopsis*.

**Whole Psalm.** The author of the Psalm is mentioned, but not the date of its composition; but from an examination of its contents, it would seem to have been intended as a song for the "day of atonement," and for the "feast of tabernacles," which followed immediately after. Nu 29:7,12. The sins of the year were then "covered over," and a thorough purification of the sanctuary was made by a special service of expiation. The labours of the year were all by that time concluded, and its fruits secured; and Israel could look on the goodness of God towards them, through its entire extent; and this Psalm was penned to serve as a fitting expression of their feelings. It opens with a reference to the "silence" that reigned in the sanctuary; to the profound, unbroken, solemn stillness that reigned within it; while, in deep abasement, the people without waited in hushed expectation the return of their high priest from the immediate presence of God, Le 16:17. It goes on to a statement of the blessedness of those who are accepted of God, and admitted to fellowship with One so unspeakably great; and concludes with a description of the various processes by which the Almighty had fitted the earth to yield a year's supplies for his people. *Dalman Hapstone, in "The Ancient Psalms in appropriate Meters... with Notes."* 1867.

**Whole Psalm.** We have here a psalm of thanksgiving to be sung in the Temple during a public festivity, at which the sacrifices were to be offered which had been vowed during a long and protracted drought (Ps 65:1-2). To the thanksgiving, however, for a gracious rain, and the hope of an abundant harvest (Ps 65:9-14), is added gratitude for a signal deliverance during a time of distress and commotion affecting all the nations around (Ps 65:7-8). Thus the Psalm becomes a song of praise to Jehovah as the God of history and the God of nature, alike. *From the "Psalms Chronologically Arranged. By Four Friends."* 1867.

**Whole Psalm.** This is a charming psalm. Coming after the previous sad ones, it seems like the morning after the darkness of night. There is a dewy freshness about it, and from the ninth verse to the end there is a sweet succession of landscape pictures that remind one of the loveliness of spring;

and truly it is a description, in natural figures, of that happy state of men's minds which will be the result of the "Day spring's visiting us from on high." Lu 1:7-8. *O. Prescott Hiller.*

**Verse 1.** *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion.* The believer sometimes seems to want words to exalt God, and stops, as it were, in the middle; his thoughts want words. Thus praise waits, or is silent for God; it is silent to other things, and it waits to be employed about him. The soul is often put to a nonplus in crying up the grace of God, and wants words to express its greatness; yea, to answer the elevation of the thoughts; the heart indites a song of praise, but it cannot tune it. The psalmist is stopped, as it were, through admiration (which is *silentium intellectus*), for when the mind can rise no higher, it falls admiringly; hence some say, God is most exalted with fewest words. *Alexander Carmichael.*

**Verse 1.** *Praise waiteth for thee, O God.* Mercy is not yet come, we expect it; whilst thou art preparing the mercy, we are preparing the praise. *Edward Leigh in "Annotations on the Five Poetical Books of the Old Testament," 1657.*

**Verse 1.** *Praise waiteth on thee.* As a servant, whose duty it is to do what thou commandest; or, *for thee*; is ready to be offered in thy courts for special favours. I think there is an allusion to the daily service in which God was praised. *Benjamin Boothroyd.*

**Verse 1.** *Praise waiteth for thee, O God. Te decet hymnus,* so the vulgar edition reads this place. To thee, O Lord, belong our hymns, our psalms, our praises, our cheerful acclamations, and conformable to that, we translate it, *Praise waiteth for thee, O God.* But if we take it according to the original, it must be *tibi, silentium laus est*, Thy praise, O Lord, consists in silence. That man praises God best that says least of him; of his mysterious essence, of his unrevealed will and secret purposes. *Abraham Wright.*

**Verse 1.** *"To thee is silence and praise." Piscator.*

**Verse 1.** The Hebrew may be rendered, *Praise is silent for thee.* As if the holy man had said, "Lord, I quietly wait for a time to praise thee; my soul is not in an uproar because you stay. I am not murmuring, but rather stringing my harp and tuning my instrument with much patience and confidence, that I may be ready to strike up when the joyful news of my deliverance come." *William Gurnall.*

**Verse 1.** *To thee belongeth silence praise.* Praise without any tumult. (Alexander.) It has been said, "The most intense feeling is the most calm, being condensed by repression." And Hooker says of prayer, "The very silence which our unworthiness putteth us unto doth itself make request for us, and that in the confidence of his grace. Looking inward, we are stricken dumb; looking upward, we speak and prevail." Horsley renders it, "Upon thee is the repose of prayer." *Andrew A. Bonar.*

**Verse 1.** *Praise is silent for thee.* The Chaldee interpretation is, that our praise is not sufficiently worthy that we should praise God. The very praises of angels are esteemed as nothing before him.

For so its rendering is: "*Before thee, O God, whose Majesty dwells in Zion, the praise of angels is regarded as silence.*"... Jerome's version here is, "*To thee silence is praise, O God, in Zion.*" Atheneus says, silence is a divine thing; and Thomas a Kempis calls silence the nutriment of devotion. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 1.** *To thee belong submission, praise, O God, in Sion.* (Version of the American Bible Union.) Thou hast a claim for submission in times of sorrow, for praise in seasons of joy. *Thomas J. Conant, in "The Psalms... with occasional notes."* 1871.

**Verse 1.** *Vow.* A vow is a voluntary and deliberate promise made unto God in an extraordinary case. "It is a religious promise made unto God in a holy manner:" so a modern writer defines it. (Szegeginus.) It is a "holy and religious promise, advisedly and freely made unto God, concerning something which to do or to omit appeareth to be grateful and well pleasing unto him:" so Bucanus. I forbear Aquinas's definition of a vow. If these which I have given satisfy not, then view it in the words of Peter Martyr, a man of repute, and well known to our own nation in the days of Edward VI., of ever blessed memory: "It is a holy promise, whereby we bind ourselves to offer somewhat unto God." There is one more who defines it, and he is a man whose judgment, learning, and holiness hath perfumed his name; it is learned Perkins, in his "Cases of Conscience." "A vow, " saith he, "is a promise made unto God of things lawful and possible." *Henry Hurst*(—1690), in "*The Morning Exercises.*"

**Verse 1.** (*last clause*). The reference here is to the vows or promises which the people had made in view of the manifested judgments of God, and the proofs of his goodness. Those vows they were now ready to carry out in expressions of praise. *Albert Barnes.*

**Verse 2.** *O thou that hearest prayer, etc.* This is one of his titles of honour, he is a God that hears prayer; and it is as truly ascribed to him as mercy or justice. He hears all prayer, therefore, *unto thee shall all flesh come.* He never rejects any that deserves the name of prayer, how weak, how unworthy soever the petitioner be. *All flesh!* And will he (may faith say) reject mine only? Ro 10:12, "He is rich unto all that call upon him; " Ps 86:5, "Thou art plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee; " Heb 11:6, "A rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This must be believed as certainly as we believe that God is. As sure as God is the true God, so sure is it that none who sought him diligently departed from him without a reward. He rewards all seekers, for *indefinita in materia necessaria aequipollet universali.* And if all, why not me? You may as well doubt that he is God, as doubt that he will not reward, not hear prayer; so Jas 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." *David Clarkson.*

**Verse 2.** *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.* What avails prayer, if it be not heard? But God's people need not lay it aside on that score. Our text bears two things with respect to that matter.

1. A comfortable title ascribed to God, with the unanimous consent of all the sons of Zion, who are all praying persons: *O thou that hearest prayer*. He speaks to *God in Zion*, or Zion's God, that is in New Testament language, to God in Christ. An absolute God thundereth on sinners from Sinai, there can be no comfortable intercourse betwixt God and them, by the law: but in Zion, from the mercyseat, in Christ, he is the hearer of prayer; they give in their supplications, and he graciously hears them. Such faith of it they have, that praise waits there for the prayer hearing God.

2. The effect of the savour of this title of God, spread abroad in the world: *Unto thee shall all flesh come*: not only Jews, but Gentiles. The poor Gentiles who have long in vain implored the aid of their idols, hearing and believing that God is the hearer of prayer, will flock to him, and present their petitions. They will throng in about his door, where by the gospel they understand beggars are so well served. They will *come in even unto thee*, Hebrew. They will come in even to thy seat, thy throne of grace, even unto thyself through the Mediator... That God is the hearer of prayer, and will hear the prayers of his people, is evident from these considerations:

First. The supernatural instinct of praying that is found in all that are born of God, Ga 4:6. It is as natural for them to fall a praying when the grace of God has touched their hearts, as for children when they are born into the world to cry, or to desire the breasts. Zec 12:10, compared with Ac 9:11, where in the account that is given of Paul, at his conversion, it is particularly noticed, "Behold, he prayeth." Hence the whole saving change on a soul comes under the character of this instinct. Jer 3:4,19.

Secondly. The intercession of Christ, Ro 8:34. It is a great part of the work of Christ's intercession to present the prayers of his people before his Father, Re 8:4, to take their causes in hand, contained in their supplications. 1Jo 2:1.

Thirdly. The promises of the covenant, whereby God's faithfulness is impawned for the hearing of prayer, as Mt 7:7: see also Isa 65:24.

Fourthly. The many encouragements given in the Word to the people of God, to come with their cases unto the Lord by prayer. He invites them to his throne of grace with their petitions for supply of their needs. So 2:14. He sends afflictions to press them to come. Ho 5:15. He gives them ground of hope of success, Ps 50:15, whatever extremity their case is brought to. Isa 41:17. He shows them that however long he may delay their trial, yet praying and not fainting shall be successful at length. Lu 18:8.

Fifthly. The gracious nature of God, with the endearing relations he stands in to his people. Ex 22:27. He wants not power and ability to fulfil the holy desires of his people; he is gracious, and will withhold no good from them that they really need. He has the bowels of a father to pity them, the bowels of a mother to her sucking child. He has a most tender sympathy with them in all their afflictions, the touches on them are as on the apple of his eye; and he never refuses them a request, but for their

good. Ro 8:28.

Sixthly. The experiences which the saints of all ages have had of the answer of prayer. The faith of it brings them to God at conversion, as the text intimates: and they that believe cannot be disappointed. Lastly. The present ease and relief that prayer sometimes gives to the saints, while yet the full answer of prayer is not come. Ps 138:3. *Thomas Boston (1676-1732).*

**Verse 2.** *O thou that hearest prayer.* Observe

1. That God is called the hearer of prayers, since he hears, without distinction of persons, the prayers of every one poured forth with piety, not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles; as in Ac 10:34-35... It follows, therefore, as a necessary consequence, *that all flesh should come to him.*

2. *To come to God*, is not indeed simply tantamount to saying, *to draw near to God*, to adore, call upon, and worship him, but to come *to Zion* for the purpose of adoring God; for it was just now said, that God must be praised in Zion, and to this the phrase, *to come to God*, must be referred. On this account also *la* is not used, but *de*, whose proper force is *right up to God*, or to the place of the habitation of God to render adoration to God. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 2.** *To thee shall all flesh come.* To Christ "*all flesh comes*, "that is (1.) every sinner and carnal man. He himself says, Mt 9:13 "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." The Grecian priest in olden times, when approaching to receive the sacrifice, used to exclaim, *Who comes there?* and the reply was, *Many and good.* But God received publicans and sinners, and invites them to his banquet, and eateth with them; but for the purpose of delivering them from sin. "*All flesh shall see the salvation of God.*" (2.) *All flesh* may be taken for the whole flesh, the whole body; all the senses and members of the body shall come to God that they may pay him tribute as their King. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 2.** *All flesh.* By *flesh* is meant man in his weakness and need. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Verse 3.** *Iniquities prevail against me.* There are two ways in which iniquities may prevail against the Christian—the first is in the growing sense of his guilt, the second is in the power of their acting. This prevalence cannot be entire, for sin shall not have dominion over them; but it may be occasional and partial. There are two ways, according to Scripture, in which God purges our transgressions; and they always go together. The one is by pardoning mercy. Thus David prays: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." Thus the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. The other is by sanctifying grace: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." And this is as much the work of God as the former. He subdues our iniquities as well as forgives them. *William Jay.*

**Verse 3.** *Iniquities.* Literally, *Words of iniquities*, by some regarded as a pleonastic phrase for iniquities themselves. More probably, however, the phrase means the charge or accusation of iniquity. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

**Verse 3.** The deeds of iniquity are said *To prevail against us*, in so far as they are too strong and powerful for us to deny or refute, and to subject us to a demand of those penalties which the sin



merits; hence there remains no other refuge than the clemency and grace of God, the Judge. See Ps 143:2 130:3-4. *Hermann Venema*.

**Verse 3.** *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* In the Hebrew it is, Thou shalt hide them. It alludes to the mercy seat which was covered with the wings of the Cherubim; so are the sins of the godly, when repented of, covered with the wings of mercy and favour. *Thomas Watson*.

**Verse 3.** *Thou shalt purge them away; or, Thou coverest them.* The pronoun is emphatic, as though to express the conviction that God and God alone could do this. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

**Verse 3.** The holy prophets, and penmen of Scripture, have no grounds of hope for pardon of sin, save those which are common to the meanest of God's people; for David, in his confession, cometh in by himself alone, aggravating his own sins most: *Iniquities prevail against me*, saith he. But in hope of pardon, he joins with the rest of God's people, saying, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* *David Dickson*.

**Verses 3-4.** Now, soul, thou art molested with many lusts that infect thee, and obstruct thy commerce with heaven; yea, thou hast complained to thy God, what loss thou hast suffered by them; is it now presumption to expect relief from him, that he will rescue thee from them, that thou mayest serve him without fear, who is thy liege Lord? You have the saints for your precedents; who, when they have been in combat with their corruptions, yea, been foiled by them, have even then exercised their faith on God, and expected the ruin of those enemies, which, for the present, have overrun them. *Iniquities prevail against me*; he means his own sins; but see his faith; at the same time that they prevailed over him, he beholds God destroying them, as appears in the very next words, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* See here, poor Christian, who thinkest that thou shalt never get above deck, holy David has a faith, not only for himself, but also for all believers, of whose number I suppose thee one. And mark the ground he hath for this his confidence, taken from God's choosing act: *Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts.* As if he had said, Surely he will not let them be under the power of sin, or in want of his gracious succour, whom he sets so near himself. This is Christ's own argument against Satan, in the behalf of his people. *"The Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee."* Zec 3:2. *William Gurnall*.

**Verse 4.** *Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth.* The benedictions of the Psalter advance in spirituality and indicate a growth. The first blessed the godly reader of the word. Ps 1:1. The second described the pardoned child. Ps 32:1. The third pronounced a blessing upon faith. Ps 34:8 40:4. The fourth commended the active and generous believer, abundant in deeds of charity (Ps 41:1); and this last mounting to the fountain head of all benediction, blesses the elect of God. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 4.** *The man whom thou chooseth.* Christ, whom God chose, and of whom he said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," is, indeed, "over all, God blessed for ever; "but in him his

elect are blessed too. For his sake, not for our own, are we chosen; in him, not in ourselves, are we received by God, being accepted in the Beloved; and, therefore, in him are we blessed: he is our blessing. With that High Priest who has ascended into the holy place and entered within the veil, we enter into the house of God; we learn to dwell therein; we are filled with its spiritual joys; we partake of its holy mysteries and sacraments of grace and love. *From "A Plain Commentary on the Book of Psalms."* 1859.

**Verse 4.** *We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.* We shall be so filled, that nothing can be said to be wanting, we shall have nothing to look for outside. What can be wanting in the house of him who made everything, who is the master of everything, who will be all unto all, in whom is an inexhaustible treasure of good. Of him is said in Psalm 103, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with thy likeness." *Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621).*

**Verse 4.** *Satisfied with the goodness of thy house.* There is an allusion here to the oblations which were devoted to God, of which, also, sacred persons partook. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 5.** *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us.* The reason why he answers thus is, because what God doth for his people, take one thing with another, is still in order to the crucifying of the flesh; and what more *terrible* than such a death? We pray for *pleasing* things, as we imagine, but as we are flesh as well as spirit; so the flesh hath still a part in every prayer, and what we beg is partly carnal, and upon the matter, in part, we beg we know not what. Now, the answer as it comes from God, take all together, is spiritual, which is a crucifying thing to sinful flesh; hence comes all the terror... You pray for pardon; that is a pleasing thing, yet rightly understand not pleasing to the flesh; it mortifies corruption, breaks the heart, engages to a holy life: every answer from our God to us, one way or the other, first or last, shall tend that way. God useth so to give good things unto his children, as withal to give himself, and show to them his heavenly glory in what is done... Now God is *terrible* to sinful flesh: so far as he appears, it dies. Jacob, therefore, whilst he conquered God in prayer, himself was overcome, signified by that touch upon his thigh put out of joint, where the chiefest stress in wrestling lies. When we are weak, then are we strong; because, as God appears, we die unto ourselves and live in him. *William Carter, in a Fast Sermon entitled, "Light in Darkness."* 1648.

**Verse 5.** God's judgments are these *terribilia*, terrible, fearful things; and he is faithful in his covenant; and by terrible judgments he will answer, that is, satisfy our expectation: and that is a convenient sense of these words. But the word which we translate *righteousness* here, is *tzadok*, and *tzadok* is not faithfulness, but holiness; and these *terrible things* are reverend things; and so Tremellius translates it, and well. *Per res reverendas, by reverend things*, things to which there belongs a reverence—*thou shalt answer us*. And thus, the sense of this place will be, that the God of our salvation (that is, God working in the Christian church) calls us to holiness, to righteousness, by terrible things; not terrible in the way and nature of revenge, but terrible, that is, stupendous,

reverend, mysterious; so that we should not make religion too homely a thing, but come always to all acts and exercises of religion with reverence, with fear, and trembling, and make a difference between religious and civil actions. *John Donne.*

**Verse 5.** God's deliverance of his church and people *by terrible things* is *in righteousness*. The meaning of the point is this: God in all the deliverances of his people by terrible things, doth therein manifest his righteousness. He doth therein nothing but what is according to righteousness and justice. To clear this, consider that there is a double righteousness, the righteousness of his word, which is the righteousness of his faithfulness, and the righteousness of his works, or his just acts of righteousness. And God doth manifest both these in his deliverance of his people by terrible things. *John Bewick. 1644.*

**Verse 5.** But what is the meaning when they say, *wilt thou answer us?* *Us*, who are inhabitants of Zion, who are constituted thy people, and truly worship Thee; *us*, moreover, in contact with enemies, who stirred up strife against us, and wished us ill; *us*, lastly, who aim at and seek the stability of the Kingdom and Church, and every kind of felicity and safety; with such things *wilt thou answer us*, it says, that is, for our advantage and benefit, and according to our vows, and therefore by pleading our cause, and deciding in our favour, and satisfying our desires; and in this way rendering us happy and establishing us, and subduing and confounding our foes. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 5.** *Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth.* How could God be the confidence of all the ends of the earth, if he does not reign and constantly work? The stability of the mountains is ascribed not to certain physical laws, but to the power of God. The noise of the seas is stilled not by laws without a powerful agent, but by the immediate influence of the Almighty Ruler. Human laws also may be the means of restraining persecution, but they are only means; and it is God who stilleth the tumult of the people. It is God who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to sing. The Scriptures, in viewing the works which God does through means, never lose sight of God himself. God visits and waters the earth: God prepares the corn. Without his own immediate power, the laws of nature could not produce their effect. How consoling and satisfactory is this view of Divine Providence, compared with that of an infidel philosophy, that forbids us to go further back than to the power of certain physical laws, which it grants, indeed, were at first established by God, but which can now perform their office without him. *Alexander Carson. (1776-1844.)*

**Verse 5.** *All the ends of the earth.* God is *in himself potentially, The confidence of all the ends of the earth.* Hereafter he will be recognised by all to be so (Ps 23:27-28), of which the Queen of Sheba's coming to Solomon "from the uttermost parts of the earth" is a type. Mt 12:42. *A. R. Faussett.*

**Verse 5.** *And of them that are afar off upon the sea.* We must beseech God in the words of this Psalm, that since He stands upon the shore, and beholds our perils, he would make us, who are tossed on the turbulent sea, secure for his name's sake, and enable us to hold between Scylla and

Charybdis, the middle course, and escaping the danger on either hand, with a sound vessel and safe merchandise, reach the port. *Lorinus (from Augustine)*.

**Verses 5-8.** The divine watering of the earth is obviously symbolical of the descent of the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension; and when on the great day of Pentecost the devout Jews, "out of every nation under heaven, "heard the apostle speaking in their several tongues the wonderful works of God, it was a testimony that God was beginning spiritually to make *the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice*. To God, *which stilleth the noise of the waves and the tumult of the people*, the apostles betook themselves in prayer after their first conflict with Jewish authorities, the first conflict of the infant Christian community with the powers of this world: the language of the Psalm (Ps 65:5), *O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea*, is reflected in the opening words of their prayer on that occasion (Ac 4:24), "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; "and if, when they prayed, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, "it was no idle sign that *by terrible things in righteousness* were they being answered by the God of their salvation. These are, of course, mere illustrations of the inner harmony of Scripture; but, as such, they may not be without their value. *Joseph Francis Thrupp*.

**Verse 6.** *Setteth fast the mountains*. It is by thy strength they have been raised, and by thy power they are girded about and preserved. He represents the mountains as being formed and pitched into their proper places by the mighty hand of God; and shows that they are preserved from splitting, falling down, or moulding away, as it were, by a girdle by which they are surrounded. The image is very fine. They were hooped about by the divine power. *Adam Clarke*.

**Verse 8.** Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to *rejoice*. That is, thou makest men to rejoice, they are glad, they rejoice in, or at, the outgoings in the morning. And at the evening men rejoice too, for then they go to their rest, being wearied with the labour of the day. Or, we may thus expound it: Thou makest men who live at the outgoings of the morning, and at the outgoings of the evening, to rejoice. As if it had been said, Thou makest the eastern people and the western people, all people from east to west, rejoice. And that which makes all people to rejoice, naturally, is the rising of light with them in the east, and the coming of light towards them in the west. *Joseph Caryl*.

**Verse 8.** *Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice*. How contrary soever light and darkness are to each other, and how inviolable soever the partition between them (Ge 1:4), both are equally welcome to the world in their season; it is hard to say which is more welcome to us, the light of the morning which befriends the business of the day, or the shadows of the evening which befriend the repose of the night. Doth the watchman wait for the morning? so doth the hireling earnestly desire the shadow. Some understand it of the morning and evening sacrifice, which good people greatly rejoiced in, and in which God was constantly honoured. Thou makest them to sing, so

the word is; for every morning and every evening songs of praise were sung by the Levites; it was that which the duty of every day required. And we are to look upon our daily worship alone, and with our families, to be both the most needful of our daily business, and the most delightful of our daily comforts; and if therein we keep up our communion with God, the outgoings both of the morning and of the evening are thereby made truly to rejoice. *Matthew Henry.*

**Verse 8.** Lyranus, Dionysius Carthusianus, Cajetanus, Placidus Parmensis, (who treads in the footsteps of Cajetanus though he does not mention him) take the first clause to refer to the wonder of all mankind at the wonderful works of God on the land and the sea; and explain the second respecting the sacrifices which were wont to be offered in the morning and evening; that God made these acceptable to himself and delightful to those who offered them, especially after the return from captivity. In the beginning of the Psalm sacrifices are hinted at by *praise* and *vows*, as we have seen, and in the history of Esdra it is recorded, that *the morning and evening sacrifice were offered unto the Lord* by those who had returned; and that those who approached, when they entered, and others who had made their offerings, when they departed, gave praises to God. Hence it is here said, that the outgoings of the morning and of the evening, that is to say, when they who praise God go forth from either sacrifice, God will be well pleased, he will receive delight from that praise, and it will be grateful to him. *Lorinus.*

**Verse 8.** Figuratively, *the outgoings of the morning*, or dawn, is the light of grace in the beginning of conversion; "*the outgoing of the evening*" is the final light of grace in the hour of death. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 9.** *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it*, etc. How beautiful are the words of the inspired poet, read in this month of harvest, nearly three thousand years after they were written! For nearly three thousand years since the royal poet looked over the plains of Judea covered with the bounty of God, and broke forth into his magnificent hymn of praise, has the earth rolled on in her course, and the hand of God has blessed her, and all her children, with seed time and harvest, with joy and abundance. The very steadfastness of the Almighty's liberality, flowing like a mighty ocean through the infinite vast of the universe, makes his creatures forget to wonder at its wonderfulness, to feel true thankfulness at its immeasurable goodness. The sun rises and sets so surely; the seasons run on amid all their changes with such inimitable truth, that we take as a matter of course that which is amazing beyond all stretch of imagination, and good beyond the wildest expansion of the noblest human heart. The poor man, with his half a dozen children, toils, and often dies, under the vain labour of winning bread for them. God feeds his family of countless myriads swarming over the surface of all countless worlds, and none know need but through the follies of themselves, or the cruelty of their fellows. God pours his light from innumerable suns on innumerable rejoicing planets; he waters them everywhere in the fittest moment; he ripens the food of globes and of nations, and

gives them fair weather to garner it. And from age to age, amid his endless creatures of endless forms and powers, in the beauty and the sunshine, and the magnificence of nature, he seems to sing throughout creation the glorious song of his own divine joy, in the immortality of his youth, in the omnipotence of his nature, in the eternity of his patience, and the abounding boundlessness of his love. What a family hangs on his sustaining arm! The life and soul of infinite ages, and of uncounted worlds! Let a moment's failure of his power, of his watchfulness, or of his will to do good, occur, and what a sweep of death and annihilation through the universe! How stars would reel, planets expire, and nations perish! But from age to age, no such catastrophe occurs, even in the midst of national crimes, and of atheism that denies the hand that made and feeds it. Life springs with a power ever new; food springs up as plentiful to sustain it, and sunshine and joy are poured over all from the invisible throne of God, as the poetry of the existence which he has given. If there come seasons of dearth, or of failure, they come but as warnings to proud and tyrannic man. The potato is smitten that a nation may not be oppressed for ever; and the harvest is diminished that the laws of man's unnatural avarice may be rent asunder. And then, again, the sun shines, the rain falls, and the earth rejoices in a renewed beauty, and in a redoubled plenty. *William Howitt, in "The Year Book of the Country."* 1850.

**Verse 9.** *Thou visitest the earth.* God seems to come with the coming in of each of the seasons. In some respects, during winter, God seems like a man travelling into a far country. Darkness, and barrenness, and coldness, suggest absence on the part of God. The spring looks like his return. The great change it involves cheerily whispers, "He is not far from any one of us." In longer days, and a warmer atmosphere, and a revived earth, God comes to us. These things are not of necessity, but of providence. There are second causes, but above all these is the First Cause, intelligent, loving, and free, God rules in all, over all, and above all. He is not displaced or supplanted by the forces and agencies which he employs, he is not absorbed by care of other worlds, he is not indifferent toward the earth. A personal superintendence and providence are not beneath his dignity, or in anywise distasteful to him. As Maker, and Life giver, and Father, *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it.* *Samuel Martin, in "Rain upon the Mown Grass, and other Sermons."* 1871.

**Verse 9.** The psalmist is here foretelling the gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of the nations of the earth to Christ. *Origen.*

**Verse 9.** The chiefs of Hebrew theology attribute four keys to God, which he never entrusted to any angel or seraph, and as the first of these they place *the key of rain.* He himself is said, in Job 28:26, to give a law to the rain, and in chapter Job 26:8, *to bind up the waters in the clouds.* *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 9.** *With the river of God, which is full of water.* That is, the clouds figuratively described. *Edward Leigh (1602-3-1671).*

**Verse 9.** *The river of God*, as opposed to earthly streams. However these may fail, the divine resources are exhaustless. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

**Verse 9.** *The river of God.* The Chaldee paraphrase is, *From the fountain of God which is in the heavens, which is full of the rainstorms of blessing, thou wilt prepare their cornfields.* *Lorinus.*

**Verse 9.** *Thou preparest their grain; for so dost thou prepare the earth.* (Version of American Bible Union.) So, namely, with this design, and for this end. In the Hebrew, "for so dost thou prepare her;" referring to "the earth," which in Hebrew is *fem.*, while grain is *masc.* The meaning can be expressed in English only by using the word (earth) which the Hebrew pronoun represents. The English pronoun (it) would necessarily refer to "grain," and would represent neither the meaning of the Hebrew nor its form. *Thomas J. Conant.*

**Verse 9.** *Thou preparest them corn,* etc. Corn is the special gift of God to man. There are several interesting and instructive ideas connected with this view of it. All the other plants we use as food are unfit for his purpose in their natural condition, and require to have their nutritious qualities developed, and their natures and forms to a certain extent changed by a gradual process of cultivation. There is not a single useful plant grown in our gardens and fields, but is utterly worthless for food in its normal or wild state; and man has been left to himself to find out, slowly and painfully, how to convert these crudities of nature into nutritious vegetables. But it is not so with corn. It has from the very beginning been an abnormal production. God gave it to Adam, we have every reason to believe, in the same perfect state of preparation for food in which we find it at the present day, It was made expressly for man, and given directly into his hands. "Behold," says the Creator, "I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth; "that is, all the cereal plants—such as corn, wheat, barley, rice, maize, etc., whose peculiar characteristic it is to produce seed... There is another proof that corn was created expressly for man's use, in the fact that it has never been found in a wild state. The primitive types from which all our other esculent plants were derived are still to be found in a state of nature in this or other countries. The wild beet and cabbage still grow on our seashores; the crab apple and the sloe, the savage parents of our luscious pippins and plums, are still found among the trees of the wood; but where are the original types of our corn plants? Where are the wild grasses, which, according to some authors, the cumulative process of agriculture carried on through successive ages, have developed into corn, wheat, and barley? Much has been written, and many experiments have been tried, to determine the natural origin of these cereals, but every effort has hitherto proved in vain. Reports have again and again been circulated that corn and wheat have been found growing wild in some parts of Persia and the steppes of Tartary, apparently far from the influence of cultivation; but when tested by botanical data, these reports have turned out, in every instance, to be unfounded. Corn has never been known as anything else than a cultivated plant. History and observation prove that it cannot grow spontaneously. It is never, like other plants, self

sown and self diffused. Neglected of men, it speedily disappears and becomes extinct. It does not return, as do all other cultivated varieties of plants, to a natural condition, and so become worthless as food, but utterly perishes, being constitutionally unfitted to maintain the struggle for existence with the aboriginal vegetation of the soil. All this proves that it must have been produced miraculously; or, in other words, given by God to man directly, in the same abnormal condition in which it now appears; for nature never could have developed or preserved it. In the mythologies of all the ancient nations it was confidently affirmed to have had a supernatural origin. The Greeks and Romans believed it to be the gift of the goddess Ceres, who taught her son, Triptolemus, to cultivate and distribute it over the earth; and from her, the whole class of plants received the name of cereals, which they now bear. And we only express the same truth when we say to him, whom these pagans ignorantly worshipped, *Thou preparest them corn, when thou hast provided for it.* Let me bring forth one more proof of special design, enabling us to recognise the hand of God in this mercy. Corn is universally diffused. It is almost the only species of plant which is capable of growing everywhere, in almost every soil, in almost any situation. In some form or other, adapted to the various modifications of climate and physical conditions, which occur in different countries, it is spread over an area of the earth's surface as extensive as the occupancy of the human race... Rice is grown in tropical countries where periodical rains and inundations, followed by excessive heat, occur, and furnishes the chief article of diet for the largest proportion of the human race. Wheat will not thrive in hot climates, but flourishes all over the temperate zone, at various ranges of elevation, and is admirably adapted to the wants of highly civilized communities. Maize spreads over an immense geographical area in the new world, where it has been known from time immemorial, and formed a principal element of that Indian civilisation which surprised the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru. Barley is cultivated in those parts of Europe and Asia where the soil and climate are not adapted for wheat; while oats and rye extend far into the bleak north, and disappear only from those desolate Arctic regions where man cannot exist in his social capacity. By these striking adaptations of different varieties of grain, containing the same essential ingredients, to different soils and climates, Providence has furnished the indispensable food for the sustenance of the human race throughout the whole habitable globe; and all nations, and tribes, and tongues can rejoice together, as one great family, with the joy of harvest. *Hugh Macmillan, in "Bible Teachings in Nature."* 1868.

**Verses 9-13.** I do not know any picture of rural life that in any measure comes up to the exquisite description here brought before us, and which every one's heart at once recognises as so true to nature in all its branches. In the brief compass of five verses we have the whole scene vividly sketched, from the first preparation of the earth or soil; the provision of the corn seed for the sower; the rain in its season, the former and the latter rain, watering the ridges, settling the furrows, and causing the seed to swell and to spring forth, and bud and blossom; then the crowning of the whole



year in the appointed weeks of harvest, and men's hearts rejoicing before God according to the joy in harvest, the very foot paths dropping with fatness, and the valleys shouting and singing for joy. Our harvest homes are times of rejoicing too, but I would that our tillers and reapers of the soil would as piously refer all to God as the psalmist did. *Thou waterest the earth, Thou greatly enrichest it, Thou preparest the corn, Thou waterest the ridges, Thou settlest the furrows, Thou makest it soft with showers, Thou blessest the springing thereof, Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.* Not one word of man, of man's skill, or of man's labour, not one thought of self. How different from him whose grounds brought forth abundantly, and whose only thought was, "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, drink, and be merry." *Barton Bouchier.*

**Verse 13.** The phrase, *the pastures are clothed with flocks*, cannot be regarded as the vulgar language of poetry. It appears peculiarly beautiful and appropriate, when we consider the numerous flocks which whitened the plains of Syria and Canaan. In the eastern countries, sheep are much more prolific than with us, and they derive their name from their great fruitfulness; bringing forth, as they are said to do, "thousands and ten thousands in their streets," Ps 144:13. They, therefore, formed no mean part of the wealth of the East. *James Anderson, in editorial Note to Calvin in loc.*

**Verse 13.** The hills, where not tilled, were bushy and green, and sprinkled with numerous flocks; the valleys broad and covered with a rich crop of wheat; the fields full of reapers and gleaners in the midst of the harvest, with asses and camels receiving their loads of sheaves, and feeding unmuzzled and undisturbed upon the ripe grain. *Edward Robinson.*

**Verse 13.** It may seem strange, that he should first tell us, that *they shout for joy*, and then add the feebler expression, that *they sing*; interposing, too, the insensitive particle, *pa, aph, they shout for joy, YEA, they also sing.* The verb, however, admits of being taken in the future tense, *they shall sing*; and this denotes a continuation of joy, that they would rejoice, not only one year, but through the endless succession of the seasons. I may add, what is well known, that in Hebrew the order of expression is frequently inverted in this way. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 13.** *They also sing. They ardently sing:* such is the real meaning of *pa*; primarily "heat" or "warmth," thence "ardour, passion, anger," and thence again "the nostrils," as the supposed seat of this feeling. *John Mason Good.*

---

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Verse 1.** The fitness, place, use, and power of silence in worship.

**Verse 1.** The limitations, advantages, and obligations of vows.

**Verse 2.** (*first clause*). The hearing and granting of prayer is the Lord's property, his usual practice, his pleasure, his nature, and his glory. *David Dickson.*

**Verse 3.**

1. *The humble confession.* Sins prevail against us.

(a) *When* we are not alert, or go into temptation, and even after most sacred engagements.

(b) *How.* Through our inbred corruption, natural constitution, suddenness of temptation, neglect of means of grace, and want of fellowship.

(c) In *whom.* In the best of men: David says, *against me.* Let us take home the caution.

2. *The reassuring confidence.* Sin is forgiven.

(a) By God: *Thou.*

(b) By atonement: covering all.

(c) Effectually: *purge away.*

(d) Comprehensively: *our transgressions.*

**Verse 3.**

1. *A cry of distress.* Man soul besieged: *Iniquities prevail against me.*

2. *A shout of delight.* Man soul relieved: *Thou shalt purge them away.* E. G. Gange.

**Verse 4.** Nearness to God is the foundation of a creature's happiness. This doctrine appears in full evidence, while we consider the three chief ingredients of true felicity, viz., the contemplation of the noblest object, to satisfy all the powers of the understanding; the love of the supreme good, to answer the utmost propensities of the will, and the sweet and everlasting sensation and assurance of the love of an Almighty Friend, who will free us from all the evils which our nature can fear, and confer upon us all the good which a wise and innocent creature can desire. Thus all the capacities of man are employed in their highest and sweetest exercises and enjoyments. *Isaac Watts.*

**Verse 4.** Election, effectual calling, access, adoption, final perseverance, satisfaction. This verse is a body of divinity in miniature.

**Verse 5.** Treat the first clause experimentally, and show how prayers for our own sanctification are answered by trial; for God's glory, by our persecution; for our babes' salvation, by their death; for the good of others, by their sickness, etc.

**Verse 7.** The Lord, the giver, creator, and preserver of peace.

**Verse 8.** Tokens of God's presence; those causing terror, and those inspiring joy.

**Verse 8.** (*last clause*). The peculiar joys of morning and evening.

**Verse 9.** *The river of God.* John Bunyan's treatise on "The Water of Life" would be suggestive on this topic.

**Verse 9.** Divine visits and their consequences.

**Verses 9-13.** A Harvest Sermon.

1. *The general goodness of God,* Visiting the earth in rotation of seasons: "Seed time and harvest," etc.

2. *The greatness of his resources:* The river of God, which is full of water; not like Elijah's brook,

which dried up.

3. *The variety of his benefactions:* Corn; Water; Blesses the springing thereof, etc.

4. *The perpetuity of his blessings;* Crownest the year. E. G. G.

**Verse 13.** The song of nature and the ear which hears it.

## **Psalm 66**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

---

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician.* He had need be a man of great skill, worthily to sing such a Psalm as this: the best music in the world would be honoured by marriage with such expressions. *A Song or Psalm, or a Song and Psalm.* It may be either said or sung; it is a marvellous poem if it be but read; but set to suitable music, it must have been one of the noblest strains ever heard by the Jewish people. We do not know who is its author, but we see no reason to doubt that David wrote it. It is in the Davidic style, and has nothing in it unsuited to his times. It is true the "house" of God is mentioned, but the tabernacle was entitled to that designation as well as the temple.

**SUBJECT AND DIVISION.** Praise is the topic, and the subjects for song are the Lord's great works, his gracious benefits, his faithful deliverances, and all his dealings with his people, brought to a close by a personal testimony to special kindness received by the prophet bard himself. Ps 66:1-4 are a kind of introductory hymn, calling upon all nations to praise God, and dictating to them the words of a suitable song. Ps 66:5-7 invite the beholder to "*Come and see*" the works of the Lord, pointing attention to the Red Sea, and perhaps the passage of Jordan. This suggests the similar position of the afflicted people which is described, and its joyful issue predicted, Ps 66:8-12. The singer then becomes personal, and confesses his own obligations to the Lord (Ps 66:13-15); and, bursting forth with a vehement "*Come and hear,*" declares with thanksgiving the special favour of the Lord to himself, Ps 66:16-20.

---

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Make a joyful noise unto God.* "In Zion, "where the more instructed saints were accustomed to profound meditation, the song was silent unto God, and was accepted of him; but in the great popular assemblies a joyful noise was more appropriate and natural, and it would be equally acceptable. If praise is to be wide spread, it must be vocal; exulting sounds stir the soul and cause a sacred contagion of thanksgiving. Composers of tunes for the congregation should see to it that their

airs are cheerful; we need not so much noise, as *joyful* noise. God is to be praised with the voice, and the heart should go therewith in holy exultation. All praise from all nations should be rendered unto the Lord. Happy the day when no shouts shall be presented to Juggernaut or Boodh, but all the earth shall adore the Creator thereof. All ye lands. Ye heathen nations, ye who have not known Jehovah hitherto, with one consent let the whole earth rejoice before God. The languages of the lands are many, but their praises should be one, addressed to one only God.

**Verse 2.** *Sing forth the honour of his name.* The noise is to be modulated with tune and time, and fashioned into singing, for we adore the God of order and harmony. The honour of God should be our subject, and to honour him our object when we sing. To give glory to God is but to restore to him his own. It is our glory to be able to give God glory; and all our true glory should be ascribed unto God, for it is his glory. "All worship be to God only," should be the motto of all true believers. The name, nature, and person of God are worthy of the highest honour. Make his praise glorious. Let not his praise be mean and grovelling: let it arise with grandeur and solemnity before him. The pomp of the ancient festivals is not to be imitated by us, under this dispensation of the Spirit, but we are to throw so much of heart and holy reverence into all our worship that it shall be the best we can render. Heart worship and spiritual joy render praise more glorious than vestments, incense, and music could do.

**Verse 3.** *Say unto God.* Turn all your praises to him. Devotion, unless it be resolutely directed to the Lord, is no better than whistling to the wind. How terrible art thou in thy works. The mind is usually first arrested by those attributes which cause fear and trembling; and, even when the heart has come to love God, and rest in him, there is an increase of worship when the soul is awed by an extraordinary display of the more dreadful of the divine characteristics. Looking upon the convulsions which have shaken continents, the hurricanes which have devastated nations, the plagues which have desolated cities, and other great and amazing displays of divine working, men may well say: *How terrible art thou in thy works.* Till we see God in Christ, the terrible predominates in all our apprehensions of him. Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit *themselves unto thee*; but, as the Hebrew clearly intimates, it will be a forced and false submission. Power brings a man to his knee, but love alone wins his heart. Pharaoh said he would let Israel go, but he lied unto God; he submitted in word but not in deed. Tens of thousands, both in earth and hell, are rendering this constrained homage to the Almighty; they only submit because they cannot do otherwise; it is not their loyalty, but his power, which keeps them subjects of his boundless dominion.

**Verse 4.** *All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee.* All men must even now prostrate themselves before thee, but a time will come when they shall do this cheerfully; to the worship of fear shall be added the singing of love. What a change shall have taken place when singing shall displace sighing, and music shall thrust out misery! They shall sing to thy name. The nature and works of God will be the theme of earth's universal song, and he himself shall be the object of the joyful adoration of

our emancipated race. Acceptable worship not only praises God as the mysterious Lord, but it is rendered fragrant by some measure of knowledge of his name or character. God would not be worshipped as an unknown God, nor have it said of his people, "Ye worship ye know not what." May the knowledge of the Lord soon cover the earth, that so the universality of intelligent worship may be possible: such a consummation was evidently expected by the writer of this Psalm; and, indeed, throughout all Old Testament writings, there are intimations of the future general spread of the worship of God. It was an instance of wilful ignorance and bigotry when the Jews raged against the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. Perverted Judaism may be exclusive, but the religion of Moses, and David, and Isaiah was not so. Selah. A little pause for holy expectation is well inserted after so great a prophecy, and the uplifting of the heart is also a seasonable direction. No meditation can be more joyous than excited by the prospect of a world reconciled to its Creator.

**Verse 5.** *Come and see the works of God.* Such glorious events, as the cleaving of the Red Sea and the overthrow of Pharaoh, are standing wonders, and throughout all time a voice sounds forth concerning them—"Come and see." Even till the close of all things, the marvellous works of God at the Red Sea will be the subject of meditation and praise; for, standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire, the triumphal armies of heaven sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. It has always been the favourite subject of the inspired bards, and their choice was most natural. He is terrible in his doing toward the children of men. For the defence of his church and the overthrow of her foes he deals terrific blows, and strikes the mighty with fear. O thou enemy, wherefore dost thou vaunt thyself? Speak no more so exceeding proudly, but remember the plagues which bowed the will of Pharaoh, the drowning of Egypt's chariots in the Red Sea, the overthrow of Og and Sihon, the scattering of the Canaanites before the tribes. This same God still liveth, and is to be worshipped with trembling reverence.

**Verse 6.** *He turned the sea into dry land.* It was no slight miracle to divide a pathway through such a sea, and to make it fit for the traffic of a whole nation. He who did this can do anything, and must be God, the worthy object of adoration. The Christian's inference is that no obstacle in his journey heavenward need hinder him, for the sea could not hinder Israel, and even death itself shall be as life; the sea shall be dry land when God's presence is felt. They went through the flood on foot. Through the river the tribes passed dry shod, Jordan was afraid because of them.

"What ailed thee, O thou mighty sea?

Why rolled thy waves in dread?

What bade thy tide, O Jordan, flee

And bare its deepest bed?"

"O earth, before the Lord, the God

Of Jacob, tremble still;

Who makes the waste a watered sod,  
The flint a gushing rill."

There did we rejoice in him. We participate this day in that ancient joy. The scene is so vividly before us that it seems as if we were there personally, singing unto the Lord because he hath triumphed gloriously. Faith casts herself bodily into the past joys of the saints, and realises them for herself in much the same fashion in which she projects herself into the bliss of the future, and becomes the substance of things hoped for. It is to be remarked that Israel's joy was in her God, and there let ours be. It is not so much what he has done, as what he is, that should excite in us a sacred rejoicing. "He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him."

**Verse 7.** *He ruleth by his power for ever.* He has not deceased, nor abdicated, nor suffered defeat. The prowess displayed at the Red Sea is undiminished: the divine dominion endures throughout eternity. His eyes behold the nations. Even as he looked out of the cloud upon the Egyptians and discomfited them, so does he spy out his enemies, and mark their conspiracies. His hand rules and his eye observes, his hand has not waxed weak, nor his eye dim. As so many grasshoppers he sees the people and tribes, at one glance he takes in all their ways. He oversees all and overlooks none. Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. The proudest have no cause to be proud. Could they see themselves as God sees them they would shrivel into nothing. Where rebellion reaches to a great head, and hopes most confidently for success, it is a sufficient reason for abating our fears, that the Omnipotent ruler is also an Omniscient observer. O proud rebels, remember that the Lord aims his arrows at the high soaring eagles and brings them down from their nest among the stars. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." After a survey of the Red Sea and Jordan, rebels, if they were in their senses, would have no more stomach for the fight, but would humble themselves at the Conqueror's feet. Selah. Pause again, and take time to bow low before the throne of the Eternal.

**Verse 8.** *O bless our God, ye people.* Ye chosen seed, peculiarly beloved, it is yours to bless your covenant God as other nations cannot. Ye should lead the strain, for he is peculiarly your God. First visited by his love, ye should be foremost in his praise. And make the voice of his praise to be heard. Whoever else may sing with bated breath, do you be sure to give full tongue and volume to the song. Compel unwilling ears to hear the praises of your covenant God. Make rocks, and hills, and earth, and sea, and heaven itself to echo with your joyful shouts.

**Verse 9.** *Which holdeth our soul in life.* At any time the preservation of life, and especially the soul's life, is a great reason for gratitude but much more when we are called to undergo extreme trials, which of themselves would crush our being. Blessed be God, who, having put our souls into possession of life, has been pleased to preserve that heaven given life from the destroying power of the enemy. And suffereth not our feet to be moved. This is another and precious boon. If God has

enabled us not only to keep our life, but our position, we are bound to give him double praise. Living and standing is the saint's condition through divine grace. Immortal and immoveable are those whom God preserves. Satan is put to shame, for instead of being able to slay the saints, as he hoped, he is not even able to trip them up. God is able to make the weakest to stand fast, and he will do so.

**Verse 10.** *For thou, O God, hast proved us.* He proved his Israel with sore trials. David had his temptations. All the saints must go to the proving house; God had one Son without sin, but he never had a son without trial. Why ought we to complain if we are subjected to the rule which is common to all the family, and from which so much benefit has flowed to them? The Lord himself proves us, who then shall raise a question as to the wisdom and the love which are displayed in the operation? The day may come when, as in this case, we shall make hymns out of our griefs, and sing all the more sweetly because our mouths have been purified with bitter draughts. Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Searching and repeated, severe and thorough, has been the test; the same result has followed us as in the case of precious metal, for the dross and tin have been consumed, and the pure ore has been discovered. Since trial is sanctified to so desirable an end, ought we not to submit to it with abounding resignation.

**Verse 11.** *Thou broughtest us into the net.* The people of God in the olden time were often enclosed by the power of their enemies, like fishes or birds entangled in a net; there seemed no way of escape for them. The only comfort was that God himself had brought them there, but even this was not readily available, since they knew that he had led them there in anger as a punishment for their transgressions; Israel in Egypt was much like a bird in the fowler's net. Thou laidest affliction upon our loins. They were pressed even to anguish by their burdens and pains. Not on their backs alone was the load, but their loins were pressed and squeezed with the straits and weights of adversity. God's people and affliction are intimate companions. As in Egypt every Israelite was a burden bearer, so is every believer while he is in this foreign land. As Israel cried to God by reason of their sore bondage, so also do the saints. We too often forget that God lays our afflictions upon us; if we remembered this fact, we should more patiently submit to the pressure which now pains us. The time will come when, for every ounce of present burden, we shall receive a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

**Verse 12.** *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.* They stormed, and hectorred, and treated us like the mire of the street. Riding the high horse, in their arrogance, they, who were in themselves mean men, treated the Lord's people as if they were the meanest of mankind. They even turned their captives into beasts of burden, and rode upon their heads, as some read the Hebrew. Nothing is too bad for the servants of God when they fall into the hands of proud persecutors. We went through fire and through water. Trials many and varied were endured by Israel in Egypt, and are still the portion of the saints. The fires of the brick kiln and the waters of the Nile did their worst to destroy the chosen

race; hard labour and child murder were both tried by the tyrant, but Israel went through both ordeals unharmed, and even thus the church of God has outlived, and will outlive, all the artifices and cruelties of man. Fire and water are pitiless and devouring, but a divine fiat stays their fury, and forbids these or any other agents from utterly destroying the chosen seed. Many an heir of heaven has had a dire experience of tribulation; the fire through which he has passed has been more terrible than that which chars the bones, for it has fed upon the marrow of his spirit, and burned into the core of his heart; while the waterfloods of affliction have been even more to be feared than the remorseless sea, for they have gone in even unto the soul, and carried the inner nature down into deeps horrible, and not to be imagined without trembling. Yet each saint has been more than conqueror hitherto, and, as it has been, so it shall be. The fire is not kindled which can burn the woman's seed, neither does the dragon know how to vomit a flood which shall suffice to drown it. But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. A blessed issue to a mournful story. Canaan was indeed a broad and royal domain for the once enslaved tribes: God, who took them into Egypt, also brought them into the land which flowed with milk and honey, and Egypt was in his purposes *en route* to Canaan. The way to heaven is *via* tribulation.

"The path of sorrow and that path alone,  
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown."

How wealthy is the place of every believer, and how doubly does he feel it to be so in contrast with his former slavery: what songs shall suffice to set forth our joy and gratitude for such a glorious deliverance and such a bountiful heritage. More awaits us. The depth of our griefs bears no proportion to the height of our bliss. For our shame we have double, and more than double. Like Joseph we shall rise from the prison to the palace, like Mordecai we shall escape the gallows prepared by malignity, and ride the white horse and wear the royal robe appointed by benignity. Instead of the net, liberty; instead of a burden on the loins, a crown on our heads; instead of men riding over us, we shall rule over the nations: fire shall no more try us, for we shall stand in glory on the sea of glass mingled with fire; and water shall not harm us, for there shall be no more sea. O the splendour of this brilliant conclusion to a gloomy history. Glory be unto him who saw in the apparent evil the true way to the real good. With patience we will endure the present gloom, for the morning cometh. Over the hills faith sees the daybreak, in whose light we shall enter into the wealthy place.

**Verse 13.** *I will.* The child of God is so sensible of his own personal indebtedness to grace, that he feels that he must utter a song of his own. He joins in the common thanksgiving, but since the best public form must fail to meet each individual case, he makes sure that the special mercies received by him shall not be forgotten, for he records them with his own pen, and sings of them with his own lips. I will go into thy house with burnt offerings; the usual sacrifices of godly men. Even the thankful heart dares not come to God without a victim of grateful praise; of this as well as of every other form



of worship, we may say, "the blood is the life thereof." Reader, never attempt to come before God without Jesus, the divinely promised, given, and accepted burnt offering. I will pay thee my vows. He would not appear before the Lord empty, but at the same time he would not boast of what he offered, seeing it was all due on account of former vows. After all, our largest gifts are but payments; when we have given all, we must confess, "O Lord, of thine own have we given unto thee." We should be slow in making vows, but prompt in discharging them. When we are released from trouble, and can once more go up to the house of the Lord, we should take immediate occasion to fulfil our promises. How can we hope for help another time, if we prove faithless to covenants voluntarily entered upon in hours of need.

**Verse 15.** *I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings.* The good man will give his best things to God. No starveling goat upon the hills will he present at the altar, but the well fed bullocks of the luxuriant pastures shall ascend in smoke from the sacred fire. He who is miserly with God is a wretch indeed. Few devise liberal things, but those few find a rich reward in so doing. With the incense of rams. The smoke of burning rams should also rise from the altar; he would offer the strength and prime of his flocks as well as his herds. Of all we have we should give the Lord his portion, and that should be the choicest we can select. It was no waste to burn the fat upon Jehovah's altar, nor to pour the precious ointment upon Jesus' head; neither are large gifts and bountiful offerings to the church of God any diminution to a man's estate: such money is put to good interest and placed where it cannot be stolen by thieves nor corroded by rust. I will offer bullocks with goats. A perfect sacrifice, completing the circle of offerings, should show forth the intense love of his heart. We should magnify the Lord with the great and the little. None of his ordinances should be disregarded; we must not omit either the bullocks or the goats. In these three verses we have gratitude in action, not content with words, but proving its own sincerity by deeds of obedient sacrifice. Selah. It is most fit that we should suspend the song while the smoke of the victims ascends the heavens; let the burnt offerings stand for praises while we meditate upon the infinitely greater sacrifice of Calvary.

**Verse 16.** *Come and hear.* Before, they were bidden to come and see. Hearing is faith's seeing. Mercy comes to us by way of ear gate. "Hear, and your soul shall live." They saw how terrible God was, but they heard how gracious he was. All ye that fear God. These are a fit audience when a good man is about to relate his experience; and it is well to select our hearers when inward soul matters are our theme. It is forbidden us to throw pearls before swine. We do not want to furnish wanton minds with subjects for their comedies, and therefore it is wise to speak of personal spiritual matters where they can be understood, and not where they will be burlesqued. All God fearing men may hear us, but far hence ye profane. And I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I will count and recount the mercies of God to me, to my soul, my best part, my most real self. Testimonies ought to be borne by all experienced Christians, in order that the younger and feebler sort may be encouraged

by the recital to put their trust in the Lord. To declare man's doings is needless; they are too trivial, and, besides, there are trumpeters enough of man's trumpery deeds; but to declare the gracious acts of God is instructive, consoling, inspiring, and beneficial in many respects. Let each man speak for himself, for a personal witness is the surest and most forcible; second hand experience is like "cauld kale het again; "it lacks the flavour of first hand interest. Let no mock modesty restrain the grateful believer from speaking of himself, or rather of God's dealings to himself, for it is justly due to God; neither let him shun the individual use of the first person, which is most correct in detailing the Lord's ways of love. We must not be egotists, but we must be egotists when we bear witness for the Lord.

**Verse 17.** *I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.* It is well when prayer and praise go together, like the horses in Pharaoh's chariot. Some cry who do not sing, and some sing who do not cry: both together are best. Since the Lord's answers so frequently follow close at the heels of our petitions, and even overtake them, it becomes us to let our grateful praises keep pace with our humble prayers. Observe that the psalmist did both cry and speak; the Lord has cast the dumb devil out of his children, and those of them who are least fluent with their tongues are often the most eloquent with their hearts.

**Verse 18.** *If I regard iniquity in my heart.* If, having seen it to be there, I continue to gaze upon it without aversion; if I cherish it, have a side glance of love toward it, excuse it, and palliate it; The Lord will not hear me. How can he? Can I desire him to connive at my sin, and accept me while I wilfully cling to any evil way? Nothing hinders prayer like iniquity harboured in the breast; as with Cain, so with us, sin lieth at the door, and blocks the passage. If thou listen to the devil, God will not listen to thee. If you refuse to hear God's commands, he will surely refuse to hear thy prayers. An imperfect petition God will hear for Christ's sake, but not one which is wilfully miswritten by a traitor's hand. For God to accept our devotions, while we are delighting in sin, would be to make himself the God of hypocrites, which is a fitter name for Satan than for the Holy One of Israel.

**Verse 19.** *But verily God hath heard me.* Sure sign this that the petitioner was no secret lover of sin. The answer to his prayer was a fresh assurance that his heart was sincere before the Lord. See how sure the psalmist is that he has been heard; it is with him no hope, surmise, or fancy, but he seals it with a *verily*. Facts are blessed things when they reveal both God's heart as loving, and our own heart as sincere. He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. He gave his mind to consider my cries, interpreted them, accepted them, and replied to them; and therein proved his grace and also my uprightness of heart. Love of sin is a plague spot, a condemning mark, a killing sign, but those prayers, which evidently live and prevail with God, most clearly arise from a heart which is free from dalliance with evil. Let the reader see to it, that his inmost soul be rid of all alliance with iniquity, all toleration of secret lust, or hidden wrong.

**Verse 20.** *Blessed be God.* Be his name honoured and loved. *Which hath not turned away my*

*prayer, nor his mercy from me.* He has neither withdrawn his love nor my liberty to pray. He has neither cast out my prayer nor me. His mercy and my cries still meet each other. The psalm ends on its key note. Praise all through is its spirit and design. Lord enable us to enter into it. Amen.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Whole Psalm.** This Psalm is said to be recited on Easter day, by the Greek church: it is described in the Greek Bible as *A Psalm of the Resurrection*, and may be understood to refer, in a prophetic sense, to the regeneration of the world, through the conversion of the Gentiles. *Daniel Cresswell.*

**Verse 1.** *Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:* Hebrew, *all the earth*; shout aloud for joy, as the people did at the return of the ark, so that the earth rang again. God shall show himself to be the God not of Jews only, but of *Gentiles* also; these shall as well cry *Christ*, as those *Jesus*; these say, *Father*, as those *Abba*. And, as there was great joy in Samaria when the gospel was there received (Ac 8:8), so shall there be the like in all other parts of the earth. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 1.** *All ye lands.* Where, consider, that he does not sing praises well, who desires to sing alone. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 2.** *Make his praise glorious.* Another meaning is, *give or place glory*, that is, your glory *to his praise*, be fully persuaded when you praise him that it will redound to your own glory, regard this as your own glory; praise him in such a way that all your praises may be given to glorify God; or, let your glory tend in this direction that he may be praised. Desire not the glory of eternal blessedness, unless for the praise of God, as the blessed spirits in that temple do nothing but say glory to God, and sing the hymn of his glory without end, "Holy, holy, holy." *Lorinus.*

**Verse 3.** *Say. Dicite, say,* says David, delight to speak of God; *Dicite, say something.* There was more required than to think of God. Consideration, meditation, contemplation upon God and divine objects, have their place and their season; but this is more than that, and more than admiration too; for all these may come to an end in ecstasies, and in stupidities, and in useless and frivolous imaginations. *John Donne.*

**Verse 3.** *Unto God.* To God, not *concerning* God, as some interpret, but *to God himself*; to his praises, and with minds raised to God, as it is in Ps 66:4, *sing to himself*; Gejerus also correctly remarks, that the following discourse is addressed to God. Besides, it is to *our* God, as in Ps 66:8, *O bless our God, ye people*: he is called God absolutely, because he alone is the true God. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 3.** *How terrible.* Take from the Bible its awful doctrines, and from providence its *terrible* acts, and the whole system, under which God has placed us, would be emasculated. *William S. Plumer.*

**Verse 3.** *Thine enemies shall submit themselves unto thee.* In this, our first consideration is, that *God himself hath enemies*; and then, how should we hope to be, nay, why should we wish to be, without

them. God had good, that is, glory from his enemies; and we may have good, that is, advantage in the way to glory, by the exercise of our patience, from enemies too. Those for whom God had done most, the angels, turned enemies first; vex not thou thyself, if those whom thou hast loved best hate thee deadliest... God himself hath enemies. *Thine enemies shall submit*, says the text, to God; there thou hast one comfort, though thou have enemies too; but the greater comfort is, that God calls thine enemies his. *Nolite tangere Christus meos* (Ps 105:15), says God of all holy people; you were as good touch me, as touch any of them, for, "they are the apple of mine eye" (Ps 17:8). Our Saviour Christ never expostulated for himself; never said, Why scourge you me? why spit you upon me? why crucify you me? As long as their rage determined in his person, he opened not his mouth; when Saul extended the violence to the church, to his servants, then Christ came to that, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" ...Here is a holy league, defensive and offensive; God shall not only protect us from others, but he shall fight for us against them; our enemies are his enemies. *Condensed from John Donne.*

**Verse 3.** *Thine enemies submit themselves.* Literally, *lie unto thee*. This was remarkably the case with *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*. They promised again and again to let the people go, when the hand of the Lord was upon them; and they as frequently falsified their word. *Adam Clarke.*

**Verse 3.** (*second clause*). In times of affliction every hypocrite—all tag and rag—will be ready to come in to God in an outward profession; but usually this submission to God at this time is not out of truth. Hence it is said, *Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee*: in the original it is, *they shall lie unto thee*, and so it is translated by Arias Montanus, and some others, noting hereby that a forced submission to God is seldom in truth. *Jeremiah Burroughs.*

**Verse 3.** The earthquakes in New England occasioned a kind of religious panic. A writer, who was then one of the ministers of Boston, informs us, that immediately after the great earthquake, as it was called, a great number of his flock came and expressed a wish to unite themselves with the church. But, on conversing with them, he could find no evidence of improvement in their religious views or feelings, no convictions of their own sinfulness; nothing, in short, but a kind of superstitious fear, occasioned by a belief that the end of the world was at hand. All their replies proved that they had not found God, though they had seen *the greatness of his power* in the earthquake. *Edward Payson, D.D.*

**Verse 5.** *Come and see the works of God.* An indirect censure is here passed upon that almost universal thoughtlessness which leads men to neglect the praises of God. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 5.** *Come and see.* The church at all times appeals to the world, *Come and see*, as Jesus said to the two disciples of John the Baptist, and Philip to Nathanael. Joh 1:39,46. God's marvels are to be seen by all, and *seeing* them is the first step towards *believing* in their divine author. *A. R. Faussett.*

**Verse 6.** *He turned the sea into dry land.* The psalmist refers to the passage through the Red Sea

and the Jordan, not as to transactions which took place and were concluded at a given period of time, but as happening really in every age. God's guidance of his people is a constant drying up of the sea and of the Jordan, and the joy over his mighty deeds is always receiving new materials. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Verse 6.** *There did we rejoice in him;* where those things have been done, there have we rejoiced in him, not taking any credit to ourselves as if they were our acts, but rejoicing and glorying in God, and have praised him, as may be seen in Exodus 15 and Joshua 3. The prophet uses the future for the past, unless, perhaps, he meant to insinuate that these miracles would be succeeded by much greater ones, of which they were only the types and figures. A much greater miracle is that men should pass over the bitter sea of this life, and cross the river of mortality, that never ceases to run, and which swallows up and drowns so many, and still come safe and alive to the land of eternal promise, and there rejoice in God himself, beholding him face to face; and yet this greater miracle is so accomplished by God, that many pass through this sea as if it were dry land, and cross this river with dry feet; that is to say, having no difficulty in despising all things temporal, be they good or be they bad; that is to say, being neither attached to the good things, nor fearing the evil things, of this world, that they may arrive in security at the heavenly Jerusalem, where we will rejoice in him, not in hope, but in complete possession for eternity. *Robert Bellarmine.*

**Verse 7.** *His eyes behold the nations.* The radical meaning of the word *hku* is *augazein, to shine*, and metonymically *to examine with a bright eye*; to inspect with a piercing glance, and thence *to behold*, for either good or evil, as Pr 15:3: "*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*" Here it is taken in an adverse sense, and means, to watch from a watch tower, to threaten from a lofty place. Ps 37:32: "*The wicked watcheth the righteous;*" and Job 15:22: He is waited for "*from the watch tower for the sword;*" that is to say, *the sword is drawn above the head of the wicked, as if it threatened him from the watch tower of God.* But, at the same time, there is also a reference to God's looking from the pillar of fire, and of cloud, upon the host of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. Ex 14:24. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 7.** *His eyes behold the nations.* This should give check to much iniquity. Can a man's conscience easily and delightedly swallow that which he is sensible falls under the cognizance of God, when it is hateful to the eye of his holiness, and renders the action odious to him? "Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?" saith Job, (Job 31:4)... The consideration of this attribute should make us humble. How dejected would a person be if he were sure all the angels in heaven, and men upon earth, did perfectly know his crimes, with all their aggravations! But what is created knowledge to an infinite and just censuring understanding? When we consider that he knows our actions, whereof there are multitudes, and our thoughts, whereof there are millions; that he views all the blessings bestowed upon us; all the injuries we have returned to him; that he exactly knows his

own bounty, and our ingratitude; all the idolatry, blasphemy, and secret enmity in every man's heart against him; all tyrannical oppressions, hidden lusts, omissions of necessary duties, violations of plain precepts, every foolish imagination, with all the circumstances of them, and that perfectly in all their full anatomy, every mite of unworthiness and wickedness in every circumstance... should not the consideration of this melt our hearts into humiliation before him, and make us earnest in begging pardon and forgiveness of him. *Stephen Charnock.*

**Verse 9.** *Which holdeth our soul in life.* As the works of creation at first, and upholding all by his power and providence, are yoked together as works of a like wonder, vouchsafed the creation in common, Heb 1:2-3; so just in the like manner we find regeneration and perseverance joined, as the sum of all other works in this life. Thus "begotten again," and "kept by the power of God to salvation," are joined by the Apostle, 1Pe 1:3,5, "Called and preserved in Christ Jesus;" so in Jude 1:1... "Blessed be God," says Peter, "who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again." And, *O bless our God, ye people, which holdeth our souls in life,* says the psalmist. Yea, if we do narrowly eye the words in either, both Peter and the psalmist do bless God for both at once. Blessed be God for "begetting us," who are also "kept by the power of God;" so it follows in Peter. In the psalmist both are comprehended in this one word:

1. *Which putteth our souls in life* (so the margin, out of the Hebrew), that is, who puts life into your soul at the first, as he did into Adam when he made him a living soul;
2. And then which *holdeth*, that is, continueth our souls in that life. So the translators render it also, according to the psalmist's scope, and *O bless the Lord,* saith the psalmist, for these and both these.

*Thomas Goodwin.*

**Verse 9.** *Which holdest our soul in life.* It is truth, that all we have is in the hand of God; but God keeps our life in his hand last of all, and he hath that in his hand in a special manner. Though the soul continue, *life* may not continue; there is the soul when there is not life: life is that which is the union of soul and body. *Thou holdest our soul in life;* that is, thou holdest soul and body together. So Daniel describes God to Belshazzar, Da 5:23, "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." The breath of princes is in the hand of God, and the same hand holds the breath of the meanest subject. This may be matter of comfort to us in times of danger, and times of death: when the hand of man is lifted up to take thy life, remember thy life is held in the hand of God; and as God said to Satan (Job 2:6): Afflict the body of Job, but save his life; so God saith still to bloody wretches, who are as the limbs of Satan: The bodies of such and such are in your hands, the estates of such and such are in your hands, but save their lives. *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 9.** *Putteth our soul in life.* An elegant and emphatic expression, only to be understood by observing the exact force of the words. The *soul* is the *life*, as is well known, the word Myv is *to place, to place upon, to press in*, the word Myyx signifies properly *joinings, fastenings together*, and hence

those faculties and powers by which nature is held together and made firm. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 9.** *Which holdeth our soul in life.* He holdeth our soul in life, that it may not drop away of itself; for being continually in our hands, it is apt to slip through our fingers. *Matthew Henry.*

**Verse 9.** *And suffereth not our feet to be moved.* It is a great mercy to be kept from desperate courses in the time of sad calamities, to be supported under burdens, that we sink not; and to be prevented from denying God, or his truth, in time of persecution. *David Dickson.*

**Verse 10.** *Thou, O God, hast proved us.* It is not known what corn will yield, till it come to the flail; nor what grapes, till they come to the press. Grace is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose leaves; the fire of affliction fetcheth it out.—*Thou hast tried us as silver.* The wicked also are tried (Re 3:10), but they prove reprobate silver (Jer 6:28), or at best, as alchemy gold, that will not bear the seventh fire, as Job did (Job 23:10). *John Trapp.*

**Verse 10.** *As silver is tried.* Convinced from the frequent use of this illustration, that there was something more than usually instructive in the process of assaying and purifying silver, I have collected some few facts upon the subject. The hackneyed story of the refiner seeing his image in the molten silver while in the fire, has so charmed most of us, that we have not looked further; yet, with more careful study, much could be brought out. *To assay silver requires great personal care in the operator.* "The principle of assaying gold and silver is very simple theoretically, but in practice great experience is necessary to insure accuracy; and there is no branch of business which demands more personal and undivided attention. The result is liable to the influence of so many contingencies, that no assayer who regards his reputation will delegate the principal process to one not equally skilled with himself. Besides the result ascertainable by weight, there are allowances and compensations to be made, which are known only to an experienced assayer, and if these were disregarded, as might be the case with the mere novice, the report would be wide from the truth." (Encyclopaedia Britannica.) Pagnini's version reads: "Thou hast melted us by blowing upon us, "and in the monuments of Egypt, artificers are seen with the blowpipe operating with small fire places, with cheeks to confine and reflect the heat; the worker evidently paying personal attention, which is evident also in Mal 3:3, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." *To assay silver requires a skilfully constructed furnace.* The description of this furnace would only weary the reader, but it is evidently a work of art in itself. Even the trial of our faith is much more precious than that of gold which perisheth. He has refined us, but not with silver, he would not trust us there, the furnace of affliction is far more skilfully arranged than that. *To assay silver the heat must be nicely regulated.* "During the operation, the assayer's attention should be directed to the heat of the furnace, which must be neither too hot nor too cold: if too hot, minute portions of silver will be carried off with the lead, and so vitiate the assay; moreover, the pores of the cupel being more open, greater absorption will ensue, and there is liability to loss from that cause. One indication of an excess of heat in the

furnace, is the rapid and perpendicular rising of the fumes to the ceiling of the muffle, the mode of checking and controlling which has been pointed out in the description of the improved furnace. When the fumes are observed to fall to the bottom of the muffle, the furnace is then too cold; and if left unaltered, it will be found that the cupellation has been imperfectly performed, and the silver will not have entirely freed itself from the base metals. (Encyclopaedia Britannica.) *The assayer repeats his trying process.* Usually two or more trials of the same piece are made, so that great accuracy may be secured. Seven times silver is said to be purified, and the saints through varied trials reach the promised rest." C. H. S.

**Verse 11.** *Thou broughtest us into the net,* etc. Our enemies have pursued us (like to wild beasts taken by the hunter) into most grievous straits (1Sa 13:6). They have used us like beasts of burden, and laid sore loads upon us, which they have fast bound upon our backs. *Thou laidest affliction upon our loins. Coarctationem in lumbis;* we are not only hampered, as in a net, but fettered, as with chains; as if we had been in the jailor's or hangman's hands. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 12.** *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.* The agents are *men.* Man is a sociable living creature, and should converse with man in love and tranquillity. Man should be a supporter of man; is he become an overthrower? He should help and keep him up; doth he ride over him and tread him under foot? O apostasy, not only from religion, but even from humanity! *Quid homini inimicissimum? Homo.* (Seneca.) The greatest danger that befalls man comes whence it should least come, from man himself. *Caetera animantia,* says Pliny, *in suo genere, probe degunt,* &c. Lions fight not with lions; serpents spend not their venom on serpents; but man is the main suborner of mischief to his own kind...

1. *They ride.* What need they mount themselves upon beasts, that have feet malicious enough to trample on us? They have a "foot of pride," Ps 36:11, from which David prayed to be delivered; a presumptuous heel, which they dare lift up against God; and, therefore, a tyrannous toe, to spurn dejected men. They need not horses and mules, that can kick with the foot of a revengeful malice, Ps 32:9.

2. *Over us.* The way is broad enough wherein they travel, for it is the devil's road. They might well miss the poor, there is room enough besides; they need not ride over us. It were more brave for them to jostle with champions that will not give them the way. We never contend for their path; they have it without our envy, not without our pity. Why should they ride over us?

3. *Over our heads.* Is it not contentment enough to their pride to *ride,* to their malice to ride *over us,* but must they delight in bloodiness to ride over our *heads?* Will not the breaking of our arms and legs, and such inferior limbs, satisfy their indignation? Is it not enough to rack our strength, to mock our innocence, to prey on our estates, but must they thirst after our bloods and lives? *Quo tendit saeva libido?* Whither will their madness run? But we must not tie ourselves to the letter. Here is a mystical



or metamorphical gradation of their cruelty. Their riding is proud; their riding over us is malicious; and their riding over our heads is bloody oppression. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 12.** (*first clause*). The time was when the Bonners and butchers rode over the faces of God's saints, and made (Madefy, to moisten, to make wet) the earth with their bloods, every drop whereof begot a new believer. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 12.** *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.* This verse is like that sea (Mt 8:24) so tempestuous at first, that the vessel was covered with waves; but Christ's rebuke quieted all, and there followed a great calm. Here are cruel Nimrods riding over innocent heads, as they would over fallow lands; and dangerous passages through fire and water; but the storm is soon ended, or rather the passengers are landed. *Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.* So that this strain of David's music, or psalmody, consists of two notes—one mournful, the other mirthful; the one a touch of distress, the other of redress: which directs our course to an observation of *misery* and of *mercy*; of grievous misery, of gracious mercy. There is desolation and consolation in one verse: a deep dejection, as laid under the feet of beasts; a happy deliverance, *broughtest us out into a wealthy place.* In both these strains God hath his stroke; he is a principal in this concert. He is brought in for an *actor*, and for an *author*; and actor in the persecution, and author in the deliverance. *Thou causest, etc; Thou broughtest, etc.* In the one he is a causing worker; in the other a sole working cause. In the one he is joined with company: in the other he works alone. He hath a finger in the former; his whole hand is in the latter. We must begin with *misery* before we come to *mercy*. If there were no trouble, we should not know the worth of a deliverance. The passion of the saints is given, by the hearty and ponderous description, for very grievous; yet it is written in the forehead of the text, "The Lord caused it." *Thou causest men to ride, etc.* Hereupon, some wicked libertine may offer to rub his filthiness upon God's purity, and to plead an authentic derivation of all his villainy against the saints from the Lord's warrant: *He caused it.* We answer, to the justification of truth itself, that God doth ordain and order every persecution that striketh his children, without any allowance to the instrument that gives the blow. God works in the same action with others, not after the same manner. In the affliction of Job were three agents—God, Satan, and the Sabeans. The devil works on his body, the Sabeans on his goods; yet Job confessed a third party: "The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away." Here oppressors trample on the godly, and God is said to cause it. He causeth affliction for trial (so Ps 66:10-11: *Thou hast tried us, etc.*); they work it for malice; neither can God be accused nor they excused. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 12.** *Thou hast placed men over our heads.* Thus Jerome renders, although the Hebrew noun *vwga*, is in the singular, the word itself denotes *an obscure, mean man*, who is mentioned with indignity, but ought to be buried in oblivion. The singular noun is taken collectively, and so also is *wgvar*, with the affix. Such were the Egyptian and Babylonish idolaters, whom the Hebrew served. *To*

place any one over the head of another, or, as the Hebrew word *tbrh* means, *to ride*, to be superior to, to subdue to oneself and subject, and to sit upon and insult, just as the horseman rules with the rein, and spur, and whip the beast which he rides. *Lorinus*.

**Verse 12.** *To ride over our heads.* This is an allusion to beasts of burden, and particularly to camels, whose heads the rider almost sits over, and so domineers over them as he pleases. *Thomas Fenton*, in "*Annotations on the Book of Job, and the Psalms.*" 1732.

**Verse 12.** *We went through fire and through water.* The children of Israel when they had escaped the Red Sea, and seen their enemies the Egyptians dead, they thought all was cocksure, and therefore sang *Epicinia*, songs of rejoicing for the victory. But what followed within a while? The Lord stirred up another enemy against them from out their bowels, as it were, which was hunger, and this pinched them sorer, they thought, than the Egyptian. But was this the last? No; after the hunger came thirst, and this made them to murmur as much as the former; and after the thirst came fiery serpents, and fire and pestilence, and Amalekites, and Midianites, and what not? Thus hath it been with the church not only under the law, but also under Christ, as it might be easily declared unto you. Neither hath it been better with the several members thereof; they likewise have been made conformable to the body and to the Head. What a sight of temptations did Abraham endure? So Jacob, so Joseph, so the patriarchs, so the prophets? Yea, and all they that would live godly in Christ Jesus, though their sorrow in the end were turned to joy, yet they wept and lamented first. Though they were brought at the length to a wealthy place, yet they passed through fire and water first. *Miles Smith*, 1624.

**Verse 12.** *We went through fire and through water.* There was a great variety of such perils; and not only of several, but of contrary sorts: *We went through fire and through water*, either of which singly and alone denotes an extremity of evils. Thus, through water (Ps 69:1-2): "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." Or, through fire (Eze 15:7): "And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I set my face against them." But when through both successively, one after the other, this denotes an accumulation of miseries, or trials, indeed: as we read Isa 43:2, with God's promise to his people in such conditions: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Which promise is here, you see, acknowledged by the psalmist to have been performed: God was with the three children when they walked through the fire, in the very letter of Isaiah's speech; and with the children of Israel when they went through the water of the Red Sea. *Thomas Goodwin*.

**Verse 12.** *We went through fire and through water.* In allusion, probably, to the ordeal by fire and water, which is of great antiquity. On the question who had interred the body of Polynices:

"All denied:

Offering, in proof of innocence, to grasp  
The burning steel, to walk through fire, and take  
Their solemn oath they knew not of the deed."

*Sophocles. From T. S. Millington's "Testimony of the Heathen to the Truths of Holy Writ." 1863.*

**Verse 12. Fire and water.** The Jewish law required both these for purification of spoil in war, where they could be borne. Nu 31:23: "Everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified through the water of separation." God's saints are, therefore, subject to both ordeals. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 12. But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.** Every word is sweetly significant, and amplifies God's mercy to us. Four especially are remarkable:—

1. The deliverer;
2. The deliverance;
3. The delivered; and,
4. Their felicity or blessed advancement.

So there is the deliverer, *aliquid celsitudinis, Thou*; in the delivery, *certitudinis, broughtest out*, in the delivered, *solitudinis, us*; in the happiness, *plenitudinis, into a wealthy place*. There is highness and lowness, sureness and fulness. The deliverer is great, the deliverance is certain, the distress grievous, the exaltation glorious. There is yet a first word, that like a key unlocks this golden gate of mercy, a *veruntamen*:—BUT. This is *vox respirationis*, a gasp that fetcheth back again the very life of comfort. *But thou broughtest*, etc. We were fearfully endangered into the hands of our enemies; they rode and trod upon us, and drove us through hard perplexities. *But thou*, etc. If there had been a full point or period at our misery, if those gulfs of persecution had quite swallowed us, and all our light of comfort had been thus smothered and extinguished we might have cried, *Periit spes nostra*, yea, *periit salus nostra*.—Our hope, our help is quite gone. He had mocked us that would have spoken, Be of good cheer. This same *but* is like a happy oar, that turns our vessel from the rocks of despair, and lands it at the haven of comfort. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 12. (second and third clause).**

1. The outlet of the trouble is happy. They are in fire and water, yet they get through them; we went through fire and water, and did not perish in the flames or floods. Whatever the troubles of the saints are, blessed be God there is a way through them.

2. The inlet to a better state is much more happy. *Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place*, into a well watered place; for the word is, *like the gardens of the Lord*, and therefore fruitful. *Matthew Henry.*

**Verse 12. (last clause).** Thou, O God, with the temptation hast given the issue. *Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*

1. Thou hast proved, and thou hast brought.

2. Thou laidest the trouble, and thou tookest it off; yea, and hast made us an ample recompense, for thou hast brought us to a moist, pleasant, lovely, fertile, rich place, a happy condition, a flourishing condition of things, so that thou hast made us to forget all our trouble. *William Nicholson, in "David's Harp strung and tuned."* 1662.

**Verse 12.** *A wealthy place.* The hand of God led them in that fire and water of affliction through which they went; but who led them out? The psalmist tells us in the next words: *Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place;* the margin saith, *into a moist place.* They were in fire and water before. *Fire* is the extremity of heat and dryness; *water* is the extremity of moistness and coldness. *A moist place* notes a due temperament of heat and cold, of dryness and moistness, and therefore elegantly shadows that comfortable and contented condition into which the good hand of God had brought them, which is significantly expressed in our translation by *a wealthy place;* those places flourishing most in fruitfulness, and so in wealth, which are neither over hot nor over cold, neither over dry nor over moist. *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 13.** You see all the parts of this song; the whole concert or harmony of all is praising God. You see *quo loco*, in his house; *quo modo*, with burnt offering; *quo animo*, paying our vows. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 13.** *Burnt offerings.* For ourselves, be we sure that the best sacrifice we can give to God is obedience; not a dead beast, but a living soul. The Lord takes not delight in the blood of brutish creatures. It is the mind, the life, the soul, the obedience, that he requires: 1Sa 15:22, "To obey is better than sacrifice." Let this be our burnt offering, our holocaust, a sanctified body and mind given up to the Lord, Ro 12:1-2. First, the heart: "My son, give me thy heart." Is not the heart enough? No, the hand also: Isa 1:16, Wash the hands from blood and pollution. Is not the hand enough? No, the foot also: "Remove thy foot from evil." Is not the foot enough? No, the lips also: "Guard the doors of thy mouth;" Ps 34:13, "Refrain thy tongue from evil." Is not thy tongue enough? No, the ear also: "Let him that hath ears to hear, hear." Is not the ear enough? No, the eye also: "Let thine eyes be towards the Lord." Is not all this sufficient? No, give body and spirit: 1Co 6:20, "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." When the eyes abhor lustful objects, the ear slanders, the foot erring paths, the hands wrong and violence, the tongue flattery and blasphemy, the heart pride and hypocrisy; this is thy holocaust, thy whole burnt offering. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verses 13, 15.** In the *burnt offerings*, we see his approach to the altar with the common and general sacrifice; and next, in his *paying vows*, we see he has brought his *peace offerings* with him. Again, therefore, he says at the altar: *I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings* (Ps 66:15). This is the general offering, brought from the best of his flock and herd. Then follow the *peace offerings*: *With*

*the incense (trjg, fuming smoke) of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.* Having brought his offerings, he is in no haste to depart, notwithstanding; for his heart is full. Ere, therefore, he leaves the sanctuary, he utters the language of a soul at peace with God: Ps 66:16-20. This, truly, is one whom *the very God of peace* has sanctified, and whose whole spirit, and body, and soul he will preserve blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1Th 5:23. *Andrew A. Bonar.*

**Verses 13-15.** He tells what were the vows he promised in his troubles, and says he promised the richest sacrifice of cattle that could be made according to the law. These were three—rams, cows, and goats. Rams included lambs; cows included heifers; and goats, kids. *Robert Bellarmine.*

**Verse 14.** *Which my lips have uttered.* Hebrew, *have opened*; that is which I have uttered, *diductis labiis*, with lips wide open. *Videmus qualiter vota nuncupari soleant*, saith Vatablus. Here we see after what sort vows used to be made, when we are under any pressing affliction; but when once delivered, how heavily many come off in point of payment. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 14.** Express mention is made of *opened lips* to indicate that the vows were made with great vehemence of mind, and in a state of need and pressure; so that his *lips were broken through* and widely opened. For the root, huk contains the idea of *opening anything with violence*; to *break open*, as the Latin expression is, *rumpere labia*. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 15.** *I will offer*, etc. Thou shalt have the best of the herd and of the fold. *Adam Clarke.*

**Verse 15.** *Fatlings.* For as I will not come empty into thy house, so I will not bring thee a niggardly present; but offer sacrifices of all sorts, and the best and choicest in every kind. *Symon Patrick.*

**Verse 15.** *Bullocks with goats.* That is, I will liberally provide for every part of the service at the tabernacle. *Thomas Scott.*

**Verse 16.** *Come and hear, all ye that fear God.* One reason why the saints are so often inviting all that fear God to come unto them is, because the saints see and know the great good that they shall get by those that fear God. The children of darkness are so wise in their generation as to desire most familiarity and acquaintance with those persons whom they conceive may prove most profitable and advantageous to them, and to pretend much friendship there where is hope of most benefit. And shall not the saints, the children of light, upon the same account wish and long for the society of those that fear God, because they see what great good they shall gain by them? It is no wonder that the company of those that fear God is so much in request, since it is altogether gainful and commodious; it's no wonder they have many invitations, since they are guests by which something is still gotten; and, indeed, among all persons living, those that fear God are the most useful and enriching. *Samuel Heskins, in "Soul Mercies Precious in the Eyes of Saints... set forth in a little Treatise on Ps 66:16."* 1654.

**Verse 16.** *All ye that fear God.* For such only will hear to good purpose; others either cannot, or care not. *And I will declare*, etc. Communicate unto you my soul secrets and experiments. There is no

small good to be gotten by such declarations. Bilney, perceiving Latimer to be zealous without knowledge, came to him in his study and desired him for God's sake to hear his confession. "I did so," saith Latimer, "and, to say the truth, by this confession I learned more than afore in many years. So from that time forward I began to smell the word of God, and forsake the school doctors, and such fooleries." *John Trapp.*

**Verse 16.** *Ye that fear God.* Observe the invitation given to those only *who fear God*, because "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; "he loosens the feet to *come*, opens the ears to *hear*; and therefore, he who has no fear of God will be called to no purpose, either to come or to hear. *Robert Bellarmine.*

**Verse 16.** *I will declare.* Consider the ends which a believer should purpose in the discharge of this duty ("of communicating Christian experience"). The principal end he should have in view when he declares his experience is the glory of that God, who hath dealt so bountifully with him. He would surely have the Lord exalted for his faithfulness and goodness to him; he would have it published that the name of the Lord might be great; that sinners might know that his God is faithful to his word; that he hath not only engaged to be "a present help in time of need, "but that he hath found him in reality to be so. As he knows the enemies of God are ready enough to charge him with neglect of his people, because of the trials and afflictions they are exercised with; so he would, in contradiction to them, declare what he hath found in his own experience, that in very faithfulness he afflicts those that are dearest to him. And with what lustre doth the glory of God shine, when his children are ready to acknowledge that he never called them out to any duty but his grace was sufficient for them; that he never laid his hand upon them in any afflictive exercise, but he, at the same time, supplied them with all those supports which they stood in need of? I say, for Christians thus to stand up, on proper occasions, and bear their experimental testimony to the faithfulness and goodness of God, what a tendency hath it to make the name of the Lord, who hath been their strong tower, glorious in the midst of the earth... How may we blush and be ashamed, that we have so much conversation in the world and so little about what God hath done for our souls? It is a very bad sign upon us, in our day, that the things of God are generally postponed; while either the affairs of state, or the circumstances of outward life, or other things, perhaps, of a more trifling nature, are the general subjects of our conversation. What! are we ashamed of the noblest, the most interesting subject? It is but a poor sign that we have felt anything of it, if we think it unnecessary to declare it to our fellow Christians. What think you? Suppose any two of us were cast upon a barbarous shore, where we neither understood the language, nor the customs of the inhabitants, and were treated by them with reproach and cruelty; do you think we should not esteem it a happiness that we could unburden ourselves to each other, and communicate our griefs and troubles? And shall we think it less so, while we are in such a world as this, in a strange land, and at a distance from our Father's house? Shall we neglect

conversing with each other? No; let our conversation not only be in heaven, but about spiritual and heavenly things. *Samuel Wilson (1703-1750), in "Sermons on Various Subjects."*

**Verse 16.** *I will declare.* After we are delivered from the dreadful apprehensions of the wrath of God, it is our duty to be publicly thankful. It is for the glory of our Healer to speak of the miserable wounds that once pained us; and of that kind hand that saved us when we were brought very low. It is for the glory of our Pilot to tell of the rocks and of the sands; the many dangers and threatening calamities that he, by his wise conduct, made us to escape: and to see us safe on the shore, may cause others that are yet afflicted, and tossed with tempests, to look to him for help; for he is able and ready to save them as well as us. We must, like soldiers, when a tedious war is over, relate our combats, our fears, our dangers, with delight; and make known our experiences to doubting, troubled Christians, and to those that have not yet been under such long and severe trials as we have been. *Timothy Rogers (1660-1729), in "A Discourse on Trouble of Mind."*

**Verse 17.** This verse may be rendered thus:—*I cried unto him with my mouth, and his exaltation was under my tongue;* that is, I was considering and meditating how I might lift up and exalt the name of God, and make his praise glorious. Holy thoughts are said to be under the tongue when we are in a preparation to bring them forth. *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 17.** *He was extolled with my tongue.* It is a proof that prayer has proceeded from unworthy motives, when the blessings which succeed it are not acknowledged with as much fervency as when they were originally implored. The ten lepers all cried for mercy, and all obtained it, but only one returned to render thanks. *John Morison.*

**Verse 17.** *He was extolled with my tongue: literally an extolling (of Him was) under my tongue,* implying *fulness* of praise (Ps 10:7). A store of praise being conceived as *under the tongue*, whence a portion might be taken on all occasions. The sense is, *scarcely had I cried unto him when, by delivering me, he gave me abundant reason to extol him.* (Ps 34:6.) *A. R. Faussett.*

**Verse 17.** *With my tongue.* Let the praise of God be in thy tongue, under thy tongue, and upon thy tongue, that it may shine before all men, and that they may see that thy heart is good. The fish *Lucerna* has a shining tongue, (A reviewer condemns us for quoting false natural history, but no intelligent reader will be misled thereby.—Editor.) from which it takes its name; and in the depths of the sea the light of its tongue reveals it: if thy heart has a tongue, shining with the praises of God, it will sufficiently show itself of what sort it is. Hence the old saying, "Speak, that I may see thee." *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 18.** *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* The very supposition that "if he regarded iniquity in his heart, the Lord would not hear him," implies the possibility that such may be the state even of believers; and there is abundant reason to fear that it is in this way their prayers are so often hindered, and their supplications so frequently remain unanswered. Nor is it difficult to

conceive how believers may be chargeable with regarding iniquity in their heart, even amidst all the solemnity of coming into the immediate presence of God, and directly addressing him in the language of prayer and supplication. It is possible that they may put themselves into such a situation, in a state of mind but little fitted for engaging in that holy exercise; the world, in one form or another, may for the time have the ascendancy in their hearts; and there may have been so much formality in their confessions, and so much indifference in their supplications, that when the exercise is over, they could not honestly declare that they really meant what they acknowledged, or seriously desired what they prayed for. A Christian, it is true, could not be contented to remain in a state like this; and, when he is awakened from it, as he sooner or later will be, he cannot fail to look back upon it with humiliation and shame. But we fear there are seasons in which believers themselves may make a very near approach to such a state; and what then is the true interpretation of prayers offered up at such a moment? It is in fact saying, that there is something which, for the time, they prefer to what they are formally asking of God; that, though the blessing which they do ask may be for a time withheld, yet they would find a compensation in the enjoyment of the worldly things which do at the moment engross their affections; and that, in reality, they would not choose to have at that instant such an abundant communication of spiritual influence imparted to them, as would render these worldly objects less valuable in their estimation, and would turn the whole tide of their affections towards spiritual things... The Christian may sometimes betake himself to prayer, to ask counsel of God in some perplexity regarding divine truth, or to seek direction in some doubtful point of duty; but, instead of being prepared fairly to exercise his judgment in the hope that, while doing so, the considerations that lie of the side of truth will be made to his mind clear and convincing; he may have allowed his inclinations so to influence and bias his judgment towards the side of error, or in favour of the line of conduct which he wishes to pursue, that when he asks counsel it may only be in the hope that his previous opinion will be confirmed, and when he seeks direction it is in reality on a point about which he was previously determined... Another case is, I fear, but too common, and in which the believer may be still more directly chargeable with regarding iniquity in his heart. It is possible that there may be in his heart or life something which he is conscious is not altogether as it should be—some earthly attachment which he cannot easily justify—or some point of conformity to the maxims and practices of the world, which he finds it difficult to reconcile with christian principle; and yet all the struggle which these have from time to time cost him, may only have been an effort of ingenuity on his part to retain them without doing direct violence to conscience—a laborious getting up of arguments whereby to show how they may be defended, or in what way they may lawfully be gone into; while the true and simple reason of his going into them, namely, the love of the world, is all the while kept out of view. And, as an experimental proof of how weak and inconclusive all these arguments are, and at the same time how unwilling he still is to relinquish his favourite objects, he



may be conscious that in confessing his sins he leaves them out of the enumeration, rather because he would willingly pass them over, than because he is convinced that they need not be there; he may feel that he cannot and dare not make them the immediate subject of solemn and deliberate communing with God; and, after all his multiplied and ingenuous defences, he may be reconciled to them at last, only by ceasing to agitate the question whether they are lawful or not. *Robert Gordon, D.D., 1825.*

**Verse 18.** Whence is it that a man's regarding or loving sin in his heart hinders his prayers from acceptance with God?

1. The first reason is, because in this case he cannot pray by the Spirit. All prayers that are acceptable with God are the breathings of his own Spirit with us. Ro 8:26. As without the intercession of Christ we cannot have our prayers accepted, so without the intercession of the Spirit we cannot pray...

2. The second reason is, because as long as a man regards iniquity in his heart he cannot pray in faith; that is, he cannot build a rational confidence upon any promise that God will accept him. Now, faith always respects the promise, and promise of acceptance is made only to the upright: so long, therefore, as men cherish a love of sin in their heart, they either understand not the promises, and so they pray without understanding, or they understand them, and yet misapply them to themselves, and so they pray in presumption: in neither case, they have little cause to hope for acceptance...

3. The third reason is, because while we regard iniquity in our hearts we cannot pray with fervency; which, next to sincerity, is the great qualification of prayer, to which God has annexed a promise of acceptance (Mt 11:12): "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Mt 7:7: those only that seek are like to find, and those that knock to have admittance; all which expressions denote vehemence and importunity. Now, the cause of vehemence, in our prosecution of any good, is our love of it; for proportionable to the affection we bear to anything is the earnestness of our desires and the diligence of our pursuit after it. So long, therefore, as the love of sin possesses our hearts, our love to spiritual things is dull, heavy, inactive, and our prayers for them must needs be answerable. O the wretched fallacy that the soul will here put upon itself! At the same time it will love its sin and pray against it; at the same time it will entreat for grace, with a desire not to prevail: as a father confesses of himself, that before his conversion he would pray for chastity, with a secret reserve in his wishes that God would not grant his prayer. Such are the mysterious, intricate treacheries by which the love of sin will make a soul deceive and circumvent itself. How languidly and faintly will it pray for spiritual mercies; conscience, in the meanwhile, giving the lie to every such petition! The soul, in this case, cannot pray against sin in earnest; it fights against it, but neither with hope nor intent to conquer; as lovers, usually, in a game one against another, with a desire to lose. So, then, while we regard iniquity, how is it possible for us to regard spiritual things, the only lawful

object of our prayers? and, if we regard them not, how can we be urgent with God for the giving of them? And where there is no fervency on our part, no wonder if there is no answer on God's. *Robert South, 1633-1716.*

**Verse 18.** *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Though the subject matter of a saint's prayer be founded on the word, yet if the end he aims at be not levelled right, this is a door at which his prayer will be stopped: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Jas 4:3. Take, I confess, a Christian in his right temper, and he aims at the glory of God; yet, as a needle that is touched with a loadstone may be removed from its point to which nature hath espoused it, though trembling till it again recovers it; so a gracious soul may in a particular act and request vary from this end, being jogged by Satan, yea, disturbed by an enemy nearer home—his own unmortified corruption. Do you not think it possible for a saint, in distress of body and spirit, to pray for health in the one, and comfort in the other, with too selfish a respect to his own ease and quiet? Yes, surely; and to pray for gifts and assistance in some eminent service, with an eye to his own credit and applause; to pray for a child with too inordinate a desire that the honour of his house may be built up in him. And this may be understood as the sense, in part, of that expression, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* For though to desire our own health, peace, and reputation, be not an iniquity, when contained within the limits that God hath set; yet, when they overflow at such a height, as to overtop the glory of God, yea, to stand but in a level with it, they are a great abomination. That which in the first or second degree is wholesome food, would be rank poison in the fourth or fifth: therefore, Christian, catechize thyself, before thou prayest: O, my soul, what sends thee on this errand? Know but thy own mind what thou prayest for, and thou mayest soon know God's mind how thou shalt speed. Secure God his glory, and thou mayest soon know God's mind how thou shalt speed. *William Gurnall.*

**Verse 18.** *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*

1. They regard iniquity in their heart, who practise it secretly, who are under restraint from the world, but are not possessed of an habitual fear of the omniscient God, the searcher of all hearts, and from whose eyes there is no covering of thick darkness where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. Jer 23:24.

2. They regard iniquity in the heart, who entertain and indulge the desire of sin, although in the course of providence they may be restrained from the actual commission of it. I am persuaded the instances are not rare, of men feeding upon sinful desires, even when through want of opportunity, through the fear of man, or through some partial restraint of conscience, they dare not carry them into execution.

3. They regard iniquity in their heart, who reflect upon past sins with delight, or without sincere humiliation of mind. Perhaps our real disposition, both towards sin and duty, may be as certainly

discovered by the state of our minds after, as in the time of action. The strength and suddenness of temptation may betray even a good man into the commission of sin; the backwardness of heart and power of inward corruption may make duty burdensome and occasion many defects in the performance; but every real Christian remembers his past sins with unfeigned contrition of spirit, and a deep sense of unworthiness before God; and the discharge of his duty, however difficult it may have been at the time, affords him the utmost pleasure on reflection. It is otherwise with many; they can remember their sins without sorrow, they can speak of them without shame, and sometimes even with a mixture of boasting and vain glory. Did you never hear them recall their past follies, and speak of them with such relish, that it seems to be more to renew the pleasure than to regret the sin? Even supposing such persons to have forsaken the practice of some sin, if they can thus look upon them with inward complacency, their seeming reformation must be owing to a very different cause from renovation of heart.

4. They regard iniquity in their heart, who look upon the sins of others with approbation; or, indeed, who can behold them without grief. Sin is so abominable a thing, so dishonouring to God, and so destructive to the souls of men, that no real Christian can witness it without concern. Hence it is so frequently taken notice of in Scripture, as the character of a servant of God, that he mourns for the sins of others. Ps 119:136,158.

5. In the last place, I suspect that they regard sin in the heart, who are backward to bring themselves to the trial, and who are not truly willing that God himself would search and try them. If any, therefore, are unwilling to be tried, if they are backward to self examination, it is an evidence of a strong and powerful attachment to sin. It can proceed from nothing but from a secret dread of some disagreeable discovery, or the detection of some lust which they cannot consent to forsake... There are but too many who though they live in the practice of sin, and regard iniquity in their hearts, do yet continue their outward attendance on the ordinances of divine institution, and at stated times lay hold of the seals of God's covenant. Shall they find any acceptance with him? No. He counts it a profane mockery; he counts it a sacrilegious usurpation. Ps 50:16-17. Shall they have any comfort in it? No: unless in so far as in righteous judgment he suffers them to be deceived; and they are deceived, and they are most unhappy, who lie longest under the delusion. Ps 50:21. Shall they have any benefit by it? No: instead of appeasing his wrath, it provokes his vengeance; instead of enlightening their minds, it blinds their eyes; instead of sanctifying their nature, it hardens their hearts. See a description of those who had been long favoured with outward privileges and gloried in them. Joh 12:39-40. So that nothing is more essential to an acceptable approach to God in the duties of his worship in general, and particularly to receiving the seals of his covenant, than a thorough and universal separation from all known sin. Job 11:13-14. *John Witherspoon (1722-1749), in a Sermon entitled "The Petitions of the Insincere Unavailing."*

**Verses 18-20.** Lord, I find David making a syllogism, in mood and figure, two propositions he perfected. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me; but verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.* Now I expected that David should have concluded thus: "Therefore I regard not wickedness in my heart; but far otherwise he concludes": *Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.* Thus David had deceived, but not wronged me. I looked that he should have clapped the crown on his own, and he puts it on God's head. I will learn this excellent logic; for I like David's better than Aristotle's syllogisms, that whatsoever the premise be, I make God's glory the conclusion. *Thomas Fuller.*

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Verse 3.** The terrible in God's works of nature and providence.

**Verse 4.**

1. *Who?* All the earth.

(a) All, collectively, all classes and tribes.

(b) All numerically.

(c) All harmoniously.

2. *What?* Shall worship and sing.

(a) Humiliation; then,

(b) Exultation.

3. *When?* Shall, &c. Denotes

(a) Futurity.

(b) Certainty. God has spoken it. All things are tending towards it. *G. R.*

**Verse 5.** Here is—

1. A subject for general study: the *Works of God.*

2. For particular study: *his doings towards,* etc.

(a) These are the most wonderful.

(b) In these we are most concerned.

**Verse 7.** Sovereignty, immutability ("for ever"), and omniscience,—the enemies of proud rebels.

**Verse 8.** (*last clause*). To get a hearing for the gospel—difficult, necessary, and possible. Ways and means for so doing.

**Verses 8-9.**

1. Praise *to.*

(a) As God.

(b) As *our* God.

2. Praise *for.* Preservation.

(a) Of natural life.

(b) Of spiritual life.

3. Praise *by, ye people*.

(a) On your own account.

(b) On account of others.

Or

(a) Individually.

(b) Unitedly. *G. R.*

**Verse 9.** Perseverance the subject of gratitude.

1. The maintenance of the inner life.

2. The integrity of the outward character.

**Verse 10.** The assaying of the saints.

**Verse 10.**

1. The design of the afflictions.

(a) To prove them.

(b) To reprove them.

2. The illustration of that design. As silver, etc.

3. The issue of the trial.

**Verses 11-12.** The hand of God should be acknowledged.

1. In our temptations: *Thou broughtest us*.

2. In our bodily afflictions: *Thou laidest, etc.*

3. In our persecutions: *Thou hast caused, etc.*

4. In our deliverances: *Thou broughtest us out, etc. G. R.*

**Verse 12.** *Fire and water.* Varied trials.

1. Discover different evils.

2. Test all parts of manhood.

3. Educate varied graces.

4. Endear many promises.

5. Illustrate divine attributes.

6. Afford extensive knowledge.

7. Create capacity for the varied joys of heaven.

**Verse 12.** (*first clause*). The rage of oppression. *Thomas Adam's Sermon.*

**Verse 12.** (*last clause*). A plentiful place, free from penury; a pleasant place, void of sorrow; a safe place, free from dangers and distresses. *Daniel Wilcocks.*

**Verse 12.** (*last clause*). The victory of patience, with the expiration of malice. *Thomas Adams*

*Sermon.*

**Verse 12.** (*last clause*). The wealth of a soul whom God has tried and delivered. Among other riches he has the wealth of experience, of strengthened graces, of confirmed faith, and of sympathy for others.

**Verse 13.** God's house; or, the place of praises. *Thomas Adams' Sermon.*

**Verses 13-15.**

1. Resolutions made (Ps 66:13).

(a) What? To offer praise.

(b) Why? For deliverance.

(c) Where? In thy house.

2. Resolutions uttered (Ps 66:14).

(a) To God.

(b) Before men.

3. Resolutions fulfilled.

(a) In public acknowledgment.

(b) In heartfelt gratitude.

(c) In more frequent attendance at the house of God.

(d) The renewed self dedication.

(e) In increased liberality. *G. R.*

**Verse 16.**

1. What has God done for the soul of every Christian?

2. Why does the Christian wish to declare what God has done for his soul?

3. Why does he wish to make this declaration to those who only fear God?

(a) Because they alone can understand such a declaration.

(b) They alone will really believe him.

(c) They only will listen with interest, or join with him in praising his Benefactor. *E. Payson.*

**Verse 16.**

1. Religious teaching should be *simple: I will declare.*

2. *Earnest: Come and hear.*

3. *Seasonable: All ye that.*

4. *Discriminating: Fear God.*

5. *Experimental: What he hath, etc.*

**Verse 17.**

1. The two principal parts of devotion. Prayer and praise.

2. Their degree. In prayer, crying. In praise, extolling.

3. Their order.

(a) Prayer.

(b) Then praise. What is won by prayer is worn in praise.

**Verses 18-19.**

1. The test admitted.

2. The test applied.

3. The test approved.

**Verse 19.** The fact that God has heard prayer.

**Verse 20.** The mercy of God.

1. In permitting prayer.

2. In inclining to prayer.

3. In hearing prayer.

---

WORK UPON THE SIXTY-SIXTH PSALM

"A fourth Proceeding in the Harmony of King David's Harp. That is *to say*; A *Godly and learned Exposition of six Psalms more of the princely Prophet David, beginning with the 62, and ending with the 67, Psalm.*" Done in Latin by the reverend Doctor VICTORINUS STRIGELIUS, Professor of Diunitie in the university of Lypsia in Germany, Anno 1562. Translated into English by Richard Robinson, Citizen of London. 1596... London... 1596.

(The above is the *"fourth,* "and, as far as we have been able to discover, the *last* part of R. Robinson's Translation of Strigelius. The four parts, separately titled and paged, contain Expositions of Psalms 1-67. Dates: 1591-3-5-6.)

**Psalm 67**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

---

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician.* Who he was matters not, and who we may be is also of small consequence, so long as the Lord is glorified. *On Neginoth,* or upon stringed instruments. This is the fifth Psalm so entitled, and no doubt like the others was meant to be sung with the accompaniment of "harpers harping with their harps." No author's name is given, but he would be a bold man who should attempt to prove that David did not write it. We will be hard pushed before we will look for any other author upon whom to father these anonymous odes which lie side by side with those ascribed

to David, and wear a family likeness to them. *A Psalm or Song*. Solemnity and vivacity are here united. A Psalm is a song, but all songs are not Psalms: this is both one and the other.

#### EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us.* This is a fit refrain to the benediction of the High Priest in the name of the Lord, as recorded in Nu 6:24-25. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." It begins at the beginning with a cry for *mercy*. Forgiveness of sin is always the first link in the chain of mercies experienced by us. Mercy is a foundation attribute in our salvation. The best saints and the worst sinners may unite in this petition. It is addressed to the God of mercy, by those who feel their need of mercy, and it implies the death of all legal hopes or claims of merit. Next, the church begs for a blessing; *bless us*—a very comprehensive and far reaching prayer. When we bless God we do but little, for *our* blessings are but words, but when God blesses he enriches us indeed, for his blessings are gifts and deeds. But his blessing alone is not all his people crave, they desire a personal consciousness of his favour, and pray for a smile from his face. These three petitions include all that we need here or hereafter. This verse may be regarded as the prayer of Israel, and spiritually of the Christian church. The largest charity is shown in this Psalm, but it begins at home. The whole church, each church, and each little company, may rightly pray, *bless us*. It would, however, be very wrong to let our charity end where it begins, as some do; our love must make long marches, and our prayers must have a wide sweep, we must embrace the whole world in our intercessions. Selah. Lift up the heart, lift up the voice. A higher key, a sweeter note is called for.

**Verse 2.** *That thy way may be known upon earth.* As showers which first fall upon the hills afterwards run down in streams into the valleys, so the blessing of the Most High comes upon the world through the church. We are blessed for the sake of others as well as ourselves. God deals in a way of mercy with his saints, and then they make that way known far and wide, and the Lord's name is made famous in the earth. Ignorance of God is the great enemy of mankind, and the testimonies of the saints, experimental and grateful, overcome this deadly foe. God has set a way and method of dealing out mercy to men, and it is the duty and privilege of a revived church to make that way to be everywhere known. Thy saving health among all nations, or, *thy salvation*. One likes the old words, "saving health," yet as they are not the words of the Spirit but only of our translators, they must be given up: the word is *salvation*, and nothing else. This all nations need, but many of them do not know it, desire it, or seek it; our prayer and labour should be, that the knowledge of salvation may become as universal as the light of the sun. Despite the gloomy notions of some, we cling to the belief that the kingdom of Christ will embrace the whole habitable globe, and that all flesh shall see the salvation of God: for this glorious consummation we agonize in prayer.



**Verse 3.** *Let the people praise thee, O God.* Cause them to own thy goodness and thank thee with all their hearts; let nations do this, and do it continually, being instructed in thy gracious way. Let all the people praise thee. May every man bring his music, every citizen his canticle, every peasant his praise, every prince his psalm. All are under obligations to thee, to thank thee will benefit all, and praise from all will greatly glorify thee; therefore, O Lord, give all men the grace to adore thy grace, the goodness to see thy goodness. What is here expressed as a prayer in our translation, may be read as a prophecy, if we follow the original Hebrew.

**Verse 4.** *O let the nations be glad and sing for joy,* or, they shall joy and triumph. When men know God's way and see his salvation, it brings to their hearts much happiness. Nothing creates gladness so speedily, surely, and abidingly as the salvation of God. Nations never will be glad till they follow the leadership of the great Shepherd; they may shift their modes of government from monarchies to republics, and from republics to communes, but they will retain their wretchedness till they bow before the Lord of all. What a sweet word is that *to sing for joy!* Some sing for form, others for show, some as a duty, others as an amusement, but to sing from the heart, because overflowing joy must find a vent, this is to sing indeed. Whole nations will do this when Jesus reigns over them in the power of his grace. We have heard hundreds and even thousands sing in chorus, but what will it be to hear whole nations lifting up their voices, as the noise of many waters and like great thunders. When shall the age of song begin? When shall groans and murmurs be exchanged for holy hymns and joyful melodies?

For thou shalt judge the people righteously. Wrong on the part of governors is a fruitful source of national woe, but where the Lord rules, rectitude is supreme. He doeth ill to none. His laws are righteousness itself. He rights all wrongs and releases all who are oppressed. Justice on the throne is a fit cause for national exultation. And govern the nations upon earth. He will lead them as a shepherd his flock, and through his grace they shall willingly follow, then will there be peace, plenty, and prosperity. It is a great condescension on God's part to become the Shepherd of nations, and to govern them for their good: it is a fearful crime when a people, who know the salvation of God, apostatize and say to the Lord, "Depart from us." There is some cause for trembling lest our nation should fall into this condemnation; may God forbid. Selah. Before repeating the chorus, the note is again elevated, that full force may be given to the burst of song and the accompaniment of harps.

"Strings and voices, hands and hearts,  
In the concert bear your parts;  
All that breathe, your Lord adore,  
Praise him, Praise him, evermore!"

**Verse 5.** These words are no vain repetition, but are a chorus worthy to be sung again and again. The great theme of the psalm is the participation of the Gentiles in the worship of Jehovah; the

psalmist is full of it, he hardly knows how to contain or express his joy.

**Verse 6.** *Then shall the earth yield her increase.* Sin first laid a curse on the soil, and grace alone can remove it. Under tyrannical governments lands become unproductive; even the land which flowed with milk and honey is almost a wilderness under Turkish rule; but, when the principles of true religion shall have elevated mankind, and the dominion of Jesus shall be universally acknowledged, the science of tillage shall be perfected, men shall be encouraged to labour, industry shall banish penury, and the soil shall be restored to more than its highest condition of fertility. We read that the Lord turneth "a fruitful land into barrenness, "for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, and observation confirms the truth of the divine threatening; but even under the law it was promised, "The Lord shall make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land for good." There is certainly an intimate relation between moral and physical evil, and between spiritual and physical good. Alexander notes that the Hebrew is in the past tense, and he concludes that it is ungrammatical to render it in the future; but to us it seems that the prophet bard, hearing the nations praise the Lord, speaks of the bounteous harvest as already given in consequence. On the supposition that all the people praise Jehovah, the earth has yielded her increase. The future in the English appears to be the clearest rendering of the Hebrew. And God, even our own God, shall bless us. He will make earth's increase to be a real blessing. Men shall see in his gifts the hand of that same God whom Israel of old adored, and Israel, especially, shall rejoice in the blessing, and exult in her own God. We never love God aright till we know him to be ours, and the more we love him the more we long to be fully assured that he is ours. What dearer name can we give to him than "mine own God." The spouse in the song has no sweeter canticle than "my beloved is mine and I am his." Every believing Jew must feel a holy joy at the thought that the nations shall be blessed by Abraham's God; but every Gentile believer also rejoices that the whole world shall yet worship the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is our Father and our God.

**Verse 7.** *God shall bless us.* The prayer of the first verse is the song of the last. We have the same phrase twice, and truly the Lord's blessing is manifold; he blesses and blesses and blesses again. How many are his beatitudes! How choice his benedictions! They are the peculiar heritage of his chosen. He is the Saviour of all men, but specially of them that believe. In this verse we find a song for all future time. God shall bless us is our assured confidence; he may smite us, or strip us, or even slay us, but he must bless us. He cannot turn away from doing good to his elect. And all the ends of the earth shall fear him. The far off shall fear. The ends of the earth shall end their idolatry, and adore their God. All tribes, without exception, shall feel a sacred awe of the God of Israel. Ignorance shall be removed, insolence subdued, injustice banished, idolatry abhorred, and the Lord's love, light, life, and liberty, shall be over all, the Lord himself being King of kings and Lord of lords. *Amen, and Amen.*

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Whole Psalm.** How admirably balanced are the parts of this missionary song! The people of God long to see all the nations participating in their privileges, "visited with God's salvation, and gladdened with the gladness of his nation" (Ps 106:5). They long to hear all the nationalities giving thanks to the Lord, and hallowing his name; to see the face of the whole earth, which sin has darkened so long, smiling with the brightness of a second Eden. This is not a vapid sentiment. The desire is so expressed as to connect with it the thought of duty and responsibility. For how do they expect that the happy times are to be reached? They trust, in the first instance, to the general diffusion of the knowledge of God's way, the spreading abroad of the truth regarding the way of salvation. With a view to that, they cry for a time of quickening from the presence of the Lord, and take encouragement in this prayer from the terms of the divinely appointed benediction. As if they had said, "Hast thou not commanded the sons of Aaron to put thy name upon us, and to say: The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord cause his face to shine on thee and be gracious to thee? Remember that sure word of thine. God be gracious unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us. Let us be thus blessed, and we shall in our turn become a blessing. All the families of the earth shall, through us, become acquainted with thy salvation." Such is the church's expectation. And who shall say it is unreasonable? If the little company of a hundred and twenty disciples who met in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, all of them persons of humble station, and inconspicuous talents, were endued with such power by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that within three hundred years the paganism of the empire was overthrown, one need not fear to affirm that, in order to the evangelisation of the world, nothing more is required than that the churches of Christendom be baptised with a fresh effusion of the same Spirit of power. *William Binnie.*

**Whole Psalm.** There are seven stanzas; twice three two line stanzas, having one of three lines in the middle, which forms the clasp or spangle of the septiad, a circumstance which is strikingly appropriate to the fact that the psalm is called "the Old Testament Paternoster" in some of the old expositors. *Franz Delitzsch.*

**Verse 1.** *God be merciful unto us, and bless us,* etc. God forgives, then he gives; till he be merciful to pardon our sins through Christ, he cannot bless or look kindly on us sinners. All our enjoyments are but blessings in bullion, till gospel grace and pardoning mercy stamp and make them current. God cannot so much as bear any good will to us, till Christ makes peace for us; "On earth peace, good will toward men." Lu 2:14. And what joy can a sinner take, though it were to hear of a kingdom fallen to him, if he may not have it with God's good will. *William Gurnall.*

**Verse 1.** *God be merciful unto us.* Hugo attributes these words to penitents; *Bless us,* to those setting out in the Christian life; *Cause his face to shine upon us,* to those who have attained, or the sanctified. The first seek for pardon, the second for justifying peace, the third for edification and the

grace of contemplation. *Lorinus*.

**Verses 1-2.** Connect the last clause of Ps 67:1 with the first of Ps 67:2, and observe that God made his face to shine upon Moses, and made known to him his way. "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel, "as if the common people could only see the deeds of the Lord, but his way, his plans, his secrets were revealed only to him upon whom the light of God's face had shone. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 2.** *That thy way may be known*, etc. The psalmist here supposes that there *are* certain rules or principles, in accordance with which God bestows blessings on mankind; and he prays that those rules and principles may be everywhere made known upon the earth. *Albert Barnes*.

**Verse 2.** *That thy way may be known*, etc. By nature we know little of God, and nothing of Christ, or the way of salvation by him. The eye of the creature, therefore, must be opened to see the way of life before he can by faith get into it. God doth not use to waft souls to heaven like passengers in a ship, who are shut under the hatches, and see nothing all the way they are sailing to their port; if so, that prayer might have been spared which the psalmist, inspired of God, breathes forth in the behalf of the blind Gentiles: *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations*. As faith is not a naked assent, with affiance and innitency (Act of leaning on) on Christ; so neither is it a blind assent, without some knowledge. If, therefore, you continue still in thy brutish ignorance, and knowest not so much as who Christ is, and what he hath done for the salvation of poor sinners, and what thou must do to get interest in him, thou art far enough from believing. If the day be not broke in thy soul, much less is the Sun of Righteousness arisen by faith in thy soul. *William Gurnall*.

**Verse 2.** *That thy way may be known*. The sinful Jew, obstinate in his unbelief, shall see and hate. He shall see, and be enraged at the salvation of the Gentiles; but let us see and *know*, that is, love. For *to know* is often put for *to love*, as in the passages—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them: I know mine, and am known of mine; "that is, I love my own sheep, and they love me... There is here a sudden transition from the third person to the second, that in speaking of God he might not say, "*His way*, "or "*his salvation*, "but *Thy way*, and *Thy salvation* setting forth the vehemence of an ardent suppliant, and the grace of God as he reveals himself to that suppliant while still pouring forth his prayers. *Gerhohus (1093-1169)*.

**Verse 2.** *That thy way may be known*, etc. As light, so the participation of God's light is communicative: we must not pray for ourselves alone, but for all others, that God's way may be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations. *Thy way*; that is, thy will, thy word, thy works. God's will must be known on earth, that it may be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Except we know our Master's will, how shall we do it? *Ergo*, first pray with David here: *Let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth*; and then, *Let all the people praise thee*. God's will is revealed in his word, and his word is his way wherein

we must walk, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. Or, *Thy way*; that is, thy works, as David elsewhere (Ps 25:10): "All thy ways of the Lord are mercy and truth." Or, as others (Augustine; Jerome; Hilary) most fitly: *Thy way*, that is, thy *Christ*; "*Thy saving health*, "that is, thy *Jesus*: for "I am the way, "saith our Saviour (Joh 14:6): "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me; " wherefore, "*Let thy Son be known upon earth; thy Jesus among all nations.*" *John Boys*.

**Verse 3.** *Let the people praise thee.* Mark the sweet order of the blessed Spirit: first, mercy; than, knowledge; last of all, praising of God. We cannot see his countenance except he be merciful to us; and we cannot praise him except his way be known upon earth. His mercy breeds knowledge; his knowledge, praise. *John Boys*.

**Verse 3.** *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.* What then? "*Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*" We have comforts increased, the more we praise God for what we have already received. The more vapours go up, the more showers come down; as the rivers receive, so they pour out, and all run into the sea again. There is a constant circular course and recourse from the sea, unto the sea; so there is between God and us; the more we praise him, the more our blessings come down; and the more his blessings come down, the more we praise him again; so that we do not so much bless God as bless ourselves. When the springs lie low, we pour a little water into the pump, not to enrich the fountain, but to bring up more for ourselves. *Thomas Manton*.

**Verse 3.** This verse is exceedingly emphatic.

1. First, by an apostrophe to God, in the pronoun, Thee. As if he said: Let the people praise *thee*, not strange gods; for thou art the only true God.
2. Secondly, inasmuch as it is not said, Let *us* praise thee, O God; but let the *people* praise thee, and let *all* the people. For here is expressed the longing of the pious heart, and its fond desire that God should be praised and magnified throughout all lands and by all people of the round earth.
3. Thirdly, by the iteration, in which the same particle is repeated in this and the fifth verse no less than four times, as if the duty could not be sufficiently inculcated. It is not enough to have said it once; it is delightful to repeat it again. *Wolfgang Musculus (1497-1563)*.

**Verse 4.** *For thou shalt judge the people righteously*, etc. The Psalmist may here seem to contradict himself; for if mercy make men rejoice, then judgment occasions men to tremble. Answer is made, that all such as have known the ways of the Lord, and rejoice in the strength of his salvation, all such as have the pardon of their sins assured and sealed, fear not that dreadful assize, because they know the judge is their advocate. Or, (as Jerome,) let all nations rejoice, because God doth judge righteously, being the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. Ac 10:34. Or, *let all nations rejoice*, because God doth govern all nations; that whereas theretofore they wandered in the fond imaginations of their own hearts, in wry ways, in byways; now they are directed by the Spirit of truth

to walk in God's highway, which leads unto the celestial Jerusalem; now they shall know Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. For judging is often used for ruling. 1Sa 7:15 2Co 1:10. So David doth here expound himself: *thou shalt judge*. that is, thou shalt *govern the nations*. *John Boys*.

**Verse 4.** *Govern*. Lead and guide them as the shepherd his flock. *Benjamin Boothroyd*.

**Verse 4.** *And lead*(margin) *the nations*. God now *overrules* the nations in their ways, but surely they are *led* by another guide. There is a bridle in their jaws causing them to err. They are held and shaken in the sieve of vanity, until he come to whom the government pertains. *Arthur Pridham*.

**Verses 5-6.** Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the *people praise thee!* What then? *Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us*. Our unthankfulness is the cause of the earth's unfruitfulness. While man is blessing God *for his mercies*, He is blessing man *with his mercies*. *William Secker, in "The Nonsuch Professor," 1660*.

**Verse 6.** *Then shall the earth yield her increase*. An increase of wealth is but the natural result of increased piety and intelligence. There are certain qualities essential to temporal prosperity. These are industry, economy, moderation; and such are the qualities begotten of godliness. . . . Nor is it an unreasonable expectation that our globe should, under the reign of righteousness, yield all those temporal advantages of which it is capable. Science, favoured by piety, may greatly add to the earth's fruitfulness; and mechanical genius may still farther abbreviate human toil, and increase human comforts. The great inventions and discoveries of science, by which toil is lessened and comfort enhanced, are all the product of Christian minds... Can we, then, doubt that in the era to which we look forward, labour shall cease to be a burden? Can we believe that the life of the labouring classes is to continue to be all but a ceaseless round of toil and vexation—every hand stretched out to procure something that is needed, or to ward off something that is feared? Scripture predicts the mitigation of the curse; and, in the discoveries of science, and the inventions of mechanics, we see the means by which the prediction is to be accomplished. This consummation may still be in the distant future; but if we do not grudge the oak years for its growth, the glory to be revealed is surely worthy of a process as gradual. *William Reid, in "Things to Come Practically Considered," 1871*.

**Verse 6.** *God, even our own God, shall bless us*. What a rapturous expression is that: *God, even our own God, shall bless us!* and that, "Thy God, thy glory!" Upon interest in God follows their interest in his glory and blessedness; which is so much the dearer and more valuable, as it is theirs; their glory from their God. They shall be blessed by God, their own God; "drink waters out of their own well." How endearing a thing is propriety! Another man's son is ingenuous, comely, personable; this may be a matter of envy; but mine own is so, this is a joy. I read in the life of a devout nobleman of France, (Monsieur de Renti) that receiving a letter from a friend in which were inserted these words: "*Deus meus et omnia*, "my God and my all, he thus returns back to him: "I know not what your intent was to put into your letter these words, '*Dues meus et omnia*, My God and my all:' only you invite me

thereby to return the same to you, and to all creatures. `My God and my all: my God and my all; my God and my all.' If, perhaps, you take this for your motto, and use it to express how full your heart is of it, think you it possible I should be silent upon such an invitation, and not express my sense thereof? Likewise be it known unto you, therefore, that he is `my God and my all; 'and, if you doubt of it, I shall speak of it a hundred times over. I shall add no more, for anything else is superfluous to him that is truly penetrated with `my God and my all; 'I leave you, therefore, in this happy state of jubilation, and conjure you to beg for me, of God, the solid sense of these words." And do we think, "my God and my all." or, "my God and my glory, "will have lost its emphasis in heaven? or that it will be less significant among awakened souls? These things concur, then, concerning the object; it is more excellent, even divine, entire, permanent, and *theirs*: how can it but satisfy? *John Howe, in "The Blessedness of the Righteous."*

**Verse 6.** *Our own God.* How inexpressible was the inward pleasure wherewith we may suppose those words to have been uttered. How delightful an appropriation! as if it were intended to be said, the blessing itself were less significant, it could not have that savour with it, if it were not from our own God. Not only, therefore, allow but urge your spirits thus to look towards God, that you may both delight in him as being in himself the most excellent one, and also as being yours; for know, you are not permitted only, but obliged to eye, accept, and rejoice in him as such. *John Howe.*

**Verses 6-7.** The promise refers directly to the visible fertility of the renewed earth at the time of Israel's recovery, but it includes a fuller reference to higher things; for the true increase yielded by any of God's works is the revenue of praise which redounds to his holy name. Such, then, is the promise I have to bring before you. In its widest sense, the lower creation is now made subject to vanity, because of man's sin; but in the kingdom of Christ this curse will be removed, and all God's works will yield their full increase—a tribute of unmingled honour and praise to his name. Let us consider (1.) The preparation for this increase. (2.) The increase itself. (3.) The blessing of God, which will crown it.

I. THE PREPARATIONS FOR THIS INCREASE. What are the means? What is the way of its accomplishment? Whence does it proceed? Our Psalm is full of instruction. Consider—

1. *Its fountain:* the free mercy of God. The Psalm begins, *God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us.* Whatever the details and steps of the work of redemption, all must be traced up to this original fountain, the sovereign grace and mercy of our God... The eternal, free, unchangeable, inexhaustible mercy of our God revealed through his dear Son Jesus Christ; this is the fountain head of the blessed increase here foretold...

2. *The order* in which this increase is granted may next be considered. Salvation is given to the Jew first, and then also to the Greek. The prayer of this Psalm is, *Cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.* It is the divine plan first to

choose his people and bless them, and then to make them a blessing, as we see in Abraham, the father of the faithful. It is through his church that God blesses the world... The same principle is true in every revival of pure religion... But all this order of divine mercy has yet to be more fully seen in what is before us; in the restoration of Israel, and in its effect upon the world at large...

3. *The immediate precursor of this increase is the return of our Lord* from heaven, the coming of Christ to judge the earth and reign over all nations. The Psalm calls all nations to rejoice in this: *O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.* ... The world craves, and will crave more and more for righteous government. The Lord has promised to supply this natural want of the human heart, though he take vengeance on his hardened enemies. Even in the coming of the Lord to judgment, goodness will so finally triumph that the nations are to be glad and sing for joy... It is the Lord judging the people and governing the nations, and all the people praising him, that prepares directly and immediately for the promised blessedness. *Then shall the earth yield her increase.*

II. THE INCREASE ITSELF. This increase has many aspects. Let us view them in a climax of benefits.

1. *Natural fertility.* The first sentence of curse and barrenness, of thorns and thistles, was pronounced on Adam's fall, and renewed on Cain's murder. It seems to have been specially removed after the deluge... Even now, two thirds of our world are ocean, incapable of increase; half of the rest, and perhaps more, is almost desert, and of the remainder the largest part is very imperfectly tilled. There is room, even in the latter, for a vast increase, when the whole earth might become like the garden of the Lord.

2. *The redemption of art.* Its activity, its talent, and discoveries are now great and wonderful; but it is mainly turned to human self sufficiency and vanity, and bears little fruit to God's glory and the highest benefit of man. But in the period predicted in this Psalm, every creature, when redeemed to man's use, shall be also reclaimed to God's glory...

3. *The redemption of science....*

4. *Society will yield its increase to God....* Men now live as without God in the world, full though it be of proofs of his wisdom and love... What a change when every social circle shall be a fellowship of saints, and all bent to one great purpose, the divine glory and the blessedness of each other.

5. *The soul shall yield its increase.* The earth is only the figure of the human heart, a soil ever fertile for good or evil. Thus the apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, regards it: "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is hitherto unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Then the thorns and briers of a



crooked and perverse generation will cease... The fruits of righteousness will abound from the human race to the glory of God. Much praise, much zeal, much reverence, much humility, will distinguish his servants. Faith, hope, and love will all be in the fullest exercise. Christ will be all and in all, and every power will be consecrated to him. This is the best increase the earth yields to God.

6. *The large number of God's true servants*, thus yielding themselves to him, is another part of this blessedness...

7. *The perpetuity of this increase* has to be added to this glory. This is according to the promise made to the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. *Condensed from Edward Bickersteth's Sermon in the "Bloomsbury Lent Lectures," 1848.*

**Verses 6-7.** Double blessings from God—temporal and spiritual, blessings peculiar to the Jews, and blessings suited to Christians. O Lord, I refuse not the temporal blessings it pleases thee to send me; I will receive them with humble gratitude as the gift of thy goodness: but I entreat from thee especially for spiritual blessings; and that thou wouldest treat me rather as a Christian than as a Jew. *Pasquier Quesnel (1634-1719), in "Les Psaumes de David avec des Reflexions Morales."*

**Verse 7.** Note, how joy in God, and fear of God, are combined. By joy the sadness and anxiety of diffidence are excluded, but by fear contempt and false security are banished. So Psalm 2, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." *Wolfgang Musculus.*

---

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Verse 1.**

1. Here is mercy in God the Father.
2. Here is blessing as the fruit of that mercy in God the Son.
3. Here is the experience of that blessing in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

**Verse 1.** The need of seeking a blessing for ourselves.

**Verses 1-2.** The prosperity of the church at home, the hope for missions abroad.

**Verse 2.**

1. The way of God towards the earth.
  - (a) A way of mercy.
  - (b) Of blessing.
  - (c) Of comfort.
2. The knowledge of that way.
  - (a) By outward means.
  - (b) By inward teaching.
3. The effect of that knowledge. Salvation among all nations.

**Verse 2.** What is the true health of men?

**Verse 3.** Viewed,

1. As the desire of every renewed heart.
2. As a prayer.
3. As a prophecy.

**Verse 4.**

1. The reign of God in the world: it is not left to itself.
2. The joy of the world on that account: *Let the nations*, etc.
3. The reason of that joy: *He will judge righteously*.
  - (a) As faithful to his law.
  - (b) Faithful to his promises of mercy.

**Verses 5-7.**

1. The prayer (Ps 67:5).
2. The promise (Ps 67:6).
  - (a) Of temporal good.
  - (b) Of spiritual good.
3. The prediction (Ps 67:7).

**Verses 6-7.** See "Spurgeon's Sermons, "No. 819: "The Minstrelsy of Hope."

**Verse 7.**

1. God to man: *shall bless us*.
2. Man to God: *shall fear him*.

---

**WORK UPON THE SIXTY-SEVENTH PSALM**

In "*The Works of JOHN BOYS*, "1626, folio, pp. 42-45, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

**Psalm 68**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

---

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician, a Psalm or Song of David.* We have already said enough upon this title when dealing with Psalms 65 and 66. The present is obviously a song to be sung at the removal of the ark; and in all probability was rehearsed when David conducted it with holy joy from the house of Obededom to the prepared place on Mount Zion. It is a most soul stirring hymn. The first verses were often the battle song of the Covenanters and Ironsides; and the whole Psalm fitly pictures the way of the Lord Jesus among his saints, and his ascent to glory. The Psalm is at once surpassingly excellent

and difficult. Its darkness in some stanzas is utterly impenetrable. Well does a German critic speak of it as a Titan very hard to master. Our slender scholarship has utterly failed us and we have had to follow a surer Guide. We trust our thoughts may not however prove unprofitable.

**DIVISION.** With the words of the first two verses the ark is uplifted, and the procession begins to move. In Ps 68:3-6, the godly in the assembly are exhorted to commence their joyous songs, and arguments are adduced to help their joy. Then the glorious march of Jehovah in the wilderness is sung: Ps 68:7-10, and his victories in war are celebrated in verses Ps 68:11-14. The joyous shouts are louder as Zion comes in sight, and the ark is borne up the hill: Ps 68:15-19. On the summit of the mount the priests sing a hymn concerning the Lord's goodness and justice; the safety of his friends, and ruin of his foes: Ps 68:20-23. Meanwhile the procession is described as it winds up the hill: Ps 68:24-27. The poet anticipates a time of wider conquest, Ps 68:28-31: and concludes with a noble burst of song unto Jehovah.

#### EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Let God arise.* In some such words Moses spake when the cloud moved onward, and the ark was carried forward. The ark would have been a poor leader if the Lord had not been present with the symbol. Before we move, we should always desire to see the Lord lead the way. The words suppose the Lord to have been passive for awhile, suffering his enemies to rage, but restraining his power. Israel beseeches him to "arise, "as elsewhere to "awake, ""gird on his sword, "and other similar expressions. We, also, may thus importunately cry unto the Lord, that he would be pleased to make bare his arm, and plead his own cause. Let his enemies be scattered. Our glorious Captain of the vanguard clears the way readily, however many may seek to obstruct it; he has but to arise, and they flee, he has easily over thrown his foes in days of yore, and will do so all through the ages to come. Sin, death, and hell know the terror of his arm; their ranks are broken at his approach. Our enemies are *his* enemies, and in this is our confidence of victory. Let them also that hate him flee before him. To hate the infinitely good God is infamous, and the worst punishment is not too severe. Hatred of God is impotent. His proudest foes can do him no injury. Alarmed beyond measure, they shall flee before it comes to blows. Long before the army of Israel can come into the fray, the haters of God shall flee before HIM who is the champion of his chosen. He comes, he sees, he conquers. How fitting a prayer is this for the commencement of a revival! How it suggests the true mode of conducting one:—the Lord leads the way, his people follow, the enemies flee.

#### NEW TRANSLATION

In order that our readers may see the Psalm at a glance in a good translation, we subjoin the version of FRANZ DELITZSCH; recommending our ministerial brethren to procure the volumes of his valuable Commentary on the Psalms, issued by the Messrs. CLARK, of Edinburgh.

HYMN OF WAR AND VICTORY IN THE STYLE OF DEBORAH

2 LET Elohim arise, let His enemies be scattered,  
And let those who hate Him flee before His face.  
3 As smoke is driven away, do Thou drive them away;  
As wax melteth before the fire,  
Let the wicked perish before Elohim.  
4 And let the righteous rejoice, let them exult before Elohim,  
And let them be glad with joy.  
5 Sing unto Elohim, harp His name,  
Pave a highway for Him who rideth along through the steppes;  
Jah is his name, and exult ye before Him.  
6 A Father of the fatherless and an Advocate of the widows  
Is Elohim in His holy habitation.  
7 Elohim maketh a household for the solitary,  
He leadeth forth prisoners into prosperity;  
Yet the rebellious abide in a land of drought.  
8 Elohim, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people,  
When thou didst march along in the wilderness—Sela.  
9 The earth shook,  
The heavens also dropped before Elohim,  
Yon Sinai before Elohim, the God of Israel.  
10 With plentiful rain didst Thou, Elohim, water Thine inheritance,  
And when it was parched, THOU hast confirmed it.  
11 Thy creatures have settled down therein,  
Thou didst provide with Thy goodness for the poor, Elohim.  
12 The Lord will sound forth the mandate;  
Of the women who herald victory there is a great army.  
13 The kings of hosts shall flee, shall flee,  
And she that tarrieth at home, shall divide the spoil.  
14 If ye encamp among the sheep folds,  
The dove's wings are covered with silver  
And her feathers with glistening gold.  
15 When the Almighty scattereth kings therein,  
It becometh snow white upon Zalmon.  
16 A mountain of Elohim is the mountain of Bashan,

A mountain full of peaks is the mountain of Bashan.  
17 Why look ye enviously, ye many peaked mountains,  
Upon the mountain which Elohim hath chosen, to dwell thereon?  
Yea, Jahve will dwell (there) for ever.  
18 The war chariots of Elohim are myriads, a thousand thousands,  
The Lord is among them, it is a Sinai in holiness.  
19 Thou hast ascended up to the height, Thou hast led captives captive,  
Thou hast received gifts among men,  
Even from the rebellious, that Jah Elohim might dwell (there).  
20 Blessed be the Lord:  
Day by day doth He bear our burden,  
He, God, is our salvation. (*Sela.*)  
21 He, God, is to us a God for deeds of deliverance,  
And Jahve the Lord hath ways of escape for death.  
22 Yea, Elohim will smite the head of His enemy,  
The hairy scalp of him who stalks along in his trespasses.  
23 The Lord hath said: Out of Bashan will I bring back,  
I will bring back out of the depths of the sea,  
24 That thou mayest bathe thy foot in blood,  
That the tongue of thy dogs may have its share of the enemy.  
25 They behold Thy splendid procession, Elohim,  
The splendid procession of my God, my King in holiness.  
26 Before went the singers, behind the players on stringed instruments,  
In the midst of damsels striking timbrels.  
27 In the choirs of the congregation bless ye Elohim,  
The Lord, ye who are out of the fountain of Israel.  
28 There is Benjamin the youngest, their ruler;  
The princes of Judah—their motley band,  
The princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali,  
29 Thy God hath commanded thy supreme power—  
Uphold in power, Elohim, what Thou hast wrought for us!—  
30 From Thy temple above Jerusalem  
Let kings present offerings unto Thee.  
31 Threaten the wild beast of the reed, the troops of bulls with the calves of the people,  
That they may prostrate themselves with ingots of silver!—

He hath scattered the peoples that delight in wars.

32 Magnates come out of Egypt,

Cush—quickly do his hands stretch out unto Elohim.

33 Ye kingdoms of the earth, sing unto Elohim,

Praising the Lord with stringed instruments—(*Sela.*)

34 To Him who rideth in the heaven of heavens of the primeval time—

Lo, He made Himself heard with His voice, a mighty voice.

35 Ascribe ye might unto Elohim!

Over Israel is His majesty.

And His omnipotence in the heights of the heavens.

36 Terrible is Elohim out of thy sanctuaries;

"The God of Israel giveth might and abundant strength to the people!"

Blessed be Elohim!

**Verse 2.** *As smoke is driven away.* Easily the wind chases the smoke, completely it removes it, no trace is left; so, Lord, do thou to the foes of thy people. They fume in pride, they darken the sky with their malice, they mount higher and higher in arrogance, they defile wherever they prevail. Lord, let thy breath, thy Spirit, thy Providence, make them to vanish for ever from the march of thy people. Philosophic scepticism is as flimsy and as foul as smoke; may the Lord deliver his Church from the reek of it. As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the *presence of God*. Wax is hard when by itself, but put it to the fire, how soft it is. Wicked men are haughty till they come into contact with the Lord, and then they faint for fear; their hearts melt like wax when they feel the power of his anger. Wax, also, burns and passes away; the taper is utterly consumed by the flame: so shall all the boastful power of the opposers of the gospel be as a thing of nought. Rome, like the candles on her altars, shall dissolve, and with equal certainty shall infidelity disappear. Israel saw, in the ark, God on the mercyseat—power in connection with propitiation—and they rejoiced in the omnipotence of such a manifestation; this is even more clearly the confidence of the New Testament church, for we see Jesus, the appointed atonement, clothed with glory and majesty, and before his advance all opposition melts like snow in the sun; the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. When he comes by his Holy Spirit, conquest is the result; but when he arises in person, his foes shall utterly perish.

**Verse 3.** *But let the righteous be glad.* The presence of God on the throne of grace is an overflowing source of delight to the godly; and let them not fail to drink of the streams which are meant to make them glad. Let them rejoice before God. The courtiers of the happy God should wear the garments of gladness, for in his presence is fulness of joy. That presence, which is the dread and death of the wicked, is the desire and delight of the saints. Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Let them dance with

all their might, as David did, for very joy. No bounds should be set to joy in the Lord. "Again, I say, rejoice," says the apostle, as if he would have us add joy to joy without measure or pause. When God is seen to shine propitious from above the mercyseat in the person of our Immanuel, our hearts must needs leap within us with exultation, if we are indeed among those made righteous in his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit. Move on, O army of the living God, with shouts of abounding triumph, for Jesus leads the van.

**Verse 4.** *Sing unto God, sing praises to his name.* To time and tune, with order and care, celebrate the character and deeds of God, the God of his people. Do it again and again; and let the praise, with resolution of heart, be all directed to him. Sing not for ostentation, but devotion; not to be heard of men, but of the Lord himself. Sing not to the congregation, but "unto God," Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH. Remember his most great, incomprehensible, and awful name; reflect upon his self existence and absolute dominion, rise to the highest pitch of joyful reverence in adoring him. Heaven beholds him riding on the clouds in storm, and earth has seen him marching over its plains with majesty. The Hebrew seems to be: "Cast up a highway for him who marches through the wilderness," in allusion to the wanderings of the tribes in the desert. The marches of God were in the waste howling wilderness. His eternal power and Godhead were there displayed in his feeding, ruling, and protecting the vast hosts which he had brought out of Egypt. The ark brought all this to remembrance, and suggested it as a theme for song. The name JAH is an abbreviation of the name Jehovah; it is not a diminution of that name, but an intensified word, containing in it the essence of the longer, august title. It only occurs here in our version of Scripture, except in connection with other words such as Hallelujah. And rejoice before him. In the presence of him who marched so gloriously at the head of the elect nation, it is most fitting that all his people should display a holy delight. We ought to avoid dulness in our worship. Our songs should be weighty with solemnity, but not heavy with sadness. Angels are nearer the throne than we, but their deepest awe is consonant with the purest bliss; our sense of divine greatness must not minister terror but gladness to our souls; we should *rejoice before him*. It should be our wish and prayer, that in this wilderness world, a highway may be prepared for the God of grace. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God," is the cry of gospel heralds, and we must all zealously aim at obedience thereto; for where the God of the mercyseat comes, blessings innumerable are given to the sons of men.

**Verse 5.** *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.* In the wilderness the people were like an orphan nation, but God was more than a father to them. As the generation which came out of Egypt gradually died away, there were many widows and fatherless ones in the camp, but they suffered no want or wrong, for the righteous laws and the just administrators whom God had appointed, looked well to the interests of the needy. The tabernacle

was the Palace of Justice; the ark was the seat of the great King. This was a great cause for joy to Israel, that they were ruled by the ONE who would not suffer the poor and needy to be oppressed. To this day and for ever, God is, and will be, the peculiar guardian of the defenceless. He is the President of Orphanages, the Protector of Widows. He is so glorious that he rides on the heavens, but so compassionate that he remembers the poor of the earth. How zealously ought his church to cherish those who are here marked out as Jehovah's especial charge. Does he not here in effect say, "Feed my lambs"? Blessed duty, it shall be our privilege to make this one of our life's dearest objects. The reader is warned against misquoting this verse; it is generally altered into "*the husband of the widow*," but Scripture had better be left as God gave it.

**Verse 6.** *God setteth the solitary in families.* The people had been sundered and scattered over Egypt; family ties had been disregarded, and affections crushed; but when the people escaped from Pharaoh they came together again, and all the fond associations of household life were restored. This was a great joy. He bringeth out those which are bound with chains. The most oppressed in Egypt were chained and imprisoned, but the divine Emancipator brought them all forth into perfect liberty. He who did this of old continues his gracious work. The solitary heart, convinced of sin and made to pine alone, is admitted into the family of the Firstborn; the fettered spirit is set free, and its prison broken down, when sin is forgiven; and for all this, God is to be greatly extolled, for he hath done it, and magnified the glory of his grace. But the rebellious dwell in a dry land. If any find the rule of Jehovah to be irksome, it is because their rebellious spirits kick against his power. Israel did not find the desert dry, for the smitten rock gave forth its streams; but even in Canaan itself men were consumed with famine, because they cast off their allegiance to their covenant God. Even where God is revealed on the mercyseat, some men persist in rebellion, and such need not wonder if they find no peace, no comfort, no joy, even where all these abound. Justice is the rule of the Lord's kingdom, and hence there is no provision for the unjust to indulge their evil lustings: a perfect earth, and even heaven itself, would be a dry land to those who can only drink of the waters of sin. Of the most soul satisfying of sacred ordinances these witless rebels cry, "what a weariness it is!" and, under the most soul sustaining ministry, they complain of "the foolishness of preaching." When a man has a rebellious heart, he must of necessity find all around him a dry land.

**Verse 7.** *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people.* What a sweetly suitable association, "thou" and "thy people;"—thou before, and thy people following! The Lord went before, and, therefore, whether the Red Sea or burning sand lay in the way, it mattered not; the pillar of cloud and fire always led them by a right way. When thou didst march through the wilderness. He was the Commander in chief of Israel, from whom they received all orders, and the march was therefore *his* march. "His stately step the region drear beheld." We may speak, if we will, of the "wanderings of the children of Israel," but we must not think them purposeless strayings, they were in reality a well



arranged and well considered march. SELAH. This seems an odd place for a musical pause or direction, but it is better to break a sentence than spoil praise. The sense is about to be superlatively grand, and, therefore, the *selah* intimates the fact to the players and singers, that they may with suitable solemnity perform their parts. It is never untimely to remind a congregation that the worship of God should be thoughtfully and heartily presented.

**Verse 8.** *The earth shook.* Beneath the sublime tread the solid ground trembled. The heavens also dropped at the presence of God, as if they bowed before their God, the clouds descended, and "a few dark shower drops stole abroad." Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God. Moses tell us, in Exodus 19, that "the whole mountain quaked greatly." That hill, so lone and high, bowed before the manifested God. The God of Israel. The one only living and true God, whom Israel worshipped, and who had chosen that nation to be his own above all the nations of the earth. The passage is so sublime, that it would be difficult to find its equal. May the reader's heart adore the God before whom the unconscious earth and sky act as if they recognised their Maker and were moved with a tremor of reverence.

**Verse 9.** *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain.* The march of God was not signalized solely by displays of terror, for goodness and bounty were also made conspicuous. Such rain as never fell before dropped on the desert sand, bread from heaven and winged fowl fell all around the host; good gifts were poured upon them, rivers leaped forth from rocks. The earth shook with fear, and in reply, the Lord, as from a cornucopia, shook out blessings upon it; so the original may be rendered. Whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. As at the end of each stage, when they halted, weary with the march, they found such showers of good things awaiting them that they were speedily refreshed. Their foot did not swell all those forty years. When they were exhausted, God was not. When they were weary, He was not. They were his chosen heritage, and, therefore, although for their good he allowed them to be weary, yet he watchfully tended them and tenderly considered their distresses. In like manner, to this day, the elect of God in this wilderness state are apt to become tired and faint, but their ever loving Jehovah comes in with timely succours, cheers the faint, strengthens the weak, and refreshes the hungry; so that once again, when the silver trumpets sound, the church militant advances with bold and firm step towards "the rest which remaineth." By this faithfulness, the faith of God's people is confirmed, and their hearts established; if fatigue and want made them waver, the timely supply of grace stays them again upon the eternal foundations.

**Verse 10.** *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein.* In the wilderness itself, enclosed as in a wall of fire, thy chosen church has found a home; or, rather, girdled by the shower of free grace which fell all around the camp, thy flock has rested. The congregation of the faithful find the Lord to be their "dwelling place in all generations." Where there were no dwellings of men, God was the dwelling of his people. Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor. Within the guarded circle there

was plenty for all; all were poor in themselves, yet there were no beggars in all the camp, for celestial fare was to be had for the gathering. We, too, still dwell within the circling protection of the Most High, and find goodness made ready for us: although poor and needy by nature, we are enriched by grace; divine preparations in the decree, the covenant, the atonement, providence, and the Spirit's work, have made ready for us a fulness of the blessing of the Lord. Happy people, though in the wilderness, for all things are ours, in possessing the favour and presence of our God.

**Verse 11.** In the next verse we do not sing of marching, but of battle and victory. The Lord gave the word. The enemy was near, and the silver trumpet from the tabernacle door was God's mouth to warn the camp: then was there hurrying to and fro, and a general telling of the news; great was the company of those that published it. The women ran from tent to tent and roused their lords to battle. Ready as they always were to chant the victory, they were equally swift to publish the fact that the battle note had been sounded. The ten thousand maids of Israel, like good handmaids of the Lord, aroused the sleepers, called in the wanderers, and bade the valiant men to hasten to the fray. O for the like zeal in the church of today, that, when the gospel is published, both men and women may eagerly spread the glad tidings of great joy.

**Verse 12.** *Kings of armies did flee apace.* The lords of hosts fled before the Lord of Hosts. No sooner did the ark advance than the enemy turned his back: even the princely leaders stayed not, but took to flight. The rout was complete, the retreat hurried and disorderly;—they "did flee, did flee; "helter skelter, pell mell, as we say.

"Where are the kings of mighty hosts?

Fled far away, fled far and wide.

Their triumph and their trophied boasts

The damsels in their bowers divide."

And she that tarried at home divided the spoil. The women who had published the war cry shared the booty. The feeblest in Israel had a portion of the prey. Gallant warriors cast their spoils at the feet of the women and bade them array themselves in splendour, taking each one "a prey of divers colours, of divers colours of needlework on both sides." When the Lord gives success to his gospel, the very best of his saints are made glad and feel themselves partakers in the blessing.

**Verse 13.** *Though ye have lien among the pots.* Does he mean that the women at home, who had been meanly clad as they performed their household work, would be so gorgeously arrayed in the spoil, that they would be like doves of silver wing and golden plumage? Or, would he say that Israel, which had been begrimed in the brick kilns of Egypt, should come forth lustrous and happy in triumph and liberty? Or, did the song signify that the ark should be brought from its poor abode with Obededom into a fairer dwelling place? It is a hard passage, a nut for the learned to crack. If we knew all that was known when this ancient hymn was composed, the allusion would no doubt strike us as

being beautifully appropriate, but as we do not, we will let it rest among the unriddled things. Alexander reads it, "When ye shall lie down between the borders, ye shall be like the wings, "etc., which he considers to mean, "when settled in peace, the land shall enjoy prosperity; "but this version does not seem to us any more clear than our authorized one. Of making many conjectures there is no end; but the sense seems to be, that from the lowest condition the Lord would lift up his people into joy, liberty, wealth, and beauty. Their enemies may have called them squatters among the pots—in allusion to their Egyptian slavery; they may have jested at them as scullions of Pharaoh's kitchen; but the Lord would avenge them and give them beauty for blackness, glory for grime. Yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her *feathers with yellow gold*. The dove's wing flashed light like silver, and anon gleams with the radiance of "the pale, pure gold." The lovely, changeable colours of the dove might well image the mild, lustrous beauty of the nation, when arrayed in white holiday attire, bedecked with their gems, jewels, and ornaments of gold. God's saints have been in worse places than among the pots, but now they soar aloft into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

**Verse 14.** *When the almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.* The victory was due to the Almighty arm alone; he scattered the haughty ones who came against his people, and he did it as easily as snow is driven from the bleak sides of Salmon. The word *white* appears to be imported into the text, and by leaving it out the sense is easy. A traveller informed the writer that on a raw and gusty day, he saw the side of what he supposed to be Mount Salmon suddenly swept bare by a gust of wind, so that the snow was driven hither and thither into the air like the down of thistles, or the spray of the sea: thus did the Omnipotent one scatter all the potentates that defied Israel. If our authorized version must stand, the conjectures that the bleached bones of the enemy, or the royal mantles cast away in flight, whitened the battle field, appear to be rather too far fetched for sacred poetry. Another opinion is, that Salmon was covered with dark forests, and appeared black, but presented quite another aspect when the snow covered it, and that by this noteworthy change from sombre shade to gleaming whiteness, the poet sets forth the change from war to peace. Whatever may be the precise meaning, it was intended to pourtray the glory and completeness of the divine triumph over the greatest foes. In this let all believers rejoice.

**Verse 15.** Here the priests on the summit of the chosen hill begin to extol the Lord for his choice of Zion as his dwelling place. The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan, or more accurately, "a hill of God is Bashan, "that is to say, Bashan is an eminent mountain, far exceeding Zion in height. According to the Hebrew custom, every great or remarkable thing is thus designated. Where we talk of the Devil's Dyke, the Devil's Ditch, the Devil's Punch Bowl, etc., the more commendable idiom of the Hebrews speaks of the hill of God, the trees of the Lord, the river of God, etc. An high hill as the hill of Bashan, or rather, "a mount of peaks is Bashan." It does not appear that Zion is compared with Bashan, but contrasted with it. Zion certainly was not a high hill comparatively; and it is here conceded that

Bashan is a greater mount, but not so glorious, for the Lord in choosing Zion had exalted it above the loftier hills. The loftiness of nature is made as nothing before the Lord. He chooses as pleases him, and, according to the counsel of his own will, he selects Zion, and passes by the proud, uplifted peaks of Bashan; thus doth he make the base things of this world, and things that are despised, to become monuments of his grace and sovereignty.

**Verse 16.** *Why leap ye, ye high hills? Why are ye moved to envy? Envy as ye may, the Lord's choice is fixed. Lift up yourselves, and even leap from your seats, ye cannot reach the sublimity which Jehovah's presence has bestowed on the little hill of Moriah. This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in. Elohim makes Zion his abode, yea, Jehovah resides there. Yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever. Spiritually the Lord abides eternally in Zion, his chosen church, and it was Zion's glory to be typical thereof. What were Carmel and Sirion, with all their height, compared to Zion, the joy of the whole earth! God's election is a patent of nobility. They are choice men whom God has chosen, and that place is superlatively honoured which he honours with his presence.*

**Verse 17.** *The chariots of God are twenty thousand. Other countries, which in the former verse were symbolically referred to as "high hills," gloried in their chariots of war; but Zion, though far more lowly, was stronger than they, for the omnipotence of God was to her as two myriads of chariots. The Lord of Hosts could summon more forces into the field than all the petty lords who boasted in their armies; his horses of fire and chariots of fire would be more than a match for their fiery steeds and flashing cars. The original is grandly expressive: "the war chariots of Elohim are myriads, a thousand thousands." The marginal reading of our Bibles, *even many thousands*, is far more correct than the rendering, *even thousands of angels*. It is not easy to see where our venerable translators found these "angels," for they are not in the text; however, as it is a blessing to entertain them unawares, we are glad to meet with them in English, even though the Hebrew knows them not; and the more so because it cannot be doubted that they constitute a right noble squadron of the myriad hosts of God. We read in De 33:2, of the Lord's coming "with ten thousands of saints, "or holy ones, and in Heb 12:22, we find upon mount Zion "an innumerable company of angels," so that our worthy translators putting the texts together, inferred the angels, and the clause is so truthfully explanatory, that we have no fault to find with it. *The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place*, or, "it is a Sinai in holiness." God is in Zion as the Commander in chief of his countless hosts, and where he is, there is holiness. The throne of grace on Zion is as holy as the throne of justice on Sinai. The displays of his glory may not be so terrible under the new covenant as under the old; but they are even more marvellous if seen by the spiritual eye. Sinai has no excellency of glory beyond Zion; but the rather it pales its light of law before the noontide splendours of Zion's grace and truth. How joyful was it to a pious Hebrew to know that God was as truly with his people in the tabernacle and temple as amid the terrors of the Mount of Horeb; but it is even more heart cheering to us to be assured that the Lord*

abides in his church, and has chosen it to be his rest for ever. May we be zealous for the maintenance of holiness in the spiritual house which God condescends to occupy; let a sense of his presence consume, as with flames of fire, every false way. The presence of God is the strength of the church; all power is ours when God is ours. Twenty thousand chariots shall bear the gospel to the ends of the earth; and myriads of agencies shall work for its success. Providence is on our side, and it "has servants everywhere." There is no room for a shade of doubt or discouragement, but every reason for exultation and confidence.

**Verse 18.** *Thou hast ascended on high.* The ark was conducted to the summit of Zion; God himself took possession of the high places of the earth, being extolled and very high. The antitype of the ark, the Lord Jesus, has ascended into the heavens with signal marks of triumph. To do battle with our enemies, the Lord descended and left his throne; but now the fight is finished, he returns to his glory; high above all things is he now exalted. Thou hast led captivity captive. A multitude of the sons of men are the willing captives of Messiah's power. As great conquerors of old led whole nations into captivity, so Jesus leads forth from the territory of his foe a vast company as the trophies of his mighty grace. From the gracious character of his reign it comes to pass that to be led into captivity by him is for our captivity to cease, or to be itself led captive; a glorious result indeed. The Lord Jesus destroys his foes with their own weapons: he puts death to death, entombs the grave, and leads captivity captive. Thou hast received gifts for men, or, received gifts among men: they have paid thee tribute, O mighty Conqueror, and shall in every age continue to do so willingly, delighting in thy reign. Paul's rendering is the gospel one: Jesus has "received gifts for men, "of which he makes plentiful distribution, enriching his church with the priceless fruits of his ascension, such as apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and all their varied endowments. In him, the man who received gifts for man, we are endowed with priceless treasures, and moved with gratitude, we return gifts to him, yea, we give him ourselves, our all. Yea, for the rebellious also: these gifts the rebels are permitted to share in; subdued by love, they are indulged with the benefits peculiar to the chosen. The original runs, "even the rebellious, "or, "even from the rebellious, "of which the sense is that rebels become captives to the Lord's power, and tributaries to his throne.

"Great King of grace my heart subdue,  
I would be led in triumph too;  
As willing captive to my Lord,  
To own the conquests of his word."

That the Lord God might dwell among them. In the conquered territory, Jah Elohim would dwell as Lord of all, blessing with his condescending nearness those who were once his foes. When Canaan was conquered, and the fort of Zion carried by storm, then was there found a resting place for the ark of God; and so when the weapons of victorious grace have overcome the hearts of men, the Lord

God, in all the glory of his name, makes them to be his living temples. Moreover, the ascension of Jesus is the reason for the descent of the Lord God, the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus dwells with God, God dwells with men. Christ on high is the reason for the Spirit below. It was expedient that the Redeemer should rise, that the Comforter should come down.

**Verse 19.** *Blessed be the Lord.* At the mention of the presence of God among men the singers utter an earnest acclamation suggested by reverential love, and return blessings to him who so plentifully blesses his people. Who daily loadeth us with benefits. Our version contains a great and precious truth, though probably not the doctrine intended here. God's benefits are not few nor light, they are loads; neither are they intermittent, but they come "daily; "nor are they confined to one or two favourites, for all Israel can say, *he loadeth us with benefits.* Delitzsch reads it, "He daily bears our burden; "and Alexander, "Whoever lays a load upon us, the Mighty God is our salvation." If he himself burdens us with sorrow, he gives strength sufficient to sustain it; and if others endeavour to oppress us, there is no cause for fear, for the Lord will come to the rescue of his people. Happy nation, to be subdued by a King whose yoke is easy, and who secures his people from all fear of foreign burdens which their foes might try to force upon them.

Even the God of our salvation. A name most full of glory to him, and consolation to us. No matter how strong the enemy, we shall be delivered out of his hands; for God himself, as King, undertakes to save his people from all harm. What a glorious stanza this is! It is dark only because of its excessive light. A world of meaning is condensed into a few words. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light, therefore blessed be the Saviour's name for evermore. All hail! thou thrice blessed Prince of Peace! All thy saved ones adore thee, and call thee blessed. Selah. Well may the strings need tuning, they have borne an unparalleled strain in this mighty song. Higher and yet higher, ye men of music, lift up the strain. Dance before the ark, ye maidens of Israel; bring forth the timbrel, and sing unto the Lord who hath triumphed gloriously.

**Verse 20.** *He that is our God is the God of salvation.* The Almighty who has entered into covenant with us is the source of our safety, and the author of our deliverances. As surely as he is our God he will save us. To be his is to be safe. *And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.* He has ways and means of rescuing his children from death: when they are at their wit's end, and see no way of escape, he can find a door of deliverance for them. The gates of the grave none can open but himself, we shall only pass into them at his bidding; while on the heavenward side he has set open the doors for all his people, and they shall enjoy triumphant issues from death. Jesus, our God, will save his people from their sins, and from all else besides, whether in life or death.

**Verse 21.** *But God shall wound the head of his enemies.* The Preserver is also the Destroyer. He smites his foes on the crown of their pride. The seed of the woman crushes the serpent's head. There is no defence against the Lord, he can in a moment smite with utter destruction the lofty crests of his

haughty foes. And the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his *trespasses*. He may glory in his outward appearance, and make his hair his pride, as Absalom did; but the Lord's sword shall find him out, and pour out his soul. Headstrong sinners will find that providence overcomes them despite their strong heads. They who go on in sin will find judgments come on them; and the adornment of their pride may be made the instrument of their doom. He covers the head of his servants, but he crushes the head of his foes. At the second coming of the Lord Jesus, his enemies will find his judgments to be beyond conception terrible.

**Verse 22.** This verse, by the insertion of the words, *my people*, is made to bear the meaning which the translators thought best; but, if their interpolated word is omitted, we probably get nearer to the sense. *The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring again from the depths of the sea.* Though his foes should endeavour to escape, they should not be able. Amos describes the Lord as saying, "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them." As there is no resisting Israel's God, so is there no escape from him, neither the heights of Bashan nor the depths of the great sea can shelter from his eye of detection, and his hand of justice. The powers of evil may flee to the utmost ends of the earth, but the Lord will arrest them, and lead them back in chains to adorn his triumph.

**Verse 23.** *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies.* Vengeance shall be awarded to the oppressed people, and that most complete and terrible. And the tongue of thy dogs in the same. So overwhelming should be the defeat of the foe that dogs should lick their blood. Here "the stern joy which warriors feel" expresses itself in language most natural to the oriental ear. To us, except in a spiritual sense, the verse sounds harshly; but read it with an inner sense, and we also desire the utter and crushing defeat of all evil, and that wrong and sin may be the objects of profound contempt. Terrible is the God of Israel when he cometh forth as a man of war, and dreadful is even the Christ of God when he bares his arm to smite his enemies. Contemplate Revelation 19 and note the following:—"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God... And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit upon them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together

to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

**Verse 24.** *They have seen thy goings, O God.* In the song the marchings of the Lord had been described; friends and foes had seen his goings forth with the ark and his people. We suppose that the procession was now climbing the hill, and entering the enclosure where the tabernacle of the ark was pitched; it was suitable at this moment to declare with song that the tribes had seen the glorious progress of the Lord as he led forth his people. Even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. The splendid procession of the ark, which symbolised the throne of the great King, was before the eyes of men and angels as it ascended to the holy place; and the psalmist points to it with exultation before he proceeds to describe it. All nature and providence are, as it were, a procession attending the great Lord, in his visitations of this lower globe. Winter and summer, sun and moon, storm and calm, and all the varied glories of nature swell the pomp of the King of kings, of whose dominion there is no end.

**Verse 25.** *The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after.* This was the order of the march, and God is to be worshipped evermore with due decorum. First the singers, and lastly the musicians, for the song must lead the music, and not the music drown the singing. In the midst of the vocal and instrumental band, or all around them, were the maidens: among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. Some have imagined that this order indicates the superiority of vocal to instrumental music: but we need not go so far for arguments, when the simplicity and spirituality of the gospel already teach us that truth. The procession depicted in this sublime song was one of joy, and every means was taken to express the delight of the nation in the Lord their God.

**Verse 26.** *Bless ye God in the congregations.* Let the assembled company magnify the God whose ark they followed. United praise is like the mingled perfume which Aaron made, it should all be presented unto God. He blesses us; let him be blessed. Even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. A parallel passage to that in Deborah's song: "They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord." The seat of the ark would be the fountain of refreshing for all the tribes, and there they were to celebrate his praises. "Drink," says the old inscription, "drink, weary traveller; drink and pray." We may alter one word, and read it, drink and praise. If the Lord overflows with grace, we should overflow with gratitude. Ezekiel saw an ever growing stream flow from under the altar, and issue out from under the threshold of the sanctuary, and wherever it flowed it gave life: let as many as have quaffed this life giving stream glorify "the fountain of Israel."



**Verse 27.** *There is little Benjamin with their ruler.* The tribe was small, having been greatly reduced in numbers, but it had the honour of including Zion within its territory. "And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." Little Benjamin had been Jacob's darling, and now the tribe is made to march first in the procession, and to dwell nearest to the holy place. The princes of Judah and their council. Judah was a large and powerful tribe, not with one governor, like Benjamin, but with many princes "and their company, "for so the margin has it. "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel, "and the tribe was a quarry of stones wherewith to build up the nations: some such truth is hinted at in the Hebrew. The princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. Israel was there, as well as Judah; there was no schism among the people. The north sent a representative contingent as well as the south, and so the long procession set forth the hearty loyalty of all the tribes to their Lord and King. O happy day, when all believers shall be one around the ark of the Lord; striving for nothing but the glory of the God of grace. The prophet now puts into the mouth of the assembly a song, foretelling the future conquests of Jehovah.

**Verse 28.** *Thy God hath commanded thy strength.* His decree had ordained the nation strong, and his arm had made them so. As a commander in chief, the Lord made the valiant men pass in battle array, and bade them be strong in the day of conflict. This is a very rich though brief sentence, and, whether applied to an individual believer, or to the whole church, it is full of consolation. Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. As all power comes from God at first, so its continual maintenance is also of him. We who have life should pray to have it more "abundantly; "if we have strength we should seek to be still more established. We expect God to bless his own work. He has never left any work unfinished yet, and he never will. "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly; "and now, being reconciled to God, we may look to him to perfect that which concerneth us, since he never forsakes the work of his own hands.

**Verse 29.** *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.* The palace of God, which towered above Jerusalem, is prophesied as becoming a wonder to all lands, and when it grew from the tabernacle of David to the temple of Solomon, it was so. So splendid was that edifice that the queen of far off Sheba came with her gifts; and many neighbouring princes, overawed by the wealth and power therein displayed, came with tribute to Israel's God. The church of God, when truly spiritual, wins for her God the homage of the nations. In the latter day glory this truth shall be far more literally and largely verified.

**Verse 30.** *Rebuke the company of spearmen; or, the beasts of the reeds,* as the margin more correctly renders it. Speak to Egypt, let its growing power and jealousy be kept in order, by a word from thee. Israel remembers her old enemy, already plotting the mischief, which would break out under Jeroboam, and begs for a rebuking word from her Omnipotent Friend. Antichrist also, that

great red dragon, needs the effectual word of the Lord to rebuke its insolence. The multitude of the bulls, the stronger foes; the proud, headstrong, rampant, fat, and roaring bulls, which sought to gore the chosen nation,—these also need the Lord's rebuke, and they shall have it too. All Egypt's sacred bulls could not avail against a "thus saith Jehovah." Popish bulls, and imperial edicts have dashed against the Lord's church, but they have not prevailed against her, and they never shall. With the calves of the people. The poorer and baser sort are equally set on mischief, but the divine voice can control them; multitudes are as nothing to the Lord when he goes forth in power; whether bulls or calves, they are but cattle for the shambles when Omnipotence displays itself. The gospel, like the ark, has nothing to fear from great or small; it is a stone upon which every one that stumbleth shall be broken.

Till every one submit himself with pieces of silver. The Lord is asked to subdue the enemies of Israel, till they rendered tribute in silver ingots. Blessed is that rebuke, which does not break but bend; for subjection to the Lord of hosts is liberty, and tribute to him enriches him that pays it. The taxation of sin is infinitely more exacting than the tribute of religion. The little finger of lust is heavier than the loins of the law. Pieces of silver given to God are replaced with pieces of gold. Scatter thou the people that delight in war. So that, notwithstanding the strong expression of Ps 68:23, God's people were peace men, and only desired the crushing of oppressive nations, that war might not occur again. Let the battles of peace be as fierce as they will; heap coals of fire on the heads of enemies, and slay their enmity thereby. That "they who take the sword should perish by the sword," is a just regulation for the establishment of quiet in the earth. What peace can there be, while blood thirsty tyrants and their myrmidons are so many? Devoutly may we offer this prayer, and with equal devotion, we may bless God that it is sure to be answered, for "he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire."

**Verse 31.** *Princes shall come out of Egypt.* Old foes shall be new friends. Solomon shall find a spouse in Pharaoh's house. Christ shall gather a people from the realm of sin. Great sinners shall yield themselves to the sceptre of grace, and great men shall become good men, by coming to God. Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Cush shall hasten to present peace offerings. Sheba's queen shall come from the far south. Candace's chamberlain shall ask of Him who was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Abyssinia shall yet be converted, and Africa become the willing seeker after grace, eagerly desiring and embracing the Christ of God. Poor Ethiopia, thy hands have been long manacled and hardened by cruel toil, but millions of thy sons have in their bondage found the liberty with which Christ made men free; and so thy cross, like the cross of Simon of Cyrene, has been Christ's cross, and God has been thy salvation. Hasten, O Lord, this day, when both the civilization and the barbarism of the earth shall adore thee, Egypt and Ethiopia blending with glad accord in thy worship! Here is the confidence of thy saints, even thy promise; hasten it in thine own

time, good Lord.

**Verse 32.** *Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth.* Glorious shall that song be in which whole empires join. Happy are men that God is one who is consistently the object of joyous worship, for not such are the demons of the heathen. So sweet a thing is song that it ought to be all the Lord's; a secular concert seems almost a sacrilege, a licentious song is treason. O sing praises unto the Lord. Again and again is God to be magnified; we have too much sinning against God, but cannot have too much singing to God. Selah. Well may we rest now that our contemplations have reached the millennial glory. What heart will refuse to be lifted up by such a prospect!

**Verse 33.** *To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old.* Before, he was described in his earthly manifestations, as marching through the desert; now, in his celestial glory, as riding in the heavens of the primeval ages. Long ere this heaven and earth were made, the loftier abodes of the Deity stood fast; before men or angels were created, the splendours of the Great King were as great as now, and his triumphs as glorious. Our knowledge reaches but to a small fragment of the life of God, whose "goings forth were of old, even from everlasting." Well might the Jewish church hymn the eternal God, and well may we join therewith the adoration of the Great Firstborn:

"Ere sin was born, or Satan fell,  
He led the host of morning stars.

Thy generation who can tell?

Or count the number of thy years?"

Lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Was there a thunderclap just then heard in heaven? Or, did the poet's mind flash backward to the time when from the heaven of heavens the voice of Jehovah broke the long silence and said, "Light be, "and light was. To this hour, the voice of God is power. This gospel, which utters and reveals his word, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Our voices are fitly called to praise him whose voice spoke us into being, and gives us the effectual grace which secures our well being.

**Verse 34.** *Ascribe ye strength unto God.* When even his voice rends the rocks and uproots the cedars, what cannot his hand do? His finger shakes the earth; who can conceive the power of his arm? Let us never by our doubts or our daring defiances appear to deny power unto God; on the contrary, by yielding to him and trusting in him, let our hearts acknowledge his might. When we are reconciled to God, his omnipotence is an attribute of which we sing with delight. His excellency is over Israel. The favoured nation is protracted by his majesty; his greatness is to them goodness, his glory is their defence. And his strength is in the clouds. He does not confine his power to the sons of men, but makes it like a canopy to cover the skies. Rain, snow, hail, and tempest are his artillery; he rules all nature with awe inspiring majesty. Nothing is so high as to be above him, or too low to be beneath him; praise him, then, in the highest.

**Verse 35.** *O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places.* You inspire awe and fear. Thy saints obey with fear and trembling, and thine enemies flee in dismay. From thy threefold courts, and especially from the holy of holies, thy majesty flashes forth and makes the sons of men prostrate themselves in awe. The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his *people*. In this thou, who art Israel's God by covenant, art terrible to thy foes by making thy people strong, so that one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. All the power of Israel's warriors is derived from the Lord, the fountain of all might. He is strong, and makes strong: blessed are they who draw from his resources, they shall renew their strength. While the self sufficient faint, the All sufficient shall sustain the feeblest believer, Blessed be God. A short but sweet conclusion. Let our souls say Amen to it, and yet again, Amen.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Whole Psalm.** In this Psalm we have especial reason to condemn or to admire the timidity, or the caution and delicacy, of our translators, whichever it may be considered, for the manner in which they have rendered the names of the Almighty. They almost universally translate them "God" or "Lord;" whereas, it has been observed that, almost all the remarkable titles of the Deity are employed in describing and praising the person addressed here. He is called "Elohim" in Ps 68:2; "Adonai," Ps 68:12; "Shaddai," Ps 68:15; "Jehovah," Ps 68:17; "Jah," Ps 68:19; and "Al," Ps 68:20. The Hebrew names of God have, each of them, a distinct and peculiar meaning. No one word will suffice for them all. The vague use of the terms "God" and "Lord" in our translation can never convey to the reader's mind the important ideas which the original expression, if properly translated, would bear, and we have lost a strong additional confirmation of the deity of Messiah, by abandoning the testimony which the ascription to him of God's peculiar titles would give to this great truth. *R. H. Ryland.*

**Whole Psalm.** As 65 opened with a reference to the form of blessing (Nu 6:24-26), so this with a reference to the prayer used when the cloud pillar summoned the camp to commence a march. *There* the presence (*panim*) of God shed saving light on his people; here his enemies flee from it (*mippanayv*), Ps 68:1... In the Jewish ritual the Psalm is used at Pentecost, the Anniversary of the Giving of the Law, and the Feast of Finished Harvest... The remarkable character of the Psalm is indicated by the fact that there are no fewer than thirteen words in it which are not found elsewhere. The Pentecostal Gift of Tongues seems needed for its full exposition. *William Kay.*

**Whole Psalm.** By many critics esteemed the loftiest effusion of David's lyrical muse. *William Binnie.*

**Whole Psalm.** To judge from the antiquity of its language, the concise description, the thoroughly fresh, forcible, and occasional artlessly ironical expression of its poetry, we consider this poem as one of the most ancient monuments of Hebrew poetry. *Boettcher.*

**Whole Psalm.** It must be confessed that in this Psalm there are as many precipices, and as many

labyrinths, as there are verses, or even words. It has not inappropriately been designated the cross of critics, the reproach of interpreters. *Simon de Muis.*

**Whole Psalm.** The beginning of this Psalm clearly intimates that the inspired psalmist had light given him to see the march of Israel through the wilderness, the ark of the covenant moving before the people to find a resting place. The psalmist is filled with praise, when he is enabled to see that God revealed his Fatherly love in the whole of that movement—that his eye was upon the fatherless, the widow, the solitary, and afflicted; but David is also carried by the Spirit to the Mount of Olives, where he sees the ascending Lord; he sees the triumphal chariots, with an innumerable company of angels, and then beholds the Lord welcomed in glory as the mighty Conqueror; and not only so, but as having received or purchased gifts for men, even the rebellious (Ps 68:18), "that the Lord God might dwell among them, "or *within them*. "Wherefore, "the command of our Father is, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, "etc. (2Co 6:17-18). The doxology of God's people is, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits." Our blessed Master attends day by day to all our wants, and causes his love to flow to us, because he is God our Salvation—Selah. What comfort ought this to afford under every condition! for the Lord Jesus goes before us through the desert. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. The widow, the fatherless, the desolate, are all the objects of his care and love. He has gone before us to prepare our heavenly rest; the work is finished. He now comes, day by day, to load us with blessings, and at the last will carry us safely through death into life and glory. To the Lord our Saviour belong the issues from death; then, "Death, where is thy sting?" etc. *Ridley H. Herschell, in "Strength in Weakness. Meditations on some of the Psalms in time of Trial, "1860.*

**Verse 1.** *Let God arise*, etc. The moving ark (See Nu 10:35-36) is a type of Jesus going forth to cast down rebel foes. It is high joy to trace the Antitype's victorious march. How mightily the Lord advanced! The strength of God was in his arm. His sword was Deity. His darts were barbed with all Jehovah's might. "He had on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." Re 19:16. His foes, indeed, strove mightily. It was no easy work to rescue souls from Satan's grasp, or to lay low the prison house of darkness. The enemy rushed on, clad in his fiercest armour, wild in his keenest rage, wily in his deadliest crafts. He plied his every temptation, as a terrific battery. But the true Ark never quailed. The adversary licked the dust. Malignant passions maddened in opposing breasts. The kings stood up; rulers took counsel; all plots were laid; the ignominious death was planned and executed. But still the Ark moved on. The cross gave aid, not injury. The grave could not detain. Death could not vanquish. The gates of hell fly open. The mighty conqueror appears. And, as in Canaan, the ark ascended Zion's hill amid triumphant shouts, so Jesus mounts on high. The heaven of heavens receives him. The Father welcomes the all conquering Saviour. Angelic hosts adore the glorious God man. The Rising Prayer has full accomplishments, "Rise up,

Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee." And now, from glory's throne, he cheers his humble followers in their desert march. Their toils, their conflicts, and their fears are many. They oftentimes seem as a poor worm beneath the crushing feet. But they survive, they prosper, they lift up their head. As of old the ark was victory, so Jesus is victory now. Yes, every child of faith shall surely set a conquering foot upon the host of foes. Hear this, ye mad opposers, and desist. Where are the nations who resisted Israel? Where are the Pharaohs, the beleaguered kings, the Herods, the chief priests, the Pilates? Share not their malice, lest you share their end. Read in this word your near destruction, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee." And, as the Rising Prayer has never failed, so, too, the Resting Prayer now teems with life. "Return, O Lord." Jesus is ready to fly back. Israel's many thousands wait, but wait not in vain. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," Heb 10:37. O joyful day, triumphant sight! What ecstasy, what shouts, what glory! Salvation's Lord returns. Welcome, welcome to him! *Henry Law, in "Christ is All.' The Gospel of the Old Testament," 1858.*

**Verse 1.** *Arise.* The mercifulness of God is seen in his patience toward the wicked, implied in the word *arise*, for he seemeth, as it were, to *sleep* (Ps 44:23), and not to mark what is done amiss. The Lord is patient, and would have none to perish, but would have all men to come to repentance. He was longer in destroying one city (*Jericho*, Jos 6:4), than in building the whole world; slow to wrath, and ready to forgive, desiring not the death of a sinner, but rather he should amend. He doth not arise to particular punishments, much less to the general judgement, but after long suffering and great goodness. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I," said our Lord, "have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Mt 23:37. *John Boys.*

**Verse 1.** *Let his enemies be scattered.* You may, if you please, take the words either as a prayer, or as a *prophecy*: as a prayer that they *may*; or as a prophecy, that they *shall be scattered*. Or, you may read it, *Surgente Domino, As soon as the Lord shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered*, and so make it a theological axiom: and so it is a proposition *aeternae veritatis*, everlastingly true, true in the first age of the world, and true in the last age of the world, and will be true to the world's end. We may make it our prayer, that they may be destroyed; and we may prophesy, that they shall be destroyed. *Summa votorum est, non ex incerto poscentis, sed ex cognitione scientiaque sperantis*, saith Hilary. It is a prayer not proceeding from a doubting and wavering heart, as if God did at sometimes deliver his church, and at others fail and leave her to the will of her enemies; but grounded upon certain knowledge and infallible assurance that he will *"arise, and not keep silence,"* and avenge himself of his enemy. For there is a kind of presage and prophecy in prayer: if we pray as we should, he hath promised to grant our request; which is a fairer assurance than any prophet can give us. *Let God arise, and God will arise*, is but the difference of a tense, and the Hebrews commonly use the one for

the other...

In this prayer or prophecy, or conclusion, you may, as in a glass, behold the providence of God over his people, and the destiny and fatal destruction of wicked men. Or, you may conceive God sitting in heaven, and looking down upon the children of men, and laughing to scorn all the designs of his enemies; his *exsurgat*, his rising, as a tempest to scatter them, and as a fire to melt them. And these two, *exsurgat* and *dissipabuntur*, the rising of God and the destruction of his enemies, divide the text, and present before our eyes two parties or sides, as it were, in main opposition. Now, though the *exsurgat* be before the *dissipabuntur*, God's rising before the scattering, yet there must be some persons to rouse God up and awake him before he will arise to destroy. We will, therefore, as the very order of nature required, consider first the persons which are noted out unto us by three several appellations, as by so many marks and brands in their forehead. They are,

1. *Enemies*;
2. *Haters of God*;
3. *Wicked men*.

But God, *rising* in this manner, is more especially against the fact than the person, and against the person only for the fact. We must, therefore, search and inquire after that; and we find it wrapped up and secretly lurking in the *dissipabuntur*, in their punishment; for scattering supposes a gathering together, as corruption doth generation. That, then, which moved God to rise is this: his *enemies*, they that *hated him*, *the wicked*, were gathered together, and consulted against God and his church, as we see it this day; and, seeing it, are here met together to fall down before God in all humility, that he may arise and scatter them. This is *nunc opportunitatis*, the very time and appointed time *for* God to *arise*. In which phrase is implied a kind of pause and deliberation, as if God were not always up, and ready to execute judgment. And, hereby, he manifests—

1. His patience to the wicked: he is not always up, as it were, to destroy his enemies;
2. His justice, which cometh at length, though it come not so soon as men in misery expect;
3. His mercy to his children: though for a while he seem to sleep, and not to hearken to the voice of their complaints, yet, at last, he rises up and helps them.

Lastly, we shall take notice of the effects, or end, of this rising; and that is the destruction of his enemies, here drawn out to our view, in four several expressions, as in so many colours:—

1. *Dissipabuntur*, they shall be scattered;
2. *Fugient*, they shall fly;
3. *Deficient*, they shall vanish like smoke;
4. *Liquefient*, they shall be melted as wax; which all meet and are concentrated in *peribunt*, *they shall perish at the presence of God*. Anthony Farindon.

Note continued on See Psalms on "Job 42:10."

**Verses 1-3.** See *Psalms on "Ps 68:1"* for further information.

**Verse 3.** *But let the righteous be glad.* The wicked flee from the presence of God, since it inspires them with terror; the righteous on the other hand rejoice in it, because nothing delights them more than to think that God is near them. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 4.** *Extol him that rideth upon the heavens.* Or, as Symmachus, Jerome, Bishop Lowth, Merrick, and others render, "Prepare the way for him who rideth through the deserts": *twbre aravoth*; i.e., who rode through the wilderness on the cherubim; alluding to the passage of the ark. "*Comprehensive Bible.*"

**Verse 4.** *Rideth.* Said, perhaps, with allusion to the cherubim on which Jehovah was borne (Ps 18:10), God himself being the Leader and Captain of his people, riding as it were at their head as an earthly captain might lead his army, riding on a war horse. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Verse 4.** *Upon the heavens.* The ancient versions in general render the word *twkrek super occasus*, or *occasum*. The *desert* or *solitude* is the proper and general meaning of it, and there is no authority to render it by *the heavens*, but that of the Rabbins, which, indeed, is little or none; and of the Chaldee paraphrase which gives it *twbrek hyrqy hyorwk super thronam gloriae ejus in nono caelo* who sits upon the throne of his glory in the ninth heaven. The psalmist here alludes, as I apprehend, to the passage of the Israelites through the deserts in their way to the promised land, and describes it in many of the principal circumstances of it in the following verses; and God is said to *ride*, or *be carried through the deserts*, as the ark of his presence was carried through them, and accompanied the Israelites in all their various stages during their continuance and pilgrimage in them. *Samuel Chandler.*

**Verse 4.** God always goes at the head of his people through the deserts of suffering and need; in the deserts of trouble they find in him a true leader. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Verse 4.** *His name JAH.* JAH, as the concentration of Jehovah, is the more emphatic term (*Stier*). It occurs for the first time in Ex 15:2. *Frederic Fysh, in "A Lyrical Literary Version of the Psalms," 1850.*

**Verse 5.** *A father of the fatherless.* In a spiritual sense, the *orphans*, whose father God is, says Hilary, are those who have renounced their father the Devil, and those to whom Christ, at his departure, sent another *Comforter*, according to his promise—"I will not leave you orphans." *Lorinus.*

**Verse 5.** Does not Jas 1:27 refer to this verse, for we have *the fatherless*, *the widow*, and then the *holiness*, of the God we serve? *Andrew A. Bonar.*

**Verse 5.** *God in his holy habitation.* Albeit the Lord be infinite and uncomprehended by any place, yet hath he appointed a trysting place where his people shall find him by his own ordinance, to wit, the assembly of his saints, his holy temple shadowing forth Christ to be incarnate, who now is in heaven, now is incarnate, and sitting at the right hand of God, in whom dwells the Godhead; here, here is God to be found. *David Dickson.*



**Verse 6.** *God setteth the solitary in families.* It may be interpreted of the fruitfulness and increase of the church with converts, under the gospel dispensation, even from among the Gentiles, who were before solitary, or were alone, without God and Christ, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; but, being called and converted by the ministry of the word, were brought into and placed in gospel churches, or families... Gospel churches, like families, have a master over them, who is Christ the Son and firstborn, of whom they are named; where are saints of various ages, sizes, and standing; some fathers, some young men, and some children; where are provisions suitable for them, and stewards to give them their portion of meat in due season, who are the ministers of the word; and laws and rules, by which they are directed and regulated, and everything is kept in good decorum.

*John Gill.*

**Verse 8.** *The God of Israel.* Sinai was the seat not only of God, but of the *covenant God* of the people of Israel; from which the law was proclaimed, and the covenant struck between God and his people.

*Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 9.** The *Thou* in the Hebrew is emphatic: *Thine inheritance, even when it was wearied (i.e., worn out) thou didst confirm; or, "fortify it."* Thou who alone couldst strengthen one worn out, didst so for thy people. *A. R. Fausset.*

**Verse 9.** *A liberal rain.* The words translated *a liberal rain*, read literally in the Hebrew *a rain of freenesses*; and I agree with interpreters in thinking that he alludes to the blessing as having come in the exercise of free favour, and to God, as having of his own unprompted goodness provided for all the wants of his people. Some read, *a desirable rain*; others *a rain flowing without violence, or gentle*; but neither of these renderings seems eligible. Others read, *a copious or plentiful rain*; but I have already stated what appears to me to be the preferable sense. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 9.** *A gracious rain*; that is, of manna. *Edmund Law (1703-1787), quoted by Richard Warner in loc., 1828.*

**Verse 9.** *Rain.* One fountain, says Cyril, waters thy paradise, and the rain that falls upon all the world is the same; it is white in the bloom of the hawthorn, red in the rose, purple in the hyacinth, and diverse kinds, and all in all; yet it itself is the same and of the same kind. . . . So also the Holy Spirit, though he is one and the same and not divisible, yet to every one he divideth grace according as he wills. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 9.** *A plentiful rain.* Thy love has been as a shower! The returns, but a dew drop, and that dew drop stained with sin. *James Harrington Evans, 1785-1849.*

**Verse 10.** *Thy congregation.* The words are choice and expressive. Addressing God, (the poet) intentionally and emphatically calls the people of Israel *Ktyx thy combined congregation*, in contrast to former divisions and various dissensions, to signify, that the people was now welded together, formed into one society, and united at the same time, that it was well ordered, and constituted as the

*society of God, wherein his laws flourished and were wont to be observed. Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 10.** *Thy congregation.* Or, *Thy living creatures,* Ktyh, ta zwa, LXX *animalia*, Vulgate; probably a reference to the immense number of quails which were miraculously brought to the camp of the Israelites, and, in a manner, *dwelt around it.* Note in the "*Congregational Bible.*"

**Verse 10.** *Thy congregation.* Or, *Thy living creatures.* That desolate place, where only wild beasts before could live, was now by those showers of manna (Ps 68:9) enabled to sustain a multitude of other *tamer living creatures,* even of *men* and all their *flocks* and *herds.* Henry Hammond.

**Verse 10.** (*first clause*). Rather:—"As for thy food (manna and quails), they dwelt in the midst of it." Edmund Law.

**Verse 10.** (*first clause*). *As to thy food, they dwelt amidst it.* The ambiguity of the word *hyx* has occasioned various renderings of this line. Parkhurst considers the radical sense of *hyx* is "to be vigorous, strong; "hence the noun denotes *force*, a body of men (2Sa 23:13); and also that which gives strength, the means of support, or food (Jud 6:4 17:10); and compare Ne 9:6. Our translators took the term in the first sense; I take it in the second, because the connection seems to require it, and because (*tyx*) refers always to a body of men, as soldiers, as actually engaged in some kind of warfare. Hence what is called the *troop* of Philistines (2Sa 23:13) is called the *camp* of the Philistines. 1Ch 11:15. And, lastly, because the common version has no antecedent to which *hk*, *in it*, or *amidst it*, can refer; but this version has one in the noun *food*. I think there is then a reference not only to the manna, but to the quails, which God brought in abundance around the camp. Ex 16:13 Nu 11:31. Thus he *prepared in his goodness for the poor.* Benjamin Boothroyd.

**Verse 10.** *Thou hast prepared in thine own sweetness for the poor, O God. In thine own sweetness,* not in his sweetness. For the needy he is, for he hath been made weak, in order that he may be made perfect: he hath acknowledged himself indigent, that he may be replenished. Augustine.

**Verse 11.** *The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.* You shall find, when the enemies of the church are destroyed, that God hath many preachers made that do teach his praises... The words in the original are very significant, and do note two things. First, the word which you read *company*, in the Hebrew it is "army, "great was the army of preachers. An army of preachers is a great matter; nay, it is a great matter to have seven or eight good preachers in a great army; but to have a whole army of preachers that it glorious. Secondly, it doth note out the heartiness of this preaching army, for the word *vpg*, soul, is to be understood as in that place of Ecclesiastes; it is said there, "The words or book of the preacher, "which, being in the feminine gender, doth suppose *nephesh*, and as if he should say, as Vatablus hath it; the words or book of him that hath a preaching soul or heart, or the words of a preaching soul or heart. So here where it is said, great is the army of preachers, the word being in the feminine gender, it is as if he should say, great is the army of preaching souls, whose very hearts within them shall preach of the Lord's works. Now, my brethren, it

is much to have a preaching army; but if this army shall with heart and soul preach of God's praise, O that is a blessed thing. Yet thus shall it be when the enemies of God shall be destroyed. And, therefore, seeing God will not lose all those sermons of his own praises, in due time the enemies of the church shall be scattered. *William Bridge, in "The True Soldier's Conroy."* 1640.

**Verse 11.** It is owing to the word, the appointment, and power of God, that any persons are induced or enabled to preach the gospel. *John Newton (1725-1807), in "Messiah."*

**Verses 11-12.** This account of Israel's victories is applicable to victories obtained by the exalted Redeemer, when the enemies of man's salvation were vanquished by the resurrection of Christ, and the heathen nations were compelled to own his power; and this great victory was first notified by women to the disciples. *From "A Practical Illustration of the Book of Psalms; by the Author of the Family Commentary on the New Testament."* (Mrs. Thompson.) 1826.

**Verses 11-12.** The Lord did give his word at his ascension, and there were a multitude of them that published it, and by this means kings of armies were put to flight: they conquered by the word: there is not such another way to rout kings and their armies. *William Strong.* 1654.

**Verses 11-14.**

The Lord giveth the word!

A great company of women announce the glad tidings!

Kings with their armies flee—they flee!

And those, who dwell within the house, divide the spoil!

Although they lie among the hearth stones,

They are become like a dove's wings overlaid with silver,

And like her pinions overlaid with yellow gold.

When the Almighty scattereth kings,

They glisten therein, as snow upon Salmon.

Those who dwell within the house—i.e., the women. They are thus described in allusion to their retired habits of life, in eastern countries. *Lie among the hearth stones—i.e.,* are habitually employed in the lowest domestic offices and whose ordinary dress, therefore, is mean and soiled. *The hearth stones—Hebrew rests (for boilers).* *They are become—*by being decked in the spoils of the enemy.—*Glisten as snow—Hebrew (each woman) is snowy: therein—i.e.,* in the spoils distributed amongst them. *French and Skinner's Translation and Notes.*

**Verse 12.** *Kings of armies did flee apace.* In the Hebrew it is, they fled, they fled; fled is twice. Why so? That is, they did flee very hastily, and they fled most confusedly, they fled all ways; they fled, they fled, noting the greatness of the flight. *William Bridge.*

**Verse 12.** *The kings of hosts shall flee.* The "hosts" are the numerous well equipped armies which the kings of the heathens lead forth to the battle against the people of God. The unusual expression,

"kings of hosts, "sounds very much like an ironically disparaging antithesis to the customary "Jahve of Hosts." *Bottcher, quoted by Delitzsch.*

**Verse 12.** *She that tarried at home.* That is, all the noncombatants, saith Kimchi. Or, the women also (those *domi portae*) came forth to pillage. These days of the gospel do abound with many godly matrons and holy virgins. And it is easy to observe that the New Testament affords more store of good women than the old. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 12.** *Divided the spoil,* not merely (as Hupfeld) "receives her portion of the spoil, "but rather, "distributes among her daughters and handmaidens, etc., the share of the spoil" which her husband has brought home. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Verse 14.** *Salmon* or *Zalmon*, properly *Tsalmon*, *Nwmlu* a woody hill near Shechem (Jud 9:48). Whether it is this that's referred to in Ps 69:14, is disputed. Some interpreters take *Nwmlu* here in its etymological meaning of darkness, *Mlu*; thus Luther renders the clause "so wird es helle wo es dunkel ist, "thus it be bright where it is dark, and understands it with a Messianic reference. Ewald adopts much the same rendering. The majority, however, retain the name as a proper name, but exhibit great variety in their explanation of the passage. Hengstenberg thinks that the phrase, "it snows on *Tsalmon*, "is equivalent to "there is brightness where there was darkness, "the hill, originally dark with wood, is now white with snow. De Dieu supposes a comparison: *Tsalmon* is white with the bones of the slaughtered kings, as if with snow. Some suppose that there is here a mere note of time: it was winter, the snow was on *Tsalmon* (Herder); and this Hupfeld adopts, with the explanation that the statement is made derisively, with reference to those who tarried at home, deterred by the winter's snow. He considers the passage (Ps 68:12-14) as a fragment of an ancient song, celebrating some of the early conquests of Israel in Canaan, and deriding those, who, from indolence or fear, shrank from the enterprise. He translates thus:

"The kings of the armies, flee, flee,  
And the housewife shares the spoil!  
Will ye lie among the shippens?  
Pigeons feathers decked with silver,  
And their wings with yellow gold!  
As the Almighty scattered kings therein,  
It was snowing on *Tsalmon*."

—*William Lindsay Alexander, in "A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature."* 1866.

**Verse 14.** The verb may be viewed as in the second person—*Thou, O God! didst make it fair and white as Mount Salmon with snow.* The reader may adopt either construction, for the meaning is the same. It is evident that David insists still upon the figure of the whiteness of silver, which he had previously introduced. The country had, as it were, been blackened or sullied by the hostile confusion

into which it was thrown, and he says that it had now recovered its fair appearance, and resembled Salmon, which is well known to have been ordinarily covered with snows. Others think that Salmon is not the name of a place, but an appellative, meaning *a dark shade*. I would retain the commonly received reading. At the same time, I think that there may have been an allusion to the etymology. It comes from the word Mlu, *tselem*, signifying *a shade*, and Mount Salmon had been so called on account of its blackness. This makes the comparison more striking; for it intimates that as the snows whitened this black mountain, so the country had resumed its former beauty, and put on an aspect of joy, when God dispelled the darkness which had lain upon it during the oppression of enemies. *John Calvin*.

**Verse 14.** *It was as white as snow in Salmon.* That is, this thine inheritance, thy peculiar people, appeared as bright and glorious in the sight of their neighbours, as the snowy head of Salmon glistens by the reflection of the sunbeams. *Thomas Fenton*.

**Verse 14.** *White as snow in Salmon.* The expression here used seems to denote, that everything seemed as bright and cheerful to the mind of God's people, as Salmon does to their eyes, when glistening with snow. As snow is much less common, and lies a much shorter time in Judaea than in England, no wonder that it is much more admired; accordingly, the son of Sirach speaks of it with a kind of rapture. "The eye will be astonished at the beauty of its whiteness, and the heart transported at the raining of it." Ecclus. 43:18 or 20. *Samuel Burder*.

**Verse 14.** *Salmon.* Dean Stanley conjectures that Salmon in another name for Mount Ebal; it was certainly near Shechem (see Jud 9:48), but it is almost hopeless to expect to identify it, for Mr. Mills, the industrious author of "Nablus and the modern Samaritans," could not find any one who knew the name of Salmon, neither could he discover any traditions in reference to it, or indeed any allusion to it in Samaritan literature. The word signifies a shade, and may, perhaps, popularly be accepted as identical with the name the "Black Forest." *C. H. S.*

**Verse 15.** *Hill of Bashan.* The world's physical greatness must yield to the church's spiritual grandeur. The "hill of God" is here an emblem of the *world kingdoms*, which (Ps 65:6) are great only by the grace of God. A great hill reminds us of the *creative* power of God. Hence, "the hill of Elohim" (the general name of God as *the Creator*) stands in contrast to *the hill* which (Ps 68:16) "the Lord" (Jehovah) will dwell in for ever. It lay in the north, in the region east of Jordan, or the land of Hermon, the kingdom of Og, the most formidable enemy whom Israel encountered on their march to Canaan. "The hill of Bashan is the high snow summit of Anti Lebanon, or Hermon, the extreme limit of Bashan. There was a peculiar propriety, from its position on the boundary between Judaea and the heathen world, in employing it as a symbol of the world's might (Ps 68:22 42:6 89:12)" (*Hengstenberg*). The original name of Hermon as Sion; *i.e., lofty* (De 4:48); allied in sound to Zion, which suggested the contrast here between *the world hills* and *the Lord's hill*. *A. R. Fausset*.

**Verse 15-16.**

"A mountain of God Mount Bashan is.  
A mountain of peaks Mount Bashan is,  
Why are ye piqued, ye peaked mountains?  
At the mountain *which* God desires to dwell in?  
Yea, Jehovah will dwell therein forever."

—*Frederic Fysh's Version.*

**Verse 16.** *Why leap ye?* As triumphing, and making a show of your natural advantages over Sion. Or, to insult over it, and compare and equalise yourselves in honour with it; poetical kind of speeches. Others translate it, *Why gaze you, as though you were ravished with admiration?* John Diodati.

**Verse 16.** *This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in.* This low, little, barren hill of Zion; and God's election maketh the difference, as it did of Aaron's rod from the rest, and doth still of the church from the rest of the world. The Lamb Christ is on Mount Zion. Re 14:1. *John Trapp.*

**Verse 17.** *The chariots of God.* What are these "chariots of God?" Come, we will not stand to mince the matter, look but round about thee, and thou shalt see those *innumerable* chariots and angels here spoken of; for so many *creatures* as thou seest, so many angels and chariots of God thou seest; they are all his host, they are all his chariots wherein he rides; and, whether you see it or no, *The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.* The glory of the Lord fills them all (had we but our eyes open to see it so), and they are all at his command, and there is not one creature but doth his pleasure. Oh, brethren! how glorious and blessed a thing it is, that looking round about us to behold and see, that look how many creatures *visible* and *invisible* you see or conceive in thy mind to be, for thy soul now to look on them as so many fiery chariots and horsemen for its defence, protection, and preservation! And, on the other hand, "How fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, "who hath all these chariots and horsemen at his command to execute his will and vengeance on those that neglect, hate, and oppose him. *John Everard, in "Militia Caelestis, or the Heavenly Host."* 1653.

**Verse 17.**

"About his chariot numberless were poured  
Cherubs, and seraph, potentates, and thrones,  
And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots win  
From the armoury of God, where stand of old Myriads."

—*John Milton, in "Paradise Lost."*

**Verse 17.** *Twenty-thousand;* rather, *two myriads*, Mytbr singular wkr; for twbr only here in the dual, the infinite number doubled. "*Thousands of angels*, "literally, *thousands of iteration; i.e., with margin, many thousands* (Bythner, Gesenius, &c.). Nagv only here, from hgv, *to repeat*. The rendering of

*angels* was probably suggested by the reference to Sinai, next clause (see De 33:2, where for *saints* read *holy ones*;) *chariots* bkr being used collectively for those who rode in them, as often elsewhere. William de Burgh.

**Verse 18.** *Thou hast ascended on high*, etc. Some think it refers to God's goings forth on behalf of his people Israel, leading them forth to victory, taking their enemies captive, and enriching them with the spoils. Suppose it be so, we are warranted to consider it as mainly referring to Christ, for so the apostle has applied it. Eph 4:8. The apostle not only applies it to Christ, but *proves* it applicable. Thus he reasons (Ps 68:9-10), "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended," etc. The captivity which he led captive was our spiritual enemies who had led us captive—Satan, death; and, having obtained the victory, he proceeds to divide the spoils. *Gifts to men*—as David made presents. And hence comes our ordinances, ministers, etc. There was a glorious fulfilment immediately after his ascension, in a rich profusion of gifts and graces to his church, like David's presents. Here it is *received*; in Ephesians, *gave*. He received that he might give; received the spoil that he might distribute it. But, as I wish to appropriate the passage to the work allotted me, the whole of that to which I would at this time call your attention will be contained in two things:

1. *The great blessings of the Christian ministry.*

(a) Ministers are *received for*, and are *given to*, you by Christ. As men, and as sinful men, ministers are as nothing, and wish not to make anything of themselves; but, as the gifts of Christ, it becomes you to make much of them. (1.) If you *love Christ*, you will make much of your minister, on account of his being *his* gift—a gift designed to supply Christ's absence in a sort. He is gone ("ascended"), but he gives you his servants. By and by you hope to be with him, but as yet you are as sheep in the wilderness. He gives you a shepherd. (2.) If you *fear God*, you will be afraid of treating your pastor amiss, seeing he is the gift of Christ. God took it ill of Israel for despising Moses. Nu 12:8. He is "*my servant*."

(b) Ministers are not only given to, but *received for* you, of God the Father, as a covenant blessing, among the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. In this view, consider that Christ received nothing at his Father's hand but what cost him dear—cost him his life. Or, if the allusion be to the dividing of the spoils, suppose we say, he received them as a conqueror receives the spoils at the hand of the foe. Your minister was one of those who, like yourselves, were brands consuming in the fire. Christ took him from your enemies and gives him to you. Make much of the gift on this account. "This I received of the Amorite."

(c) Consider your unworthiness of such a blessing. You are *men*, mere men, and what is more, *rebellious* men, who had joined with Satan. And must you share the spoils? It is not usual to divide the spoils amongst rebels... Men that put him to death had these gifts given to them; and we should all have done the same. Some of you, it is likely, have been vile and abandoned characters and yet,

etc...

(d) The end of it: *That the Lord God might dwell among them.* "But will God, indeed, dwell with men?" God had not dwelt with the world, nor in it, while sin bore the rule; but Christ's mediation was for the bringing it about. "Will God, indeed, dwell with men?" He will, and how? It is by the means of ordinances and ministers. A church of Christ is God's house; and where any one builds a house, it is a token that he means to dwell there. What a blessing to a village, a country, for God to build a house in it. It is by this that we may hope for a blessing upon the means to the conversion of our children and friends, and for the edification of believers.

2. *Point out some corresponding duties as answering to these your privileges.*

(a) Constant and diligent attendance at the house of God. If the house of God be God's dwelling, let it be yours, your home. If God gives you a pastor, do you thankfully receive and prize him. He hath not dealt so with every village.

(b) Cheerfully contribute to his support. Christ has given you freely, and you ought to give him freely. Consider it is not as a gift, but as a debt, and not as done to him, but to Christ.

(c) Follow those things which make for peace, with which the presence and blessing of God are connected.

(d) Shun those things that tend to provoke the Lord to withdraw his gifts, and to cease to dwell among you. *Andrew Fuller's Sketch of a Sermon, addressed to the Church at Moulton, on the Ordination of Mr. (since Doctor) Carey, August 1st, 1787.*

**Verse 18.** But who is he of whom it is written, that *he ascended up on high*? I confess that the sixty-eighth Psalm, wherein these words are first written, is literally to be understood, not of any triumph, for the slaughter of the host of Sennacherib, which was done in the time of king Hezekiah (as the Jews do most fabulously dream), when the very title of this Psalm, that ascribes it unto David, doth sufficiently confute this vanity; nor yet for any of the victories of David which he obtained against his bordering enemies, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Idumaeans, and the Philistines (as some would have it); but of that great and glorious pomp which was then done and showed, when king David with great joy and triumph did bring the *ark* of the covenant into the hill of Sion; and, therefore, these words, *Thou art gone up on high*, so dignify that the ark, which formerly had lain in an *obscure* place, and was transported from one place to another, was now ascended and seated in a most *illustrious and conspicuous* place, even in the kingly palace; and these words. *Thou hast led captivity captive*, do signify those *enemies* which formerly had spoiled and wasted divers countries; but now, being *vanquished* by king David, were led *captive* in this triumph (for so it was the manner of those times, as Plutarch doth excellently declare in the life of Paulus Amilius); and the other words, *thou hast received gifts for men*, do signify those spoils that were freely offered for conditions of peace, and were triumphantly carried about in this pompous show, for the greater solemnity of the same;



and then (as the manner was among the chieftains when they triumphed, *Bellica laudatis dona dedisse viris*, to bestow warlike gifts upon worthy men), gifts were bestowed on several men, in several manner, as Sigonius sheweth. Yet I say that, *mystically*, this Psalm is an epinikion, or a triumphal song, penned by king David upon the foresight of Jesus Christ arising from the dead, and with great joy and triumph *ascending* up into heaven, and thence sending his Holy Spirit unto his apostles and disciples; and having overcome all his enemies, collecting by the ministry of his preachers, his churches and chosen people together, and so guiding and defending them here in this life, until he doth receive them into eternal glory. *Griffith Williams*. 1636.

**Verse 18.** *Thou hast led captivity captive.* The expression is emphatic. He has conquered and triumphed over all the powers which held us in captivity, so that captivity itself is taken captive. The spirit and force of it is destroyed; and his people, when released by him, and walking in his ways, have no more to apprehend from those whose captives they were, than a conqueror has to fear from a prisoner in chains. The energy of the phrase is not unlike that of the apostle: "Death is swallowed up in victory." *John Newton*.

**Verse 18.** *Thou hast led captivity captive*, etc. The ancient prophecy of David is fulfilled here on the foot of mount Olivet. To take "captivity captive," signifies that Christ conquered the allied principalities and powers, the devil, sin, death, and hell; and that he deprived them of the instruments wherewith they enslaved men. He not only silenced the cannon on the spiritual Gibraltar, but he took rock, fortifications, and all. He not only silenced the horrible and destructive battlements of the powerful and compactly united ghostly enemies, but he threw down the towers, razed the castles, and took away the keys of the dungeons. He is the Master henceforth, and for ever. He did, also, at the same time, save his people. Where, O Jesus, is the army of which thou art the Captain? "Here! all the names are written in pearls on the breastplate which I wear as a high priest." He had no sooner left the grave than he began to distribute his gifts, and did so all along the road on his way to his Father's house; and, especially after he entered the heaven of heavens, did he shower down gifts unto men, as a mighty conqueror loaded with treasures with which to enrich and adorn his followers and people. They were gifts of mercy: gifts to the rebellious; to those who threw down their arms at his feet in penitent submission, *that the Lord God may dwell among them*. The apostle shows that a portion of these gifts are gifts of ministry. Accordingly, whenever God condescends to dwell among a people and in a country, he gives that people and country this ministry. He sends them his gospel in the mouths of faithful servants. He establishes there his house; the board and the candlestick; and then, in his Spirit, he dwells there and blesses his heritage. *Christmas Evans*. 1766-1838.

**Verse 18.** The apostle (Eph 4:8) does not quote the words of the Psalm literally, but according to the sense. The phrase, *Thou hast received gifts*, as applied to Christ as his glorification, could only be for the purpose of distribution, and hence the apostle quotes them in this sense, *He gave gifts to men*.

This Hebrew phrase may be rendered either, "Thou hast received gifts in the human nature, "or, "Thou hast received gifts for the sake of man" (see Ge 18:28 2Ki 14:6). The apostle uses the words in the sense of the *purpose* for which the gifts were received, and there is no contradiction between the psalmist and the apostle. Thus, the difficulties of this quotation vanish when we examine them closely, and the Old and New Testaments are in complete harmony. Rosenmueller expounds Psalm 18, and never mentions the name of Christ; and the neologists in general see no Messiah in the Old Testament. To these, indeed, Eph 4:8, if they had any modesty, would present a formidable obstacle. Paul asserts the Psalm belongs to Christ, and they assert he is mistaken, and that he has perverted (De Wette) and destroyed its meaning. They assert that *Lamarom*, "on high, "means the heights of Mount Zion, and Paul says it means heaven. Which is right? (see the scriptural usage of the word, Ps 7:7 18:16 93:4 102:19 Jer 25:30 Isa 37:23). These passages connect the word with the heavenly mansions, and justify the application of the apostle. *William Graham, in "Lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians."*

**Verse 18.** No sooner is Christ inaugurated in his throne, but he scatters his coin, and gives gifts. He gives gifts, or the gift of gifts, the gift of the Holy Ghost. "If thou knewest the gift of God, " said Christ to the Samaritan woman (Joh 4:10): that gift was the water of life, and that water of life was the Spirit, as John, who knew best his mind, gave the interpretation, "This spake he of the Spirit." Joh 7:39. O my soul, consider of this princely gift of Christ! Such a gift was never before, but when God gave his Son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son; "and Christ so loved the world, that he gave his Spirit. But, O my soul, consider especially to whom this Spirit was given; the application of the gift is the very soul of thy meditation: "unto us a Son is given, "saith the prophet (Isa 9:6); and "unto us the Holy Ghost is given, " saith the apostle (Ro 5:5); and yet above all consider the reasons of this gift in reference to thyself. Was it not to make thee a temple and receptacle of the Holy Ghost? Stand a while on this! Admire, O my soul, at the condescending, glorious, and unspeakable love of Christ in this! It was infinite love to come down into our nature when he was incarnate; but this is more, to come down into thy heart by his Holy Spirit: he came near to us then, but as if that were not near enough, he comes nearer now, for now he unites himself unto thy person, now he comes and dwells in thy soul by his Holy Spirit. *Isaac Ambrose. 1592-1674.*

**Verse 18.** *Thou hast received gifts for men.* The glorious ascending of God from Mount Sinai, after the giving of the law, was a representation of his "ascending up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, "as Eph 4:10. And, as God then "led captivity captive" in the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who had long held his people in captivity and under cruel bondage; so dealt the Lord Christ now in the destruction and captivity of Satan and all his powers (Col 2:15); only, whereas it is said in the Psalm that he "received gifts for men, "here (Eph 4:8) it is said that "he gave gifts to men, "wherein no small mystery is couched; for, although Christ is God, and is so gloriously represented in

the Psalm, yet an intimation is given that he should act what is here mentioned in a condition wherein he was capable to receive from another, as he did in this matter. Ac 2:33. And so the phrase in the original doth more than insinuate: Mdab twgtm txql "Thou hast received gifts in Adam, "—in the man, of human nature. And signifies as well to *give* as to *receive*, especially when anything is received to be given. Christ received this gift in the human nature to give it unto others. Now, to what end is this glorious theatre, as it were, prepared, and all this preparation made, all men being called to the preparation of it? It was to set out the greatness of the gift he would bestow, and the glory of the work which he would effect; and this was to furnish the church with ministers, and ministers with gifts for the discharge of their office and duty. And it will one day appear that there is more glory, more excellency, in giving one poor minister unto a congregation, by furnishing him with spiritual gifts for the discharge of his duty, than in the pompous instalment of a thousand popes, cardinals, or metropolitans. The worst of men, in the observance of a few outward rites and ceremonies, can do the latter; Christ only can do the former, and that as he is ascended up on high to that purpose. *John Owen.*

**Verse 18.** As the passage which we have now been considering is applied by Paul in a more spiritual sense to Christ (Eph 4:8), it may be necessary to show how this agrees with the meaning and scope of the psalmist. It may be laid down as an incontrovertible truth, that David, in reigning over God's ancient people, shadowed forth the beginning of Christ's eternal kingdom. This must appear evident to every one who remembers the promise made to him of a never failing succession, and which received its verification in the person of Christ. As God illustrated his power in David, by exalting him with the view of delivering his people, so has he magnified his name in his only begotten Son. But let us consider more particularly how the parallel holds. Christ, before he was exalted, emptied himself of his glory, having not merely assumed the form of a servant, but humbled himself to the death of the cross. To show how exactly the figure was fulfilled, Paul notices, that what David had foretold was accomplished in the person of Christ, by his being cast down to the lowest parts of the earth in the reproach and ignominy to which he was subjected, before he ascended to the right hand of his Father. Ps 22:7. That in thinking upon the ascension, we might not confine our views to the body of Christ, our attention is called to the result and fruit of it, in his subjecting heaven and earth to his government. Those who were formerly his inveterate enemies he compelled to submission and made tributary; this being the effect of the word of the Gospel, to lead men to renounce their pride and their obstinacy, to bring down every high thought which exalteth itself, and reduce the senses and the affections of men to obedience unto Christ. As to the devils and reprobate men who are instigated to rebellion and revolt by obstinate malice, he holds them bound by secret control, and prevents them from executing intended destruction. So far the parallel is complete. Nor, when Paul speaks of Christ having *given gifts to men*, is there any real inconsistency with what is here stated, although he has

altered the words, having followed the Greek version in accommodation to the unlearned reader. It was not himself that God enriched with the spoils of the enemy, but his people; and neither did Christ seek, or need to seek, his advancement, but made his enemies tributary, that he might adorn his Church with the spoil. From the close union subsisting between the head and the members, to say that God manifest in the flesh received gifts from the captives, is one and the same thing with saying that he distributed them to his Church. What is said in the close of the verse is no less applicable to Christ; that he obtained his victories that as God he might dwell among us. Although he departed, it was not that he might remove to a distance from us, but, as Paul says, "that he might fill all things." Eph 4:10. By his ascension to heaven, the glory of his divinity has been only more illustriously displayed; and, though no longer present with us in the flesh, our souls receive spiritual nourishment from his body and blood, and we find, notwithstanding distance of place, that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 18.** *Thou hast received gifts for men.* Hebrew Mdak, *in man*; "*in human nature*", says Dr. Adam Clarke, "and God, manifest in human flesh, dwells among mortals." "The gifts which Jesus Christ distributes *to man* he has received *in man*, in and by virtue of his *incarnation*, and it is in consequence of his being made man that it may be said, 'the Lord God dwells among them; 'for Jesus was called *Immanuel*, 'God with us, 'in consequence of his incarnation." *Editors note to Calvin in loc.*

**Verse 18.** *Yea, for the rebellious also.* I feared, also, that this was the mark that the Lord did set on Cain, even continual fear and trembling under the heavy load of guilt that he had charged upon him for the blood of his brother Abel. Thus did I wind and twine and shrink under the burden that was upon me, which burden also did so oppress me, that I could neither stand, nor go, nor lie, either at rest or quiet. Yet that saying would sometimes come to my mind, He hath received gifts for the rebellious. Ps 68:18. "The rebellious, "thought I; why, surely, they are such as once were under subjection to their prince, even those who, after they have sworn subjection to his government, have taken up arms against him; and this, thought I, is my very condition; once I loved him, feared him, served him; but now I am a rebel; I have sold him. I have said, let him go if he will; but yet he has gifts for rebels, and then why not for me? *John Bunyan, in "Grace Abounding."*

**Verse 18.** (*last clause*). Thou didst not regard their former disobedience, but, even although seeing them contradicting, thou didst continue to do them good, until thou madest them *thine own abode* oikhthron. *Theodoret.*

**Verse 18.** (*last clause*). The Chaldee has, "Upon the rebellious, who become proselytes and return by repentance, the shechinah of the glory of the Lord God dwelleth."

**Verse 19.** *Blessed be the Lord*, etc. I think the sweet singer of Israel seems to raise his note to the emulation of the choir of heaven in the melody of their *Allelujahs*; yea, let me say, now that he sings

above in that blessed consort of glorious spirits, his ditty cannot be better than this that he sang here upon earth, and wherein we are about to bear our parts at this time. Prepare, I beseech you, both your ears for David's song, and your hearts and tongues for your own. And first, in this angelic strain your thoughts cannot but observe the descant and the ground. The descant of gratulation, *Blessed be the Lord*, wherein is both applause and excitation; an applause given to God's goodness, and an excitation of others to give that applause. The ground is a threefold respect. Of what God is in himself, *God and Lord*; of what God is and doth to us, *which loadeth us daily with benefits*; of what he is both in himself and to us, *the God of our salvation*; which last (like to some rich stone) is set off with a dark foil: *To God the Lord belong the issues from death*. So, in the first for his own sake, in the second for our sakes, in the third for his own and ours; as God, as Lord, as a benefactor; as a Saviour and deliverer. *Blessed be the Lord*. It is not hard to observe that David's *Allelujahs* are more than his *Hosannas*, his thanks more than his suits. Ofttimes doth he praise God when he begs nothing; seldom ever doth he beg that favour, for which he doth not raise up his soul to an anticipation of thanks; neither is this any other than the universal under song of all his heavenly ditties, *Blessed be the Lord*. Praises (as our former translation hath it) is too low; honour is more than praise; blessing is more than honour. Neither is it for nothing that from this word *Krb*, *to bless*, is derived *Krb*, *the knee*, which is bowed in blessing; and the crier before *Joseph* proclaimed *Abrech*, calling for the honour of the knee from all beholders. Ge 41:43. Every slight, trivial acknowledgment of worth is a praise; blessing is in a higher strain of gratitude, that carries the whole sway of the heart with it in a kind of divine rapture. Praise is a matter of compliment; blessing of devotion. The apostle's rule is, *that the less is blessed of the greater*, *Abraham* of the King of Salem, the prophet's charge is, *that the greater should be blessed of the less*, yea, the greatest of the least, God of man. This agrees well; blessing is an act that will bear reciprocation; God blesseth man imperatively; man blesseth God optatively. God blesseth man in the acts of mercy; man blesseth God in the notions, in the expressions of thanks. God blesses man when he makes him good and happy; man blesseth God when he confesseth how good, how gracious, how glorious he is; so as the blessing is wholly taken up in agnation, (acknowledgment), in celebration: in the one we acknowledge the bounty of God to us; in the other we magnify him vocally, really, for that bounty. O see, then, what high account God makes of the affections and actions that his poor, silly, earth creeping creatures; that he gives us in them power to bless himself, and takes it as an honour to be blessed of us. *David* wonders that God should so vouchsafe to bless man; how much more must we needs wonder at the mercy of God, that will vouchsafe to be blessed by man, a worm, an atom, a nothing? Yet both, *James* tells us, that *with the tongue we bless God*; and the psalmist calls for it here as a service of dear acceptance, *Blessed be the Lord*. Even we men live not (chameleon like) upon the air of thanks, nor grow the fatter for praises; how much less our Maker? O God, we know well that whatsoever men or angels do, or do

not, thou canst not but be infinitely blessed in thyself; before ever any creature was, thou didst equally enjoy thy blessed self from all eternity: what can this worthless, loose film of flesh either add to or detract from thine infiniteness? Yet thou, *that humbleth thyself to behold the things that are done in heaven and earth*, humblest thyself also to accept the weak breath of our praises, that are sent up to thee from earth to heaven. How should this encourage the vows, the endeavours of our hearty thankfulness, to see them graciously taken? If men would take up with good words, with good desires, and quit our bonds for thanks, who would be a debtor? With the God of Mercy this cheap payment is current. If he, then, will honour us so far as to be blessed of us, Oh let us honour him so far as to bless him. *Joseph Hall, in "A Sermon of Public Thanksgiving for the Wonderful Mitigation of the late Mortality."* 1625.

**Verse 19.** *Blessed be the Lord.* It is not a little remarkable to see the saints so burdened and overcharged with the duty of singing his praise, that,

1. They are forced to come off with an excess of praise, and offer to praise him and even leave it, as it were, as they found it, and say no more, lest they should spill his praises; but, as Re 5:12, "Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory and honour, "though I be not worthy or able to give it to him.

2. That they speak broken language and half sentences in their songs, when they are deeply loaden with the deep sense of his love, as *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits*; there is no more in the original but *Blessed be the Lord, that loadeth us.* *John Spalding, in "Synaxis Sacra."* 1703.

**Verse 19.** *Who daily loadeth us with benefits.* Though some may have more than others, yet every one hath his load, as much as he can carry. Every vessel cannot bear up with the like sail, and therefore God, to keep us from oversetting, puts on so much as will safest bring us to heaven, our desired port. *Ezekiel Hopkins.*

**Verse 19.** *Who daily loadeth us with benefits.* Such is man's self love that no inward worth can so attract his praises as outward beneficence. While thou makest much of thyself, every one shall speak well of thee; how much more while thou makest much of them! Here God hath met with us also. Not to perplex you with scanning the variety of senses wherewith I have observed this Psalm, above all other of David's, to abound; see here, I beseech you, a fourfold gradation of divine bounty. First, here are *benefits*. The word is not expressed in the original, but necessarily implied in the sense: for there are but three loads whereof man is capable from God, favours, precepts, punishments, the other two are out of the road of gratulation. When we might therefore have expected judgments, behold *benefits*. And those, secondly, not sparingly hand fulled out to us, but dealt to us by the whole load: *loaded with benefits*. Whom, thirdly, doth he load but *us*? Not worthy and well deserving subjects, but *us*, Myrrwm, *rebels*. And, lastly, this he doth, not at one dole and no more (as even churls' rare feasts use to be plentiful), but Mwy Mwy successively, unweariedly, perpetually. One favour were too much,

here are *benefits*; a sprinkling were too much, here is a *load*; once were too oft, here is *daily* enlarging, (largeness, bounty). Cast your eyes, therefore, a little upon this threefold exaggeration of beneficence; the measure, *a load of benefits*; the subject, unworthy *us*; the time, *daily*. *Who daily loadeth us with benefits*. Where shall we begin to survey this vast load of mercies? Were it no more, but that he hath given us a world to live in, a life to enjoy, air to breathe in, earth to tread on, fire to warm us, water to cool and cleanse us, clothes to cover us, food to nourish us, sleep to refresh us, houses to shelter us, variety of creatures to serve and delight us; here were a just load. But now, if we yet add to these, civility of breeding, dearness of friends, competency of estate, degrees of honour, honesty or dignity of vocation, favour of princes, success in employments, domestic comforts, outward peace, good reputation, preservation from dangers, rescue from evils; the load is well mended. If yet, ye shall come closer, and add due proportion of body, integrity of parts, perfection of senses, strength of nature, mediocrity of health, sufficiency of appetite, vigour of digestion, wholesome temper of seasons, freedom from cares; this course must needs heighten it yet more. If still ye shall add to these, the order, and power, and exercise of our inward faculties, enriched with wisdom, art, learning, experience, expressed by a handsome elocution, and shall now lay all these together that concern estate, body, mind; how can the axle tree of the soul but crack under the load of these favours? But, if from what God hath done for us as men, we look to what he hath done for us as Christians; that he enlivened us by his Spirit, fed us by his word and sacraments, clothed us with his merits, bought us with his blood, becoming vile to make us glorious, a curse, to invest us with blessedness; in a word, that he hath given himself to us, his Son for us; *Oh the height, and depth, and breadth* of the rich mercies of our God! Oh the boundless, topless, bottomless, load of divine benefits, whose immensity reaches from the centre of this earth, to the unlimited extent of the very imperial heavens! "*Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he hath done for the children of men.*" Joseph Hall.

**Verse 20.** *Our God is the God of salvation* (that is of deliverance, of outward deliverance); *and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death*, or the goings out from death; that is, God hath all ways that lead out from death in his own keeping, he keepeth the key of the door that lets us out from death. When a man is in the valley of the shadow of death, where shall he issue out? Where shall he have a passage? Nowhere, saith man, he shall not escape. But God keepeth all the passages; when men think they have shut us up in the jaws of death, he can open them, and deliver us. *To him belong the issues from death*; it is an allusion to one that keepeth a passage or a door: and God is a faithful keeper, and a friendly keeper, who will open the door for the escape of his people, when they cry unto him. Joseph Caryl.

**Verse 20.** *And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.* Buildings stand by the benefit of their foundations that sustain them, support them; and of their buttresses that comprehend them, embrace

them; and of their contignations (a framing together; from *contigno*, to join together, or lay with beams and rafters), that knit and unite them. The foundation suffers them not to sink; the buttresses suffer them not to swerve; the contignation and knitting suffer them not to cleave. The body of our building is in the former part of this verse; it is this; He that is our God is the God of salvation; *ad salutes*, of salvations, in the plural, so it is in the original; the God that gives us spiritual and temporal salvation too. But of this building, the foundation, the buttresses, the contignation, are in this part of the verse, which constitutes our text, and in the three diverse acceptations of the words amongst our expositors, *Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death*. For, first, the foundation of this building (that our God is the God of all salvation) is laid in this, *That unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death*; that is, it is in his power to give us an issue and deliverance, even then, when we are brought to the jaws and teeth of death, and to the lips of that whirlpool, the grave; and so, in this acceptation, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio a morte*, a deliverance from death; and this is the most obvious and most ordinary acceptation of these words, and that upon which our translation lays hold: *the issues from death*. And then, secondly, the buttresses that comprehend and settle this building: that, *He that is our God is the God of salvation*, are thus raised; *Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death*, that is, the disposition and manner of our death, what kind of issue and transmigration we shall have out of this world, whether prepared or sudden, whether violent or natural, whether in our perfect senses or shaken or disordered by sickness; there is (no) condemnation to be argued out of that, no judgment to be made upon that; for howsoever they die, *precious in his sight is the death of his saints*, and with him are the issues of death, the ways of our departing out of this life are in his hands; and so in this sense of the words, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio in morte*, a deliverance in death; not that God will deliver us from dying, but that he will have a care of us in the hour of death, of what kind soever our passage be; and this sense and acceptation of the words, the natural frame and contexture doth well and pregnantly administer unto us. And then, lastly, the contignation and knitting of this building, that He that is our God, is the God of all salvation, consists in this, *Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death*, that is, that this God the Lord, having united and knit both natures in one, and being God, having also come into this world, in our flesh, he could have no other means to save us, he could have no other issue out of this world, no return to his former glory, but by death. And so in this sense, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio per mortem*, a deliverance by death, by the death of this God our Lord, Christ Jesus; and this, St. Augustine's acceptation of the words, and those many and great persons that have adhered to him. In all these three lines then, we shall look upon these words, first as the God of power, the Almighty Father, rescues his servants from the jaws of death; and then, as the God of mercy, the glorious Son rescues us by taking upon himself the issue of death; and then (between these two), as the God of comfort, the Holy Ghost rescues us from all discomfort, by his blessed impressions before; that what



manner of death soever be ordained for us, yet this *exitus mortis* shall be *introitus in vitam*, our issue in death shall be an entrance into everlasting life. And these three considerations, our deliverance *a morte, in morte, per mortem*, from death, in death, and by death, will abundantly do all the offices of the foundation, of the buttresses, of the contignation of this our building, that *He that is our God is the God of salvation*, because *Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death*. *John Donne*.

**Verse 20.** *The issues from death*. That is, the issue, or escape, from death, both in the resurrection and in the various perils of our present life. *Thomas Le Blanc*.

**Verse 20.** *Issue from death*. The English version cannot be sustained by the Hebrew; for *I* has never the force of *from*, and, therefore, the expression, as Dr. Hammond observes, must signify the several plagues and judgments inflicted by God on impenitent enemies—such as drowning in the sea, killing by the sword, etc.; which were the ways of punishing and destroying the Egyptians and Canaanites. Thus the two members of the verse are "antithetical" the first speaks of God as a deliverer, and the second as a punisher; and in this respect the verse corresponds with the preceding. *George Phillips*, in "*The Psalms... with a Critical, Exegetical, and Philological Commentary*." 1846.

**Verse 21.** *The hairy scalp*. That is, even the most fearful enemies, that with their ghastly visage, deformed with long hair, would strike a terror into the hearts of beholders. *Edward Leigh*.

**Verse 21.** *Hairy scalp*. It was a practice among some of the ancient inhabitants of Arabia to allow their hair to grow luxuriantly on the *top of the head*, and to shave the head in other parts. *Francis Hare*. 1740.

**Verse 22.** *I will bring the enemy*. Both the preceding and following verse prove that this is the sense, and not as many interpreters supply, *my people*. Bashan was east of Judaea, and the sea on the west; so that the meaning is, that God would bring his enemies from every quarter to be slain by his people. *Benjamin Boothroyd*.

**Verse 23.** *That thy foot may be dipped*, etc. The blood of thy enemies, shed in such abundance that thy dogs shall lap and drink it, shall be the sea in which thou shalt pass, and that red without a figure. And, proportionably shall be the destruction on the enemies of Christ and Christians in the age of the Messiah. *Henry Hammond*.

**Verse 26-28.** This Psalm was sung, it is probable, on the removal of the ark into the City of David. Numbers 10. It was now that the ark had rest, and the tribes assembled three times a year at Jerusalem, the place that God had chosen. The text is a lively description of their worship.

1. Offer a few remarks by way of expounding the passage.

(a) Israel had their lesser congregations in ordinary every Sabbath day, and their national ones three times a year. Their business in all was *to bless God*.

(b) This business was to be carried on by *all Israel*, beginning at the fountain head, and proceeding through all its streams. God had blessed Israel; let Israel bless God.

(c) All the tribes are supposed to be present; four are mentioned in the name of the whole, as inhabiting the confines of the land. Their union was a source of joy; they had been divided by civil wars, but now they are met together.

(d) Those tribes which are named had each something particular attending it. Little Benjamin (see Judges 21) had nearly been a tribe lacking in Israel, but now appears with its ruler. Judah had been at war with Benjamin: Saul was a Benjamite; David was of Judah: yet they happily lost their antipathy in the worship of God. Zebulun and Naphtali were distant tribes; yet they were there! dark, too, yet there.

(e) The princes and the people were all together.

(f) They were supposed to be strong, but were reminded that what they had of strength was of God's commanding. Their union and success, as well as that degree of righteousness among them which exalted the nation, was of God. They are not so strong, but that they need strengthening, and are directed to pray as well as praise: *Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*

2. Apply the subject. Two things are here exemplified, namely—diligence and brotherly union; and three things recommended, namely—united praise; united acknowledgment that, for what they are, they are indebted to God; and united prayer for future mercies. Each of these affords a rule for us.

(a) The worship of God must be attended with *diligence*. There are the princes of Zebulun and Naphtali. They had to travel about two hundred miles three times a year, thither and back again; that is, twelve hundred in a year, twenty-four miles a week. Those who neglect the worship of God for little difficulties show that their heart is not in it, and when they do attend cannot expect to profit: "they have snuffed at it." Those whose hearts are in it often reap great advantage. God blessed the Israelites in their journeys, as well as when there (Ps 84:6): "The rain filleth the pools; "and so the Christians. There is a peculiar promise to those that seek him *early*.

(b) The worship of God must be attended to with *brotherly love*. All the tribes must go up together. It is a kind law that enjoins *social* worship; we need each other to stimulate. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." God has made us so that we shall be greatly influenced by each other, both to good and evil. It greatly concerns us to cultivate such a spirit. To this end we must cherish an affectionate behaviour in our common intercourse—bear, forbear, and forgive; and, whatever differences we may have, not suffer them to hinder our worship. The tribes, as we have seen, had their differences; yet they were there. When all Israel met at Hebron to anoint David king, what should we have said if some had kept away because others went?

(c) Our business, when assembled, must be to *bless God* in our congregations; and a pleasant work this is. Israel had reasons, and good reasons, and Christians more. Thank him for his unspeakable gift; bless him for the means of grace, and the hopes of glory. Bless him; he "healeth all thy diseases, "etc. Psalm 103. This is an employment that fits for heaven. The tears of a mourner in God's house

were supposed to defile his altar. We may mourn for *sin*; but a fretful spirit, discontented and unthankful, defiles God's altar still.

(d) Another part of our business is to unite in acknowledging that whatever we are, we owe it to God alone; "Thy God hath commanded thy strength." We possess a degree of strength both individually and socially. Art thou strong in faith, in hope, in zeal? It is in him thou art strong. Are we strong as a society? It is God that increaseth us with men like a flock; it is he that keeps us in union, gives us success, etc.

(e) Another part of our business must be to unite in prayer for future mercies. We are not so strong, either as individuals or societies, but that there is room for increase; and this is the proper object of prayer. God has wrought a great work for us in regeneration. God has wrought much for us as a church in giving us increase, respect, and room in the earth. Pray that each may be increased; or, in the words of the text: *Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us*. Are there none who are strangers to all this? *Andrew Fuller*.

**Verse 27.** *Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, Naphtali*. The two royal tribes,

1. That of Benjamin, from which the first king sprang;
2. That of Judah, from which the second; and the two learned tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali. And we may note, that the kingdom of the Messiah should at length be submitted to by all the potentates and learned men in the world. *Henry Hammond*.

**Verse 27.** *Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, Naphtali*. The same tribes are prominent in the New Testament, as foremost in the battle of the church against the world. Paul, the "least" of the apostles (1Co 15:8-10), was by origin Saul of Benjamin (Php 3:5). Christ, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," James and John, the brothers, the other James, Thaddaeus, and Simon, were from Judah, and the other apostles were from Nephthalim and Zabulon, or Galilee (Mt 4:13). *A. R. Fausset*.

**Verse 27.** *Their ruler*. The *prince* of that tribe. The Greek version saith, *in a trance*; taking the Hebrew *Mdr* to be of *Mdr*, though it be not found elsewhere in this form; yet rare words but once used are sundry times found in this and other Psalms. These things applied to Christ's times and after are very mystical. *Benjamin*, the least, is put here *first*; so in the heavenly Jerusalem, the *first foundation is a jasper* (Re 21:19), which was the *last* precious stone in Aaron's breastplate, on which *Benjamin's* name was graven (Ex 28:10,20-21). In this tribe *Paul* excelled as a prince of God, though one of the least of the apostles (1Co 15:8-10), who was converted in a *trance* or *ecstasy* (Ac 9:3-4, etc.); and in ecstasies he and other apostles saw the mysteries of Christ's kingdom. *Henry Ainsworth*.

**Verse 27.** *Their council*; or, *their stone*, the Messiah, that sprang from Judah, Ge 49:24 Ps 118:22. *John Gill*.

**Verse 27-28.** There are all the twelve tribes of Israel with their rulers present, to conduct the ark of God to the hill, in which it pleaseth him to dwell; for, though all the tribes are not mentioned, these

which are named, include the whole, since Zebulun and Naphtali are the most remote, and Judah and Benjamin the nearest tribes to Zion. Benjamin was a dwindled family through the signal depopulation of that tribe, from which it never entirely recovered. Jud 20:43-48 1Ch 12:29. *Edward Garrard Marsh, in "The Book of Psalms translated into English Verse... with Practical and Explanatory Notes."* 1832.

**Verse 28.** *Thy God hath commanded thy strength.* Singularly appropriate to the occasion for which they were composed are these stimulating words. The ark of God had during several years been kept in private houses. David had pitched a tent for its reception, and intended providing a better shrine; he would deposit the ark in the temporary sanctuary, and he gathers thirty thousand chosen men of Israel, and with these and with a multitude of the people he proceeds to the house in which the ark had been kept. The people *can* render the service of song, so "David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals" (2Sa 6:5). The breach of Uzzah delayed the restoration of the ark three months; but David returned to the work, and with gladness, with burnt offerings and peace offerings, with feasting, dancing, and the sound of a trumpet, he brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place in the tabernacle he had pitched for it. David *can* provide a sacred place for the ark of his God, and his "God has commanded his strength." Thirty thousand chosen men *can* attend on this occasion, and a multitude besides. Then, why should they tarry at home? The occasion is worthy of their presence, and their "God has commanded their strength." There are sweet singers and skilful players in Israel, and why should they be silent. The occasion calls for praise, and their "God has commanded their strength." There are cattle upon the thousand hills of Canaan, and shall no sacrifice be brought? The occasion demands oblations, and Israel's "God has commanded their strength." There is a mountain in Canaan, beautiful for situation, and rich in historic association. God's ark *can* be brought to this mountain, and if it can be, it ought to be, for Israel's God has commanded Israel's strength. There are twelve tribes in Israel which may unite in bringing up God's ark, then let none hold back, for their "God has commanded their strength." *Thy strength* is thy best—all that is within thee; all that thou canst do, and be, and become; and all that thou hast—the two mites, if these be all, and the alabaster box of spikenard, very costly, if this be thy possession... By that which God is in himself, by that which God is to us, by law on the heart, and by law oral and written, by the new kingdom of his love, and by all his benefits, *Thy God commands thy strength.* He speaks from the beginning, and from the end of time, from the midst of chaos, and from the new heavens and new earth, from Bethel and from Gethsemane, from Sinai and from Calvary, and he saith to us all, "My son, give me thine heart, " consecrate to me thy best, and devote to me thy strength. *Samuel Martin.*

**Verse 30.** *Rebuke the wild beasts of the reeds.* This is our marginal version, which is the proper one.

Most modern critics consider that the lion is here intended, which frequently makes its den among reeds or brush wood. Innumerable lions wander about among the reeds and copses, on the borders of the rivers of Mesopotamia. The river Jordan was infested with them (Jer 4:7 49:19). Hence, the wild beasts of the reed may signify the Syrian kings, who often contended with David. *Benjamin Boothroyd*.

**Verse 30.** The idolatrous king of Egypt is here enigmatically represented as dwelling, like the crocodile, among the reeds of the Nile; and with him are introduced the *bulls* and *calves*, who were the gods of the people of Egypt, before whom they were ever dancing in their superstitious revels. "Quell these insults upon thy majesty, nor put down only the superstition of Egypt, but all their pomp of war also, that the Gentiles may be converted unto thee, and the idols be utterly abolished." *Edward Garrard Marsh*.

**Verse 30.** When the enemies of God rise up against his church, it is time for the church to fall down to God, to implore his aid against those enemies. Holy prayers are more powerful than profane swords. *Thomas Wall, in "A Comment on the Times." 1657.*

**Verse 30.** These words contain, first, a declaration of God's enemies; secondly, an imprecation against those enemies. The enemies are marshalled into four ranks.

1. A company of spearmen, or (as some translations read it) the beast of the reeds.
2. The multitude of the bulls.
3. The calves of the people.
4. The men that delight in war.

The imprecation is also twofold; the first more gentle; it is but *rebuke the spearmen*; and that with limitation too—*till they submit themselves with pieces of silver*. For they that will not, but delight in war, more severely deal with such: *Scatter them; Scatter the men that delight in war....* The church of God never wanted enemies, never will. "There is no peace to the wicked," saith God: there shall be no peace to the godly, say the wicked. The wicked shall have no peace which God can give; the godly shall have no peace which the wicked can take away. *Thomas Wall*.

**Verse 30.**

1. Scrupulosity.
2. Envy.
3. Ignorance.
4. Ambition or pride.

Upon which these four beasts in the text do act their enmity against the church; scrupulosity sets forth unto us the beast of the reeds; envy, the bulls; ignorance, the calves; and pride, the men *that delight in war*. *Thomas Wall*.

This instance of spiritualising may act rather as a beacon than as an example. The author was an

able divine, but in this sermon gives more play to his imagination than his common sense.

**Verse 31.** *Ethiopia.* It is a matter of fact, familiar to the learned reader, that the names *Ethiopia*, and "*Ethiopians*, " are frequently substituted in our English version of the Old Testament, where the Hebrew preserves the proper name, "Cush." And the name, "Cush, "when so applied in Scripture, belongs uniformly not to the African, but to the Asiatic, Ethiopia, or Arabia. *Charles Forster, in "The Historical Geography of Arabia."*

**Verse 33.** *And that a mighty voice; or a voice of strength;* a strong and powerful voice, such as the gospel is, when accompanied with the power and Spirit of God. It is a soul shaking and awakening voice; it is a heart melting and a heart breaking one; it is a quickening and an enlightening voice; it quickens dead sinners, gives life unto them, and the entrance of it gives light to dark minds; it is a soul charming and alluring one; it draws to Christ, engages the affections to him, and fills with unspeakable delight and pleasure. *John Gill.*

**Verse 33.** *To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens.* He who manages the heavens, directing their course and influence. He formed every orb, ascertained its motion, proportioned its solid contents to the orbit in which it was to revolve, and to the other bodies of the same system; and as an able rider manages his horse, so does God the sun, moon, planets, and all the host of heaven. *W. Greenfield, in Comprehensive Bible.*

**Verse 33.** The praises of the church are sung to him, who, after his sufferings here below, reascended to take possession of his ancient throne, high above all heavens; who, from thence, speaketh to the world by his glorious gospel, mighty and powerful, as thunder, in its effects upon the hearts of men (see Psalm 29 throughout). The power of Christ's voice, when he was on earth, appeared by the effects which followed, when he said, "Young man, arise:" "Lazarus, come forth:" "Peace, be still; "and it will yet further appear, when "all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth." *George Horne.*

**Verse 34.** *His strength is in the clouds.* This refers to the phenomena of thunder and lightning; for all nations have observed that the electric fluid is an irresistible agent—destroying life, tearing towers and castles to pieces, rending the strongest oaks, and cleaving the most solid rocks; and the most enlightened nations have justly considered it as an especial manifestation of the power and sovereignty of God. *W. Greenfield, in Comprehensive Bible.*

---

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

##### **Verses 1-2.**

First. The church of God ever had, and will have, enemies and haters; for against these doth the psalmist arm himself and the church with this prayer.

Secondly. The church's enemies are God's enemies; they that hate the church, hate God. *Thine*

enemies, them that hate thee.

Thirdly. God sometimes seems to sleep or lie still, and let these enemies and haters do what they will for a season, This, also, is implied: he to whom we say, *Arise* is either asleep or lies still.

Fourthly. There is a time when God will arise.

Fifthly. God's rising time is the enemies' scattering time, his hater's flying time.

Sixthly. It is the duty of God's people to pray him up when he seems to be down, and to exalt him in their praises when he doth arise to their rescue and redemption; for these words are both a prayer and a triumph as they are used both by Moses and David. Thomas Case, in a Fast Sermon, preached before the House of Commons, *entitled, "God's Rising, his Enemies' Scattering."* 1644.

**Verses 1-3.** Prayer for the Second Advent. *A. Macaul.*

**Verse 4.**

1. The name that inspires the song: *Jah.*

(a) Self existent.

(b) Immutable.

(c) Eternal.

2. The song inspired by that name.

(a) Of exultation.

(b) Of confidence.

(c) Of joy. *G. R.*

**Verse 5.** The claims of widows and orphans upon the church of God, from God's relation to them and his indwelling in the church.

**Verse 6.** Comparison of churches to families. See extract from *Dr. Gill.*

**Verse 6.**

1. Two curable evils: "solitary", "bound with chains."

2. Two rich blessings: "set in families, ""bringeth out."

3. One monster evil, and its miserable consequences.

**Verses 7-8.**

1. God has his seasons for delivering his people from their troubles: *When thou,* etc.

2. His deliverance is complete: *The earth shook,* etc.; all things gave way before him.

3. The deliverance is greater for the delay.

(a) It is so in itself.

(b) It is more prized: as in the case of Job, Abraham, Israel at the Red Sea, Daniel, his three companions, etc. *G. R.*

**Verses 7-9.**

1. The presence of God in his church.

- (a) His preeminence: "before."
- (b) As covenant God of Israel.
- (c) As active and making active.
- (d) His rule within: they follow.
- (e) His design without: marching for war.

2. The blessed consequences.

- (a) The most stolid shake.
- (b) The lofty bow.
- (c) Difficulties removed: "Sinai."
- (d) Blessings plenteous.
- (e) Church revived.

**Verse 9.**

1. God's mercy compared to a shower.

- (a) It is direct from heaven; not through priests.
- (b) It is pure and unmixed.
- (c) No one has a monopoly of it.
- (d) There is no substitute for it.
- (e) It is sovereignly dispensed, as to (1) time; (2) place; (3) manner; and (4) measure.
- (f) It works efficiently. Isa 55:10.
- (g) Prayer can get it.

2. There are seasons when these showers fall.

- (a) In the house of God.
- (b) In the means of grace.
- (c) In prayer.
- (d) In affliction.
- (e) When saints are weary (1) through working; (2) through sickness; (3) through non success.
- (f) By the Holy Spirit refreshing the heart.

3. These showers are meant to "confirm God's people."

4. They are wanted *now*.

**Verse 9.**

1. The church is God's inheritance.

- (a) Chosen.
- (b) Purchased.
- (c) Acquired.

2. Though his inheritance, at times it may be weary.



3. When weary, it will be refreshed by him. *G. R.*

**Verse 10.** (*second clause*). Special goodness, for a special people, specially prepared.

**Verse 10.** (*second clause*). It is spoken in reference to the *poor*, because,

1. They are the larger mass of mankind; and, whatever pride may think, in the eye of reason, policy, and revelation, by far the most important, useful, and necessary part.

2. They would be more peculiarly affected by deficiency.

3. To encourage those in humble and trying life to depend upon him.

4. To enforce our attention to them from the divine example. *W. Jay.*

**Verse 11.** The divinity of the gospel; the divers ways and agents for its publication.

**Verses 11-12.**

1. The word given: "The Lord." etc.

2. The word proclaimed: "Great, "etc.

3. The word obeyed: "Kings, "etc. Thus it was in Old Testament times, when to Joshua, to Gideon, to David, etc., the Lord gave the word, and it ran through the hosts, and "kings of armies, "etc. Thus it was in apostolic times, when the word of reconciliation was given. Thus it is still, and will be more signally than ever hereafter. *G. R.*

**Verse 12.** (*last clause*). The church in redemption as a spouse tarrying at home; her home duties; the spoil of her Lord's glorious and finished work, and her dividing it.

**Verse 13.**

1. The contrast.

(a) Instead of humiliation, exaltation.

(b) Instead of pollution, purity.

(c) Instead of inertness, activity.

(d) Instead of deformity, beauty.

2. Its application.

(a) To penitence and pardon.

(b) To depravity and regeneration.

(c) To affliction and recovery.

(d) To desertion and consolation.

(e) To death and glory. *G. R.*

**Verse 14.**

1. Where earth's greatest battles are fought. "Scattered, ""in it, "*i.e.*, in Zion. "There brake he, "etc.

2. By whom? The Almighty.

3. When? In answer to his people's faith and prayer.

4. How?

- (a) Without noise, gently: as the fall of snow.
- (b) Without human aid: as untrodden snow.
- (c) Without violence: "All bloodless lay the untrodden snow." *G. R.*

**Verse 15-16.**

- 1. The superiority of the hill of Zion.
  - (a) In fertility, to the hill of Bashan; to earthly pleasures.
  - (b) In glory, to other hills; to human heights of learning and power.
- 2. The reason of that superiority.
  - (a) The place of God's choice.
  - (b) Of his delight
  - (c) Of his abode.
  - (d) Of his continuance for ever. *G. R.*

**Verse 16.**

- 1. The church the dwelling place of God.
  - (a) Elected of old.
  - (b) Favoured for ever.
  - (c) Affording rest, etc., as a home for God.
  - (d) Receiving honour, etc., for herself.
- 2. The church, therefore, envied by others.
  - (a) They feel their own greatness outdone.
  - (b) They leap with rage.
  - (c) They are unreasonable in so doing.

**Verses 17-18.**

- 1. The comparison between Zion and Sinai.
  - (a) The same Lord is there: "The Lord is among, "etc.
  - (b) The same attendants: "The chariots," etc.
- 2. The contrast.
  - (a) God descended at Sinai, ascended from near Zion.
  - (b) Put a yoke upon them at Sinai, leads captivity captive at Zion.
  - (c) At Sinai demanded obedience, in Zion bestows gifts.
  - (d) In Sinai spoke terror, in Zion receives gifts for the rebellious.
  - (e) In Sinai appeared for a short season, in Zion dwells for ever. *G. R.*

**Verse 18.**

- 1. Christ's *ascension*.
- 2. His *victories*.

3. The *gifts* he received for men; and
4. The great *end* for which he bestows them. *John Newton*.

**Verse 18.** *That the Lord God might dwell among them.* It is ground for devout wonder that God should dwell among men, when we contemplate his *immensity, loftiness, independence, holiness, and sovereignty*; yet he does so—

1. In the coming of Christ into the world.
2. In the residence of his Spirit in the heart.
3. In the presence of God in his churches.

—*William Staughton, D.D. 1770-1829.*

**Verse 19.**

1. The load of benefits.
2. The load of obligation.
3. The load of praise due in return.

**Verse 19.**

1. Salvation is not to be forgotten in the midst of daily mercies.
2. Daily mercies are not to be forgotten in the enjoyment of salvation. *G. R.*

**Verse 20.** Death in God's hand.

1. Escapes from it.
2. Entrances to it.
3. The exit out of it beyond.
4. The gate which, when closed, shuts us in it for ever.

**Verse 20.**

1. What God has been to his people.
  - (a) Their salvation.
  - (b) Their portion: "Our God."
2. What he will be: With them.
  - (a) Until death.
  - (b) In death.
  - (c) After death. *G. R.*

**Verse 21.** The power, pride, wisdom, and very life of evil, to be conquered by God.

**Verse 22.**

1. Where his people may be driven.
2. The certainty of their return.
3. The reasons for being assured of this.

**Verse 24.** *The allowable procession in the sanctuary.* The marshalled order of doctrine, the holy walk

of believers, the banners of joy, the music of devotions, the shouts to the King.

**Verse 25.** (*last clause*). Work for holy women in the church.

**Verse 27.**

1. The variety of song.

(a) The royal tribe of Benjamin in the time of Saul.

(b) The princely tribe of Judah, as David was prince regent in the time of Saul.

(c) The literary tribe of Zebulun: "Out of Zebulun" they that handle the pen of the writer.

(d) The eloquent tribe: "Naphtali giveth goodly words."

2. The harmony of song. Let all unite in praising the Lord, the fountain of Israel. "Ten thousand thousand are their tongues, "etc. *G. R.*

**Verse 30-31.**

1. Hindrances to the progress of divine truth.

(a) Idolatry. Worship of the crocodile—*beasts of the reeds*, (LXX)—of bulls and calves, as in Egypt.

(b) Covetousness.

(c) War.

2. The means for their removal. Prayer and the divine *rebuke*. *Scatter thou*, etc.

3. The consequences of this removal; Ps 68:31.

**Verse 35.**

1. Consider God's jealousy towards his people for his holiness in the three "holy places."

(a) In the outer court of profession.

(b) In the holy place of our priesthood.

(c) In the holy of holies with his Son.

2. Consider his terribleness to his foes, as inferred from those "holy places."

**Verse 35.** *Blessed be God*. A brief, but very suggestive text.

**Psalm 69**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim*. Thus for the second time we have a Psalm entitled "upon the lilies." In the forty-first they were golden lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh, and blooming in the fair gardens which skirt the ivory palaces: in this we have the lily among thorns, the lily of the valley, fair and beautiful, blooming in the garden of Gethsemane. *A Psalm of David*. If any enquire, "of whom speaketh the psalmist this? of himself, or of some other man?" we would reply, "of

himself, and of some other man." Who that other is, we need not be long in discovering; it is the Crucified alone who can say, "in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." His footprints all through this sorrowful song have been pointed out by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and therefore we believe, and are sure, that the Son of Man is here. Yet it seems to be the intention of the Spirit, while he gives us personal types, and so shows the likeness to the firstborn which exists in the heirs of salvation, to set forth the disparities between the best of the sons of men, and the Son of God, for there are verses here which we dare not apply to our Lord; we almost shudder when we see our brethren attempting to do so, as for instance Ps 69:5. Especially do we note the difference between David and the Son of David in the imprecations of the one against his enemies, and the prayers of the other for them. We commence our exposition of this Psalm with much trembling, for we feel that we are entering with our Great High Priest into the most holy place.

**DIVISION.** This Psalm consists of two portions of 18 verses each. These again may each be subdivided into three parts. Under the first head, from Ps 69:1-4, the sufferer spreads his complaint before God; then he pleads that his zeal for God is the cause of his sufferings, in Ps 69:5-12: and this encourages him to plead for help and deliverance, from Ps 69:13-18. In the second half of the Psalm he details the injurious conduct of his adversaries, from Ps 69:19-21; calls for their punishment, Ps 69:22-28, and then returns to prayer, and to a joyful anticipation of divine interposition and its results, Ps 69:29-36.

#### EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Save me, O God.* "He saved others, himself he cannot save." With strong cries and tears he offered up prayers and supplications unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared (Heb 5:7). Thus David had prayed, and here his Son and Lord utters the same cry. This is the second Psalm which begins with a "Save me, O God," and the former (Psalm 54) is but a short summary of this more lengthened complaint. It is remarkable that such a scene of woe should be presented to us immediately after the jubilant ascension hymn of the last Psalm, but this only shows how interwoven are the glories and the sorrows of our ever blessed Redeemer. The head which now is crowned with glory is the same which wore the thorns; he to whom we pray, "Save us, O God," is the selfsame person who cried, "Save me, O God." For the waters are come in unto my soul. Sorrows, deep, abounding, deadly, had penetrated his inner nature. Bodily anguish is not his first complaint; he begins not with the gall which embittered his lips, but with the mighty griefs which broke into his heart. All the sea outside a vessel is less to be feared than that which finds its way into the hold. A wounded spirit who can bear. Our Lord in this verse is seen before us as a Jonah, crying, "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul." He was doing business for us on the great waters, at his Father's command; the stormy wind was lifting up the waves thereof, and he went down

to the depths till his soul was melted because of trouble. In all this he has sympathy with us, and is able to succour us when we, like Peter, beginning to sink, cry to him, "Lord, save, or we perish."

**Verse 2.** *I sink in deep mire.* In water one might swim, but in mud and mire all struggling is hopeless; the mire sucks down its victim. Where there is no standing. Everything gave way under the Sufferer; he could not get foothold for support—this is a worse fate than drowning. Here our Lord pictures the close, clinging nature of his heart's woes. "He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy." Sin is as mire for its filthiness, and the holy soul of the Saviour must have loathed even that connection with it which was necessary for its expiation. His pure and sensitive nature seemed to sink in it, for it was not his element, he was not like us born and acclimatised to this great dismal swamp. Here our Redeemer became another Jeremiah, of whom it is recorded (Jer 38:6) that his enemies cast him into a dungeon wherein "was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." Let our hearts feel the emotions, both of contrition and gratitude, as we see in this simile the deep humiliation of our Lord. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. The sorrow gathers even greater force; he is as one cast into the sea, the waters go over his head. His sorrows were first within, then around, and now above him. Our Lord was no fainthearted sentimentalist; his were real woes, and though he bore them heroically, yet were they terrible even to him. His sufferings were unlike all others in degree, the waters were such as soaked into the soul; the mire was the mire of the abyss itself, and the floods were deep and overflowing. To us the promise is, "the rivers shall not overflow thee," but no such word of consolation was vouchsafed to him. My soul, thy Well beloved endured all this for thee. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it; and, because of this, thou hast the rich benefit of that covenant assurance, "as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." He stemmed the torrent of almighty wrath, that we might for ever rest in Jehovah's love.

**Verse 3.** *I am weary of my crying.* Not of it, but by it, with it. He had prayed till he sweat great drops of blood, and well might physical weariness intervene. My throat is dried, parched, and inflamed. Long pleading with awful fervour had scorched his throat as with flames of fire. Few, very few, of his saints follow their Lord in prayer so far as this. We are, it is to be feared, more likely to be hoarse with talking frivolities to men than by pleading with God; yet our sinful nature demands more prayer than his perfect humanity might seem to need. His prayers should shame us into fervour. Our Lord's supplications were salted with fire, they were hot with agony; and hence they weakened his system, and made him "a weary man and full of woes." Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. He wanted in his direst distress nothing more than his God; that would be all in all to him. Many of us know what watching and waiting mean; and we know something of the failing eye when hope is long deferred: but in all this Jesus bears the palm; no eyes ever failed as his did or for so deep a cause. No painter can ever depict those eyes; their pencils fail in every feature of his all but fair but all marred

countenance, but most of all do they come short when they venture to pourtray those eyes which were fountains of tears. He knew both how to pray and to watch, and he would have us learn the like. There are times when we should pray till the throat is dry, and watch till the eyes grow dim. Only thus can we have fellowship with him in his sufferings. What! can we not watch with him one hour? Does the flesh shrink back? O cruel flesh to be so tender of thyself, and so ungenerous to thy Lord!

**Verse 4.** *They that hate me.* Surprising sin that men should hate the altogether lovely one, truly is it added, without a cause, for reason there was none for this senseless enmity. He neither blasphemed God, nor injured man. As Samuel said: "Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed?" Even so might Jesus enquire. Besides, he had not only done us no evil, but he had bestowed countless and priceless benefits. Well might he demand, "For which of these works do ye stone me?" Yet from his cradle to his cross, beginning with Herod and not ending with Judas, he had foes without number; and he justly said, they are more than the hairs of mine head. Both the civilians and the military, laics and clerics, doctors and drunkards, princes and people, set themselves against the Lord's anointed. "This is the heir, let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours," was the unanimous resolve of all the keepers of the Jewish vineyard; while the Gentiles outside the walls of the garden furnished the instruments for his murder, and actually did the deed. The hosts of earth and hell, banded together, made up vast legions of antagonists, none of whom had any just ground for hating him.

They that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are *mighty*. It was bad that they were many, but worse that they were mighty. All the ecclesiastical and military powers of his country were arrayed against him. The might of the Sanhedrin, the mob, and the Roman legions were combined in one for his utter destruction: "Away with such a fellow from this earth; it is not fit that he should live," was the shout of his ferocious foes. David's adversaries were on the throne when he was hiding in caverns, and our Lord's enemies were the great ones of the earth; while he, of whom the world was not worthy, was reproached of men and despised of the people. Then I restored that which I took not away. Though innocent, he was treated as guilty. Though David had no share in plots against Saul, yet he was held accountable for them. In reference to our Lord, it may be truly said that he restores what he took not away; for he gives back to the injured honour of God a recompense, and to man his lost happiness, though the insult of the one and the fall of the other were neither of them, in any sense, his doings. Usually, when the ruler sins the people suffer, but here the proverb is reversed—the sheep go astray, and their wanderings are laid at the Shepherd's door.

**Verse 5.** *O God, thou knowest my foolishness.* David might well say this, but not David's Lord; unless it be understood as an appeal to God as to his freedom from the folly which men imputed to him when they said he was mad. That which was foolishness to men was superlative wisdom before God. How often might we use these words in their natural sense, and if we were not such fools as to be

blind to our own folly, this confession would be frequently on our lips. When we feel that we have been foolish we are not, therefore, to cease from prayer, but rather to be more eager and fervent in it. Fools had good need consult with the infinitely wise. And my sins are not hid from thee. They cannot be hid with any fig leaves of mine; only the covering which thou wilt bring me can conceal their nakedness and mine. It ought to render confession easy, when we are assured that all is known already. That prayer which has no confession in it may please a Pharisee's pride, but will never bring down justification. They who have never seen their sins in the light of God's omniscience are quite unable to appeal to that omniscience in proof of their piety. He who can say, Thou knowest my foolishness, is the only man who can add, "But thou knowest that I love thee."

**Verse 6.** *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake.* If he were deserted, others who were walking in the same path of faith would be discouraged and disappointed. Unbelievers are ready enough to catch at anything which may turn humble faith into ridicule, therefore, O God of all the armies of Israel, let not my case cause the enemy to blaspheme—such is the spirit of this verse. Our blessed Lord ever had a tender concern for his people, and would not have his own oppression of spirit become a source of discouragement to them. Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of *Israel*. He appealed to the Lord of hosts by his power to help him, and now to the God of Israel by his covenant faithfulness to come to the rescue. If the captain of the host fail, how will it fare with the rank and file? If David flee, what will his followers do? If the king of believers shall find his faith unrewarded, how will the feeble ones hold on their way? Our Lord's behaviour during his sharpest agonies is no cause of shame to us; he wept, for he was man, but he murmured not, for he was sinless man; he cried, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" for he was human, but he added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," for his humanity was without taint of rebellion. In the depths of tribulation no repining word escaped him, for there was no repining in his heart. The Lord of martyrs witnessed a good confession. He was strengthened in the hour of peril, and came off more than a conqueror, as we also shall do, if we hold fast our confidence even to the end.

**Verse 7.** *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach.* Because he undertook to do the Father's will, and teach his truth, the people were angry; because he declared himself to be the Son of God, the priesthood raved. They could find no real fault in him, but were forced to hatch up a lying accusation before they could commence their sham trial of him. The bottom of the quarrel was, that God was with him, and he with God, while the Scribes and Pharisees sought only their own honour. Reproach is at all times very cutting to a man of integrity, and it must have come with acute force upon one of so unsullied a character as our Lord; yet see, how he turns to his God, and finds his consolation in the fact that he is enduring all for his Father's sake. The like comfort belongs to all misrepresented and persecuted saints. Shame hath covered my face. Men condemned to die frequently had their faces



covered as they were dragged away from the judge's seat, as was the case with the wicked Haman in Es 7:8: after this fashion they first covered our Lord with a veil of opprobrious accusation, and then hurried him away to be crucified. Moreover, they passed him through the trial of cruel mockings, besmeared his face with spittle, and covered it with bruises, so that Pilate's "Ecce Homo" called the world's attention to an unexampled spectacle of woe and shame. The stripping on the cross must also have suffused the Redeemer's face with a modest blush, as he hung there exposed to the cruel gaze of a ribald multitude. Ah, blessed Lord, it was our shame which thou wast made to bear! Nothing more deserves to be reproached and despised than sin, and lo, when thou wast made sin for us thou wast called to endure abuse and scorn. Blessed be thy name it is over now, but we owe thee more than heart can conceive for thine amazing stoop of love.

**Verse 8.** *I am become a stranger unto my brethren.* The Jews his brethren in race rejected him, his family his brethren by blood were offended at him, his disciples his brethren in spirit forsook him and fled; one of them sold him, and another denied him with oaths and cursings. Alas, my Lord, what pangs must have smitten thy loving heart to be thus forsaken by those who should have loved thee, defended thee, and, if need be, died for thee. And an alien unto my mother's children. These were the nearest of relatives, the children of a father with many wives felt the tie of consanguinity but loosely, but children of the same mother owned the band of love; yet our Lord found his nearest and dearest ones ashamed to own him. As David's brethren envied him, and spake evil of him, so our Lord's relatives by birth were jealous of him, and his best beloved followers in the hour of his agony were afraid to be known as having any connection with him. These were sharp arrows of the mighty in the soul of Jesus, the most tender of friends. May none of us ever act as if we were strangers to him; never may we treat him as if he were an alien to us: rather let us resolve to be crucified with him, and may grace turn the resolve into fact.

**Verse 9.** *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* His burning ardour, like the flame of a candle, fed on his strength and consumed it. His heart, like a sharp sword, cut through the scabbard. Some men are eaten up with lechery, others with covetousness, and a third class with pride, but the master passion with our great leader was the glory of God, jealousy for his name, and love to the divine family. Zeal for God is so little understood by men of the world, that it always draws down opposition upon those who are inspired with it; they are sure to be accused of sinister motives, or of hypocrisy, or of being out of their senses. When zeal eats us up, ungodly men seek to eat us up too, and this was preeminently the case with our Lord, because his holy jealousy was preeminent. With more than a seraph's fire he glowed, and consumed himself with his fervour. And the reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon *me*. Those who habitually blaspheme God now curse me instead. I have become the butt for arrows intended for the Lord himself. Thus the Great Mediator was, in this respect, a substitute for God as well as for man, he bore the reproaches aimed at the one, as well as

the sins committed by the other.

**Verse 10.** *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.* Having resolved to hate him, everything he did was made a fresh reason for reviling. If he ate and drank as others, he was a man gluttonous and a winebibber; if he wept himself away and wore himself out with fasting, then he had a devil and was mad. Nothing is more cruel than prejudice, its eye colours all with the medium through which it looks, and its tongue rails at all indiscriminately. Our Saviour wept much in secret for our sins, and no doubt his private soul chastening on our behalf were very frequent. Lone mountains and desert places saw repeated agonies, which, if they could disclose them, would astonish us indeed. The emaciation which these exercises wrought in our Lord made him appear nearly fifty years old when he was but little over thirty; this which was to his honour was used as a matter of reproach against him.

**Verse 11.** *I made sackcloth also my garment.* This David did literally, but we have no reason to believe that Jesus did. In a spiritual sense he, as one filled with grief, was always a sackcloth wearer. And I became a proverb to them. He was ridiculed as "the man of sorrows," quoted as "the acquaintance of grief." He might have said, "here I and sorrow sit." This which should have won him pity only earned him new and more general scorn. To interweave one's name into a mocking proverb is the highest stretch of malice, and to insult one's acts of devotion is to add profanity to cruelty.

**Verse 12.** *They that sit in the gate speak against me.* The ordinary gossips who meet at the city gates for idle talk make me their theme, the business men who there resort for trade forget their merchandise to slander me, and even the beggars who wait at men's doors for alms contribute their share of insult to the heap of infamy. And I was the song of the drunkard. The ungodly know no merrier jest than that in which the name of the holy is traduced. The flavour of slander is piquant, and gives a relish to the revellers' wine. The character of the man of Nazareth was so far above the appreciation of the men of strength to mingle strong drink, it was so much out of their way and above their thoughts, that it is no wonder it seemed to them ridiculous, and therefore well adapted to create laughter over their cups. The saints are ever choice subjects for satire. Butler's Hudibras owed more of its popularity to its irreligious banter than to any intrinsic cleverness. To this day the tavern makes rare fun of the tabernacle, and the ale bench is the seat of the scorner. What a wonder of condescension is here that he who is the adoration of angels should stoop to be the song of drunkards! What amazing sin that he whom seraphs worship with veiled faces should be a scornful proverb among the most abandoned of men.

"The byword of the passing throng,

The ruler's scoff, the drunkard's song."

**Verse 13.** *But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord.* He turned to Jehovah in prayer as being the most natural thing for the godly to do in their distress. To whom should a child turn but to his father.

He did not answer them; like a sheep before her shearers he was dumb to them, but he opened his mouth unto the Lord his God, for he would hear and deliver. In an acceptable time. It was a time of rejection with man, but of acceptance with God. Sin ruled on earth, but grace reigned in heaven. There is to each of us an accepted time, and woe to us if we suffer it to glide away unimproved. God's time must be our time, or it will come to pass that, when time closes, we shall look in vain for space for repentance. Our Lord's prayers were well timed, and always met with acceptance.

O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me. Even the perfect one makes his appeal to the rich mercy of God, much more should we. To misery no attribute is more sweet than mercy, and when sorrows multiply, the multitude of mercy is much prized. When enemies are more than the hairs of our head, they are yet to be numbered, but God's mercies are altogether innumerable, and let it never be forgotten that every one of them is an available and powerful argument in the hand of faith. In the truth of thy salvation. "Jehovah's faithfulness is a further mighty plea." His salvation is no fiction, no mockery, no changeable thing, therefore he is asked to manifest it, and make all men see his fidelity to his promise. Our Lord teaches us here the sacred art of wrestling in prayer, and ordering our cause with arguments; and he also indicates to us that the nature of God is the great treasury of strong reasons, which shall be to us most prevalent in supplication.

**Verse 14.** *Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.* He turns into prayer the very words of his complaint; and it is well, if, when we complain, we neither feel nor say anything which we should fear to utter before the Lord as a prayer. We are allowed to ask for deliverance from trouble as well as for support under it; both petitions are here combined. How strange it seems to hear such language from the Lord of glory. *Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.* Both from his foes, and the griefs which they caused him, he seeks a rescue. God can help us in all ways, and we may, therefore, put up a variety of requests without fear of exceeding our liberty to ask, or his ability to answer.

**Verse 15.** *Let not the waterflood overflow me.* He continues to recapitulate the terms of his lament. He is willing to bear suffering, but entreats grace that it may not get the victory over him. He was heard in that he feared. Neither let the deep swallow me up. As Jonah came forth again, so let me also arise from the abyss of woe; here also our Lord was heard, and so shall we be. Death itself must disgorge us. Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. When a great stone was rolled over the well, or pit, used as a dungeon, the prisoner was altogether enclosed, and forgotten like one on the oubliettes of the Bastille; this is an apt picture of the state of a man buried alive in grief and left without remedy; against this the great sufferer pleaded and was heard. He was baptised in agony but not drowned in it; the grave enclosed him, but before she could close her mouth he had burst his prison. It is said that truth lies in a well, but it is assuredly an open well, for it walks abroad in power; and so our great Substitute in the pit of woe and death was yet the Conqueror of death and hell. How appropriately

may many of us use this prayer. We deserve to be swept away as with a flood, to be drowned in our sins, to be shut up in hell; let us, then, plead the merits of our Saviour, lest these things happen unto us.

**Verse 16.** *Hear me, O Lord.* Do not refuse thy suppliant Son. It is to the covenant God, the ever living Jehovah, that he appeals with strong crying. For thy lovingkindness is good. By the greatness of thy love have pity upon thine afflicted. It is always a stay to the soul to dwell upon the preeminence and excellence of the Lord's mercy. It has furnished sad souls much good cheer to take to pieces that grand old Saxon word, which is here used in our version, *lovingkindness*. Its composition is of two most sweet and fragrant things, fitted to inspire strength into the fainting, and make desolate hearts sing for joy. Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. If the Lord do but turn the eye of pity, and the hand of power, the mourner's spirit revives. It is the gall of bitterness to be without the comfortable smile of God; in our Lord's case his grief culminated in "Lama Sabachthani, "and his bitterest cry was that in which he mourned an absent God. Observe how he dwells anew upon divine tenderness, and touches again that note of abundance, "The multitude of thy compassions."

**Verse 17.** *And hide not thy face from thy servant.* A good servant desires the light of his master's countenance; that *servus servorum*, who was also *rex regium*, could not bear to lose the presence of his God. The more he loved his Father, the more severely he felt the hiding of his face. For I am in trouble. Stay thy rough wind in the day of thine east wind; do not add sorrow upon sorrow. If ever a man needs the comforting presence of God it is when he is in distress; and, being in distress, it is a reason to be pleaded with a merciful God why he should not desert us. We may pray that our flight be not in the winter, and that God will not add spiritual desertion to all our other tribulations. Hear me speedily. The case was urgent, delay was dangerous, nay deadly. Our Lord was the perfection of patience, yet he cried urgently for speedy mercy; and therein he gives us liberty to do the same, so long as we add, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

**Verse 18.** *Draw nigh unto my soul.* The near approach of God is all the sufferer needs; one smile of heaven will still the rage of hell. And redeem it. It shall be redemption to me if thou wilt appear to comfort me. This is a deeply spiritual prayer, and one very suitable for a deserted soul. It is in renewed communion that we shall find redemption realized. Deliver me because of mine enemies, lest they should, in their vaunting, blaspheme thy name, and boast that thou art not able to rescue those who put their trust in thee. Jesus, in condescending to use such supplications, fulfils the request of his disciples: "Lord, teach us to pray." Here we have a sad recapitulation of sorrows, with more especial reference to the persons concerned in their infliction.

**Verse 19.** *Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour.* It is no novelty or secret, it has been long continued; thou, O God, hast seen it; and for thee to see the innocent suffer is an assurance of help. Here are three words piled up to express the Redeemer's keen sense of the

contempt poured upon him; and his assurance that every form of malicious despite was observed of the Lord. Mine adversaries are all before thee. The whole lewd and loud company is now present to thine eye: Judas and his treachery; Herod and his cunning; Caiaphas and his counsel; Pilate and his vacillation; Jews, priests, people, rulers, all, thou seest and wilt judge.

**Verse 20.** *Reproach hath broken my heart.* There is no hammer like it. Our Lord died of a broken heart, and reproach had done the deed. Intense mental suffering arises from slander; and in the case of the sensitive nature of the immaculate Son of Man, it sufficed to lacerate the heart till it broke. "Then burst his mighty heart." And I am full of heaviness. Calumny and insult bowed him to the dust; he was sick at heart. The heaviness of our Lord in the garden is expressed by many and forcible words in the four gospels, and each term goes to show that the agony was beyond measure great; he was filled with misery, like a vessel which is full to the brim. And I looked for some to take pity, but there was none. "Deserted in his utmost need by those his former bounty fed." Not one to say him a kindly word, or drop a sympathetic tear. Amongst ten thousand foes there was not one who was touched by the spectacle of his misery; not one with a heart capable of humane feeling towards him. And for comforters, but I found none. His dearest ones had sought their own safety, and left their Lord alone. A sick man needs comforters, and a persecuted man needs sympathy; but our blessed Surety found neither on that dark and doleful night when the powers of darkness had their hour. A spirit like that of our Lord feels acutely desertion by beloved and trusted friends, and yearns for real sympathy. This may be seen in the story of Gethsemane:—

"Backwards and forwards thrice he ran.  
As if he sought some help from man;  
Or wished, at least, they would condole—  
It was all they could—his tortured soul."  
"What ever he sought for, there was none;  
Our Captain fought the field alone.  
Soon as the chief to battle led,  
That moment every soldier fled."

**Verse 21.** *They gave me also gall for my meat.* This was the sole refreshment cruelty had prepared for him. Others find pleasure in their food, but his taste was made to be an additional path of pain to him. And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. A criminal's draught was offered to our innocent Lord, a bitter portion to our dying Master. Sorry entertainment had earth for her King and Saviour. How often have our sins filled the gall cup for our Redeemer? While we blame the Jews, let us not excuse ourselves. From this point David and our Lord for awhile part company, if we accept the rendering of our version. The severe spirit of the law breathes out imprecations, while the tender heart of Jesus offers prayers for his murderers. The whole of these verses, however, may be viewed

as predictions, and then they certainly refer to our Lord, for we find portions of them quoted in that manner by the apostle in Ro 11:9-10, and by Christ himself in Mt 23:38.

**Verse 22.** *Let their table become a snare before them.* There they laid snares, and there they shall find them. From their feasts they would afford nothing but wormwood for their innocent victim, and now their banquets shall be their ruin. It is very easy for the daily provisions of mercy to become temptations to sin. As birds and beasts are taken in a trap by means of baits for the appetite, so are men snared full often by their meats and drinks. Those who despise the upper springs of grace, shall find the nether springs of worldly comfort prove their poison. The table is used, however, not alone for feeding, but for conversations, transacting business, counsel, amusement, and religious observance: to those who are the enemies of the Lord Jesus that table may, in all these respects, become a snare. This first plague is terrible, and the second is like unto it. And that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a *trap*. This, if we follow the original closely, and the version of Paul in the Romans, is a repetition of the former phrase; but we shall not err if we say that, to the rejecters of Christ, even those things which are calculated to work their spiritual and eternal good, become occasions for yet greater sin. They reject Christ, and are condemned for not believing on him; they stumble on this stone, and are broken by it. Wretched are those men, who not only have a curse upon their common blessings, but also on the spiritual opportunities of salvation.

"Whom oils and balsams kill, what salve can cure?"

This second plague even exceeds the first.

**Verse 23.** *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not.* They shall wander in a darkness that may be felt. They have loved darkness rather than light, and in darkness they shall abide. Judicial blindness fell upon Israel after our Lord's death and their persecution of his apostles; they were blinded by the light which they would not accept. Eyes which see no beauty in the Lord Jesus, but flash wrath upon him, may well grow yet more dim, till death spiritual leads to death eternal. And make their loins continually to shake. Their conscience shall be so ill at ease that they shall continually quiver with fear; their backs shall bend to the earth (so some read it) with grovelling avarice, and their strength shall be utterly paralysed, so that they cannot walk firmly, but shall totter at every step. See the terrifying, degrading, and enfeebling influence of unbelief. See also the retaliation of justice: those who will not see shall not see; those who would not walk in uprightness shall be unable to do so.

**Verse 24.** *Pour out thine indignation upon them.* What can be too severe a penalty for those who reject the incarnate God, and refuse to obey the commands of his mercy? They deserve to be flooded with wrath, and they shall be; for upon all who rebel against the Saviour, Christ the Lord, "the wrath is come to the uttermost." 1Th 2:16. God's indignation is no trifle; the anger of a holy, just, omnipotent, and infinite Being, is above all things to be dreaded; even a drop of it consumes, but to have it poured upon us is inconceivably dreadful. O God, who knoweth the power of thine anger?

And let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Grasping them, arresting them, abiding on them. If they flee, let it overtake and seize them; let it lay them by the heels in the condemned cell, so that they cannot escape from execution. It shall indeed be so with all the finally impenitent, and it ought to be so. God is not to be insulted with impunity, and his Son, our ever gracious Saviour, the best gift of infinite love, is not to be scorned and scoffed at for nothing. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, but what shall be the "sorer punishment" reserved for those who have trodden under foot the Son of God?

**Verse 25.** *Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.* This may signify that their posterity shall be cut off, and the abode which they occupy shall be left a ruin; or, as our Lord quoted it, it refers to the temple, which was left by its divine occupant and became a desolation. What occurs on a large scale to families and nations is often fulfilled in individuals, as was conspicuously the case with Judas, to whom Peter referred this prophecy, Ac 1:20, "For it is written in the book of Psalms, let this habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein." The fierce proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar, "that every people, nation, and language, that speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, "is but an anticipation of that dread hour when the enemies of the Lord shall be broken in pieces, and perish out of the land.

**Verse 26.** *For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten.* They are cruel where they should be pitiful. When a stroke comes to any in the providence of God, their friends gather around them and condole, but these wretches hunt the wounded and vex the sick. Their merciless hearts invent fresh blows for him who is "smitten of God and afflicted." And they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. They lay bare his wounds with their rough tongues. They lampoon the mourner, satirise his sorrows, and deride his woes. They pointed to the Saviour's wounds, they looked and stared upon him, and then they uttered shameful accusations against him. After this fashion the world still treats the members of Christ. "Report, "say they, "and we will report it." If a godly man be a little down in estate, how glad they are to push him over altogether, and, meanwhile, to talk everywhere against him. God takes note of this, and will visit it upon the enemies of his children; he may allow them to act as a rod to his saints, but he will yet avenge his own elect. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with a great jealousy; and I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction."

**Verse 27.** *Add iniquity unto their iniquity.* Unbelievers will add sin to sin, and so, punishment to punishment. This is the severest imprecation, or prophecy, of all. For men to be let alone to fill up the measure of their iniquity, is most equitable, but yet most awful. And let them not come into thy righteousness. If they refuse it, and resist thy gospel, let them shut themselves out of it.

"He that will not when he may,

When he would he shall have nay."

Those who choose evil shall have their choice. Men who hate divine mercy shall not have it forced upon them, but (unless sovereign grace interpose) shall be left to themselves to aggravate their guilt, and ensure their doom.

**Verse 28.** *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.* Though in their conceit they wrote themselves among the people of God, and induced others to regard them under that character, they shall be unmasked and their names removed from the register. Enrolled with honour, they shall be erased with shame. Death shall obliterate all recollection of them; they shall be held no longer in esteem, even by those who paid them homage. Judas first, and Pilate, and Herod, and Caiaphas, all in due time, were speedily wiped out of existence; their names only remain as bywords, but among the honoured men who live after their departure they are not recorded. And not be written with the righteous. This clause is parallel with the former, and shows that the inner meaning of being blotted out from the book of life is to have it made evident that the name was never written there at all. Man in his imperfect copy of God's book of life will have to make many emendations, both of insertion and erasure; but, as before the Lord, the record is for ever fixed and unalterable. Beware, O man, of despising Christ and his people, lest thy soul should never partake in the righteousness of God, without which men are condemned already. Imprecations, prophecies, and complaints are ended, and prayer of a milder sort begins, intermingled with bursts of thankful song, and encouraging foresight of coming good.

**Verse 29.** *But I am poor and sorrowful.* The psalmist was afflicted very much, but his faith was in God. The poor in spirit and mourners are both blessed under the gospel, so that here is a double reason for the Lord to smile on his suppliant. No man was ever poorer or more sorrowful than Jesus of Nazareth, yet his cry out of the depths was heard, and he was uplifted to the highest glory. Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. How fully has this been answered in our great Master's case, for he not only escaped his foes personally, but he has become the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him, and this continues to glorify him more and more. O ye poor and sorrowful ones, lift up your heads, for as with your Lord so shall it be with you. You are trodden down today as the mire of the streets, but you shall ride upon the high places of the earth ere long; and even now ye are raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

**Verse 30.** *I will praise the name of God with a song.* He who sang after the passover, sings yet more joyously after the resurrection and ascension. He is, in very truth, "the sweet singer of Israel." He leads the eternal melodies, and all his saints join in chorus. And will magnify him with thanksgiving. How sure was our Redeemer of ultimate victory, since he vows a song even while yet in the furnace. In us, also, faith foresees the happy issue of all affliction, and makes us even now begin the music of gratitude which shall go on for ever increasing in volume, world without end. What clear shining after



the rain we have in this and succeeding verses. The darkness is past, and the glory light shines forth as the sun. All the honour is rendered unto him to whom all the prayer was presented; he alone could deliver and did deliver, and, therefore, to him only be the praise.

**Verse 31.** *This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.* No sacrifice is so acceptable to God, who is a Spirit, as that which is spiritual. He accepted bullocks under a dim and symbolical dispensation; but in such offerings, in themselves considered, he had no pleasure. "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" Here he puts dishonour upon mere outward offerings by speaking of the horns and hoofs, the offal of the victim. The *opus operatum*, which our ritualists think so much of, the Lord puffs at. The horning and hoofing are nothing to him, though to Jewish ritualists these were great points, and matters for critical examination; our modern rabbis are just as precise as to the mingling of water with their wine, the baking of their wafers, the cut of their vestments, and the performance of genuflections towards the right quarter of the compass. O fools, and slow of heart to perceive all that the Lord has declared. "Offer unto God thanksgiving" is the everlasting rubric of the true directory of worship. The depths of grief into which the suppliant had been plunged gave him all the richer an experience of divine power and grace in his salvation, and so qualified him to sing more sweetly "the song of loves." Such music is ever most acceptable to the infinite Jehovah.

**Verse 32.** *The humble shall see this and be glad.* Grateful hearts are ever on the look out for recruits, and the rejoicing psalmist discerns with joy the fact, that other oppressed and lowly men observing the Lord's dealings with his servants are encouraged to look for a like issue to their own tribulations. The standing consolation of the godly is the experience of their Lord, for as he is so are we also in this world; yea, moreover, his triumph has secured ours, and therefore, we may on the most solid grounds rejoice in him. This gave our great leader satisfaction as he foresaw the comforts which would flow to us from his conflict and conquest. And your heart shall live that seek God. A similar assurance is given in Psalm 22, which is near akin to this. It would have been useless to seek if Jesus' victories had not cleared the way, and opened a door of hope; but, since the Breaker has gone up before us, and the King at the head of us, our hope is a living one, our faith is living, our love is living, and our renewed nature is full of a vitality which challenges the cold hand of death to damp it.

**Verse 33.** *For the Lord heareth the poor.* The examples of David and David's Lord, and tens of thousands of the saints, all go to prove this. Monarchs of the nations are deaf to the poor, but the Sovereign of the Universe has a quick ear for the needy. None can be brought lower than was the Nazarene, but see how highly he is exalted: descend into what depths we may, the prayer hearing God can bring us up again. And despiseth not his prisoners. Poor men have their liberty, but these are bound; however, they are God's prisoners, and, therefore, prisoners of hope. The captive in the dungeon is the lowest and least esteemed of men, but the Lord seeth not as man seeth; he visited

those who are bound with chains, and proclaims a jail delivery for his afflicted. God despises no man, and no prayer that is honest and sincere. Distinctions of rank are nothing with him; the poor have the gospel preached to them, and the prisoners are loosed by his grace. Let all poor and needy ones hasten to seek his face, and to yield him their love.

**Verse 34.** *Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.* The doxology of a glowing heart. The writer had fathomed the deeps, and had ascended to the heights; and, therefore, calls on the whole range of creation to bless the Lord. Our Well Beloved here excites us all to grateful adoration: who among us will hold back? God's love to Christ argues good to all forms of life; the exaltation of the Head brings good to the members, and to all in the least connected with him. Inasmuch as the creation itself also is by Christ's work to be delivered from bondage, let all that have life and motion magnify the Lord. Glory be unto thee, O Lord, for the sure and all including pledge of our Surety's triumph; we see in this the exaltation of all thy poor and sorrowful ones, and our heart is glad.

**Verse 35.** *For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah.* Poor, fallen Israel shall have a portion in the mercy of the Lord; but, above all, the church, so dear to the heart of her glorious bridegroom, shall be revived and strengthened. Ancient saints so dearly loved Zion, that even in their distresses they did not forget her; with the first gleam of light which visited them, they fell to pleading for the faithful: see notable instances of this which have passed under our eye already. Ps 5:11 14:7 22:23 51:18. To us, in these modern times, it is the subject of cheering hope that better days are coming for the chosen people of God, and for this we would ever pray. O Zion, whatever other memories fade away, we cannot forget thee. That they may dwell there, and have it in possession. Whatever captivities may occur, or desolations be caused, the land of Canaan belongs to Israel by a covenant of salt, and they will surely repossess it; and this shall be a sign unto us, that through the atonement of the Christ of God, all the poor in spirit shall enjoy the mercies promised in the covenant of grace. The sure mercies of David shall be the heritage of all the seed.

**Verse 36.** *The seed also of his servants shall inherit it.* Under this image, which, however, we dare not regard as a mere simile, but as having in itself a literal significance, we have set forth to us the enrichment of the saints, consequent upon the sorrow of their Lord. The termination of this Psalm strongly recalls in us that of the twenty-second. The *seed* lie near the Saviour's heart, and their enjoyment of all promised good is the great concern of his disinterested soul. Because they are his Father's servants, therefore he rejoices in their welfare. And they that love his name shall dwell therein. He has an eye to the Father's glory, for it is to his praise that those who love him should attain, and for ever enjoy, the utmost happiness. Thus a Psalm, which began in the deep waters, ends in the city which hath foundations. How gracious is the change. Hallelujah.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician, on the lilies, of David. On the lilies*, points to the beauty of the subject treated of. *D. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Whole Psalm.** The subject of the Psalm is an ideal person, representing the whole class of religious sufferers. The only individual in whom the various traits meet is Christ. That he is not, however, the exclusive, or even the immediate subject, is clear from the confession in Ps 69:5. There is no Psalm, except for the twenty-second, more distinctly applied to him in the New Testament. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

**Whole Psalm.** This has usually been regarded as a Messianic Psalm. No portion of the Old Testament Scriptures is more frequently quoted in the New, with the exception of Psalm 22. When Jesus drives the buyers and sellers from the temple (Joh 2:17), his disciples are reminded of the words of Ps 69:9 (first clause). When it is said (Joh 15:25) that the enemies of Jesus hated him without a cause, and this is looked upon as the fulfilment of Scripture, the reference is probably to verse 4, though it may be also to Ps 35:18. To him, and the reproach which he endured for the sake of God, St. Paul refers the words of this Psalm, Ps 69:9 (second clause): *The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.* In Ps 69:12 we have a foreshadowing of the mockery of our Lord by the soldiers in the praetorium (Mt 27:27-30); in Ps 69:21, the giving of the vinegar and the gall found their counterpart in the scenes of the crucifixion, Mt 27:34. In Joh 19:28, there is an allusion, probably to verse 21 of this Psalm, and to Ps 32:15. The imprecation in Ps 69:25 is said, in Ac 1:20, to have been fulfilled in the case of Judas Iscariot, though, as the words of the Psalm are plural, the citation is evidently made with some freedom. According to Ro 11:9-10, the rejection of Israel may best be described in the words of Ps 69:22-23. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Whole Psalm.** This Psalm follows in striking connection with the preceding, and in contrast with the glory of his kingdom. The two have been compared to the transfiguration on the mount, where, after the manifestation of Christ in glory, there appeared, also, Moses and Elias, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. The clearest anticipation of future glory must not shut out the conviction, that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. *W. Wilson.*

**Whole Psalm.** Remember this is the fourth Psalm which declares at length the passion and resurrection of our Lord. Through the whole Psalm Christ speaks in person. He prays for deliverance by the Father, because he has suffered by the Jews, without cause, many afflictions and persecutions. He supplicates on behalf of his members, that the hope of the faithful, resting on his resurrection, may not be disappointed. By the power of his prescience he declares the future events which should occur to his enemies. *Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, circa 468-560.*

**Whole Psalm.** In this Psalm the whole Christ speaks; now in his own person, now crying with the voice of his members to God his Father. *Gerhohus.*

**Verse 1.** *Save me, O God.* Let his distances be never so great, he is resolved to cry after the Lord; and if he get but his head never so little above water, the Lord shall hear of him. One would think his discouragements such as he were past crying any more; *the waters entered into his soul, in deep waters, the streams running over him: he sticketh fast in the mire where is no standing* (he is at the very bottom, and there fast in the mire), *he is weary of crying*; yet, Ps 69:6,13: *But, Lord, I make my prayers to thee*: and as he recovers breath, so breathes out fresh supplications to the Lord. If men or devils would be forbidding to pray, as the multitude sometimes did the poor blind man to cry after Jesus; yet, as he, so an importunate suppliant "*will cry so much the more*, Jesus thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Mr 10:47-48. *Thomas Cobbet.*

**Verse 1.** *The waters are come in unto my soul.* What means he by *coming in unto his soul*? Surely no other than this:—that they oppressed his spirit, and, as it were, penetrated into his conscience, raising fears and perplexities there, by reason of his sins, which at present put his faith and hope to some disorder; so that he could not for a while see to the comfortable end of his affliction, but was as one under water, covered with his fears, as appears by what follows (Ps 69:2): *I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing.* He compares himself to one in a quagmire that can feel no ground to bear him up; and, observe whence his trouble rose, and where the waters made their entrance (Ps 69:5): *O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.* This holy man lay under some fresh guilt, and this made him so uncomfortable under his affliction, because he saw his sin in the face of that, and tasted some displeasure from God for it in his outward trouble, which made it so bitter in the going down; and, therefore, when once he had humbled himself by confessing his sin, and was able to see the coast clear between heaven and him, so as to believe the pardon of his sin, and hope for good news from God again, he then returns to his sweet temper, and sings in the same affliction, where before he sunk. *William Gurnall.*

**Verse 3.** *I am weary of my crying.* The word *egy* means properly, *to gape, to gasp*, then, *to become weary*.... but *to gasp in his crying*, is not so much to grow weary because of the great vehemence thereof, but while the crying lasts, and while he is in the act, to succumb under the burden of his dangerous and shameful calamity. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 3.** *I am weary of my crying.* He had cried to God for the ways of man; he had cried to man of the ways of God; he had not ceased, from his first beginning to teach, till he said upon the cross, "I thirst." His eyes had grown dim, and his flesh was faint and weary with his sufferings, through the long passion of his life on earth. He had been waiting in poverty, and insult, and treachery, and scourging, and pain, until he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" *From "A Plain Commentary."*

**Verse 3.** *I am weary of my crying*, etc. David is like the post, who layeth by three horses as breathless; his heart, his throat, his eyes... *Objection.* But I have neither weeping one way or other,

ordinary nor marred. *Answer.* Looking up to heaven, lifting up of the eyes, goeth for prayer also in God's books. "My prayer unto thee, and will look up, "(Ps 5:3). *Mine eyes fail with looking upward* (Ps 69:3). Because, first, prayer is a pouring out of the soul to God, and faith will come out at the eye, in lieu of another door: often affections break out at the window, when the door is closed; as smoke vents at the window, when the chimney refuses passage. Stephen looked up to heaven (Ac 7:55.). He sent a post; a greedy, pitiful, and hungry look up to Christ, out at the window, at the nearest passage, to tell that a poor friend was coming up to him. Second, I would wish no more, if I were in hell, but to send up a look to heaven. There be many love looks of the saints, lying up before the throne, in the bosom of Christ. The twinkling of thy eyes in prayer are not lost to Christ; else Stephen's look, David's look, should not be registered so many hundred years in Christ's written Testament. *Samuel Rutherford, in "The Trial and Triumph of Faith."*

**Verse 3.** *Crying.* Meanwhile, we see how the saints, in the vicissitudes of affairs, even when they are innocent, are not insensible and stony; they do not despise the threatening perils; they become anxious, they cry and sigh during their temptations. *Musculus.*

**Verse 3.** *Mine eyes fail.* O pitiable sight! that sight should fail, by which Jesus saw the multitudes and, therefore, ascended the mount to give the precepts of the New Testament; by which, beholding Peter and Andrew, he called them; by which, looking upon the man sitting at the receipt of custom, he called and made him an evangelist; by which, gazing upon the city, he wept over it... With these eyes thou didst look upon Simon, when thou didst say, "*Thou art the son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas.*" With these eyes thou didst gaze upon the woman who was a sinner, to whom thou didst say, "*Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*" Turn these eyes upon us, and never turn them away from our continual prayers. *Gerhohus.*

**Verse 3.** *I wait for my God.* The hour is coming when our eyes must fail, and be closed; but, even then, "*Let us wait for our God;*" in this respect, let us die the death of the righteous person, who died for us; "and let our last end be like this." *George Horne.*

**Verse 4.** *Without a cause.* In suffering, let not the mind be disturbed; for the injustice which is done to the innocent in his sufferings, is not laid to the charge of the sufferer, but to his who inflicts suffering... It is well known what Tertullian relates of Socrates, when his wife met him after his condemnation, and addresses him with a woman's tears: "*Thou art unjustly condemned, Socrates.*" His reply was, "*Wouldst thou have me justly?*" *Lorinus.*

**Verse 4.** *Then I restored that which I took not away.* It was the great and blessed work of our Lord Jesus here upon the earth, to restore what he took not away. In handling this: (1) Show what it is which was taken away, and from whom? (2) Wherein it appears that Christ took it not away. (3) How he restored it? (4) Why he did so? (5) Use.

1. *What it was which was taken away, and from whom?*

(a) There was glory taken from God. Not his essential glory, nor any perfection of his being, for that cannot be taken away; but that glory which shines forth in the moral government of his creatures, and that glory which we are bound to give him.

(b) There was righteousness, holiness, and happiness taken from man also. (1.) There was a loss of righteousness to the guilty sinner; (2.) of holiness to the polluted sinner: (3.) of happiness to the miserable sinner.

2. *Wherein it appears that Christ did not take away those things from either.*

(a) It is plain, as to God, he never took away any glory from him; for he never did anything dishonourable, or offensive to God. Joh 8:29; Isa 50:5 Lu 1:35.

(b) It is also clear, as to man, that he took not away any righteousness, holiness, or happiness from him. He was not such a fountain of guilt, pollution, and misery, as the first Adam had been, but the contrary.

(c) The Scripture, therefore, speaks of Christ's being cut off, but not for himself, Da 9:26; 1Pe 3:18 Isa 53:4-5.

(d) The innocency of Christ was conspicuous in his very sufferings. Though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. Ac 13:28.

3. *How did Christ restore those things which he took not away?* In general, by his active and passive obedience.

(a) Christ's doing the will of God in such a manner as he did it, was a greater honour to God than ever had been, or could be done before.

(b) Christ's suffering of the will of God, made a considerable addition to the glory of God, which had been impaired by the sin of man, Heb 5:8; Joh 17:4 13:31.

(c) Christ hath provided for the justification of the sinner by the obedience which he fulfilled, Ro 5:8.

(d) Christ communicates that grace which is necessary for our sanctification also.

(e) Christ hath merited for us a present blessedness in this world.

(f) Jesus Christ hath procured for us a more full and absolute blessedness in the world to come.

4. *Why did Jesus Christ make it his work to restore what he took not away?*

(a) It was a necessary work, a work which must be done, in order to his being a Saviour.

(b) It was a work impossible for any mere creature to do; so that if Christ did not, it could not be done by any person besides him. *Timothy Cruso's Sermon.*

**Verse 4.** *Then I restored that which I took not away.* Rosenmueller observes, that this seems to be a proverbial sentence, to denote an innocent man unjustly treated. According to the law, if a man stole and killed, or sold an ox, he was to restore five oxen; or a sheep, he was to restore four; and if the ox or sheep was found alive, he was to restore two. Hence, to oblige a man to restore when he had taken nothing, was the greatest injustice. Ex 22:1-5. Ainsworth observes, that though it may be taken

for all unjust criminations, whereof David and Christ were innocent, yet in special, it was verified in Christ, who, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, "Php 2:6; notwithstanding, for witnessing himself to be the Son of God, he was put to death by the Jews. Joh 19:7. *Benjamin Boothroyd.*

**Verse 4.** *I restored that which I took not away.* The devil took away by arrogating in heaven what was not his, when he boasted that he was like the Most High, and for this he pays a righteous penalty... Adam also took away what was not his own, when, by the enticement of the devil, "You will be as gods, "he sought after a likeness to God, by yielding to the deception of the woman. But the Lord Jesus thought it not robbery to be equal with God... And yet his enemies said, "Let him be crucified, for he hath made himself the Son of God." *Gerhohus.*

**Verse 4.** *I restored that which I took not away.* What a blessed verse is here! Amidst all the opposition and contradiction of sinners against himself, Jesus manifested that character, by which Jehovah had pointed him out to the church by the prophet; "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." Isa 58:12. But what was it Christ restored? Nay, all that was lost. Adam by sin had done all that he could to take away God's glory, and with it his own glory and happiness. He had robbed God of his glory, God's law of its due, himself of God's image, and of God's favour. Sin had brought in death, spiritual and eternal; and he and all his descendants stood tremblingly exposed to everlasting misery. All these and more Jesus restored. As man's Surety and man's Representative, and called to it by the authority of Jehovah, the Lord Christ restored to God his glory, and to man God's image of favour; and having destroyed sin, death, hell, and the grave, he restored to his redeemed a better paradise than our nature had lost! Hail, oh, thou blessed Restorer of all our long lost privileges. *Robert Hawker.*

**Verse 5.** *Thou knowest.* The knowledge of God is of a double use to pious men. The first is, as we observe in this place, to console the innocent: the second is, to make them circumspect, since all their thoughts, and words, and deeds are under the very eye of God. *Musculus.*

**Verse 5.** *Thou knowest my offences,* etc., that is to say, that I am not an offender. This verse is not a confession of sin, but a protestation of innocence, The writer maintains that he is a sufferer, not for his sins, but for his piety. See Ps 69:7, etc. *George R. Noyes, in "A New Translation of the Book of Psalms, with Notes," etc. 1846.*

**Verse 5.** *My sins are not hid from thee.* The sins of those for whom Christ died, by being imputed to him, no doubt became his in the eyes of the law, in such a sense as to make him answerable for them. But the Scriptures, be it observed, while they speak of him as "wounded for *our* transgressions, and bruised for *our* iniquities, "and as "bearing *our* sins in his own body on the tree, "as if afraid to use any forms of expression which would even seem to derogate from his immaculate purity, never speak

of the sins of those for whom he died as his *own* sins. *James Anderson's Note to Calvin in loc.*

**Verse 5.** *My sins are not hid.* Not as the first Adam, do I, the second Adam, hide myself or my *sins*, especially in thy sight, O God; but lifted up upon the cross I suffered without the gate for *sins* in such a way, that I desire that *my sins* should be conspicuous to every creature in heaven, earth, and hell—*my sins* which, as they refer to my person, are marked with no taint, and, as they pertain to my people believing in me, are blotted out by my blood. *Gerhohus.*

**Verse 6.** *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake,* etc. This says, that unless the carriage and deportment of the godly man redounds to the comfort of all the rest of the godly, it in some way tends to the discredit of the godly. Since this is the case, when they slip aside, or carry not aright; since they are all in hazard of doing so, it should be matter of affecting and afflicting exercise, lest they do so. Fellow professors are ashamed of the person that walketh not aright; they are ashamed that ever they should have been in company or fellowship with him; they are ashamed that ever such a person should have owned such a cause, and that ever such a thing should have befallen a professor of such a cause; and, besides, they are weakened by him in their hopes of persevering for themselves. Again, they are in hazard of being a discredit to all the godly, because, say they, it seems the Lord has granted no peremptory promise, as to the manner of their final perseverance; and corruption enough remains in them still, to overturn all their stock of grace, if they get not present renewed influences. *William Guthrie. 1620-1655.*

**Verse 6.** *Ashamed for my sake.* I pray that they may *not be confounded* by external enemies with their boundless insults and reproaches, because they seem to be the worshippers of a God crucified and dead, and are themselves like dead men, and lie rotting before his sepulchre, as if their good name were gone. Rather let my enemies who do not wish me to live be terror stricken at my angelic countenance, and fall like the dead. *Gerhohus.*

**Verse 6.** *For my sake.* *yb:* more exactly, *in me.* In these words the voice of the Sponsor of his people's peace is clearly audible. The prayer of the Sufferer has its answer in the declarative testimony which now forms the basis of the gospel: "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." 1Pe 2:6. *Arthur Pridham.*

**Verse 6.** Because I, for their sakes, do at thy command bear that shame which they should else have done, Lord, take it off from them, because thou hast laid it upon me; so it expressly follows, Ps 69:7: *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.* *Thomas Goodwin.*

**Verse 7.** *Shame hath covered my face.* It is a great question whether shame or death be the greater evil. There have been those who have rather chosen death, and have wiped off a dishonour with their blood. So Saul slew himself rather than he would fall into the hands of the Philistines, who would have insulted over him, and mocked him as they did Samson. So that king (Jer 38:19) rather chose to lose his country, life and all, than to be given to the Jews, his subjects, to be mocked of them...



Confusion of face is one of the greatest miseries that hell itself is set forth unto us by. There is nothing that a noble nature more abhors than shame, for honour is a spark of God's image; and the more of God's image there is in any one, the more is shame abhorred by him, which is the debasing of it, and so the greater and more noble any one's spirit, the more he avoids it. To a base, low spirit, indeed, shame is nothing; but to a great spirit (as to David), than to have his "glory turned into shame," as Ps 4:2, is nothing more grievous. And the greater glory any loseth, the greater is his shame. What must it be then to Christ, who because he was to satisfy God in point of honour debased by man's sin, therefore of all punishments besides, he suffered most of shame; it being also (as was said) one of the greatest punishments in hell. And Christ, as he assumed other infirmities of our nature, that made him passible in other things—as to be sensible of hunger, want of sleep, bodily torments, of unkindness, contempt, so likewise of disgrace and shame. He took that infirmity as well as fear; and though he had a strength to bear and despise it (as the author of the Hebrews speaks), yet none was ever more sensible of it. As the delicacy of the temper of his body made him more sensible of pains than ever any man was, so the greatness of his spirit made him more apprehensive of the evil of shame than ever any was. So likewise the infinite love and candour of his spirit towards mankind made him take in with answerable grief the unkindness and injuries which they heaped upon him.

*Thomas Goodwin.*

**Verse 8.** *A stranger unto my brethren.* Unless this aversion of his brethren had pained him, he would not have complained of it. It would not have pained him unless he had felt a special affection for them. *Musculus.*

**Verse 8.** In the east where polygamy prevails, the husband is a stern and unfeeling despot; his harem a group of trembling slaves; and the children, while they regard their common father with indifference or terror, cling to their own mother with the fondest affection, as the only part, as the only parent, in whom they feel an interest. Hence it greatly aggravated the affliction of David that he had become *an alien unto his mother's children*: the enmity of the other children of his father, the children of his father's other wives, gave him less concern. *W. Greenfield, in Comprehensive Bible.*

**Verse 9.** *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* He who recollects that the Scriptures speak of a "peace which passeth understanding," and a "joy unspeakable and full of glory," will be more disposed to lament the low state of his own feeling, than to suspect the propriety of sentiments the most rational and scriptural, merely because they rise to a pitch that he has never reached. The Sacred Oracles afford no countenance to the supposition that devotional feelings are to be condemned as visionary and enthusiastic merely on account of their intenseness and elevation; provided they be of the right kind, and spring from legitimate sources, they never teach us to suspect they can be carried too far. David danced before the Lord with all his might, and when he was reproached for degrading himself in the eyes of his people by indulging in such transports, he replied,

"If this be vile, I will yet make myself more vile." That the objects which interest the heart in religion are infinitely more durable and important than all others will not be disputed; and why should it be deemed irrational to be affected by them in a degree somewhat suitable to their value? *Robert Hall*, 1764-1831.

**Verse 9.** *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* Consider the examples of the saints of old, who have taken heaven by force. David broke his sleep for meditation. Ps 119:148. His violence for heaven was boiled up to zeal, Ps 119:139: "My zeal hath consumed me." And Paul did "reach forth (epekteinomenoz) unto those things which were before." The Greek word signifies to stretch out the neck, a metaphor taken from racers that strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold upon the prize. We read of Anna, a prophetess (Lu 2:37); "she departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." How industrious was Calvin in the Lord's vineyard. When his friends persuaded him for his health's sake to remit a little of his labour, saith he, "Would you have the Lord find me idle when he comes?" Luther spent three hours a day in prayer. It is said of holy Bradford, preaching, reading, and prayer, was his whole life. I rejoice, said bishop Jewel, that my body is exhausted in the labours of my holy calling. How violent were the blessed martyrs! They wore their fetters as ornaments, they snatched up torments as crowns, and embraced the flames as cheerfully as Elijah did the fiery chariot that came to fetch him to heaven. Let racks, fires, pullies, and all manner of torments come, so I may win Christ, said Ignatius. These pious souls "resisted unto blood." How should this provoke our zeal! Write after these fair copies. *Thomas Watson*.

**Verse 9.** *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* Zeal in and for true religion is a praise worthy thing. Was *David* zealous? it may then become a royal spirit. Was *Christ* our Saviour zealous? it may become an heroic spirit. Albeit, zeal is out of grace with most men who sit still, and love to be at quiet rest; yet it is no disgrace to any generous spirit that is regenerate, to have the zeal of God's house to eat him up. It is a slander to call it folly. Was not zealous David wiser than his teachers, than his enemies, than the aged? Lukewarm men call it fury; God's Spirit names it a "live coal," that hath a most vehement flame. Why bears zeal the imputation of indiscretion, rashness, puritanism, or headiness? Was it David's rashness? It was fervency in religion. Was Christ indiscreet? The wisdom of his Father. Festus called Paul mad, with a loud voice (Ac 26:24), when he spake but words of truth and soberness (Ac 26:25). Christ's kinsmen thought that he was beside himself. Mr 3:21. Was the judgment of such stolid men any disparagement to our Saviour's zeal? Nay, it is a commendation. To root out evil from, and to establish good in, the house of God is a good thing. Ga 4:18. *Thomas Wilson*, in "A Sermon preached before sundry of the Honourable House of Commons, "entitled, "David's Zeal for Zion." 1641.

**Verse 9.** *Zeal, reproaches.* Grace never rises to so great a height as it does in times of persecution. Suffering times are a Christian's harvest times. Let me instance in that grace of zeal: I remember

Moulin speaking of the French Protestants, saith, "When Papists hurt us for reading the Scriptures, we burn with zeal to be reading of them; but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old almanacs, " etc. All the reproaches, frowns, threatenings, oppositions, and persecutions that a Christian meets with in a way of holiness, do but raise his zeal and courage to a greater height. Michal's scoffing at David did but inflame and raise his zeal: "If this be to be vile, I will be more vile," 2Sa 6:20-22. Look, as fire in the winter burns the hotter, by an antiperistasiv because of the coldness of the air; so in the winter of affliction and persecution, that divine fire, the zeal of a Christian, burns so much the hotter, and flames forth so much the more vehemently and strongly. In times of greatest affliction and persecution for holiness' sake, a Christian hath, first, a good captain to lead and encourage him; secondly, a righteous cause to prompt and embolden him; thirdly, a gracious God to relieve and succour him; fourthly, a glorious heaven to receive and reward him; and, certainly, these things cannot but mightily raise him and inflame him under the greatest opposition and persecution. These things will keep him from fearing, fawning, fainting, sinking, or flying in a stormy day; yea, these things will make his face like the face of an adamant, as God's promised to make Ezekiel's. Eze 3:7-9, and Job 41:24. Now an adamant is the hardest of stones, it is harder than a flint, yea, it is harder than the nether millstone. The naturalists (Pliny) observe, that the hardness of this stone is unspeakable: the fire cannot burn it, nor so much as heat it through, nor the hammer cannot break it, nor the water cannot dissolve it, and, therefore, the Greeks call it an adamant from its untameableness; and in all storms the adamant shrinks not, it fears not, it changeth not its hue; let the times be what they will, the adamant is still the same. In times of persecution, a good cause, a good God, and a good conscience will make a Christian like an adamant, it will make him invincible and unchangeable. When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was presented to him in a dream, saith the history, a pillar of fire with this motto, *Talis est Basilius*, Basil is such a one, he is all on a light fire for God. Persecutions will but set a Christian all on a light fire for God. *Thomas Brooks*.

**Verse 9.** *Eaten me up.* The verb means, not only "to eat up, to devour, "but "to corrode, or consume, "by separating the parts from each another, as fire. And the radical import of the Hebrew word for *zeal* seems to be "to eat into, corrode, as fire." The word, says Parkhurst, is in the Hebrew Bible generally applied to the fervent or ardent affections of the human frame; the effects of which are well known to be ever like those of fire, corroding and consuming. And, accordingly, the poets, both ancient and modern, abound with descriptions of these ardent and consuming affections, taken from fire and its effects. *Richard Mant*.

**Verse 9.** *Eaten me up.* He who is zealous in his religion, or ardent in his attachments, is said to be eaten up. "Old Muttoo has determined to leave his home for ever; he is to walk barefoot to the Ganges for the salvation of his soul: his zeal has eaten him up." *J. Roberts' Oriental Illustrations*.

**Verse 9.** *The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.* We should, if it were possible, labour to wipe off all the reproach of Christ, and take it upon ourselves that we might rather be spit upon and contemned than Christ. It was a brave speech of Ambrose, "he wished it would please God to turn all the adversaries from the church upon himself, and let them satisfy their thirst with his blood:" this is a true Christian heart. And, therefore, if it be for our sakes, and we have anything in the business by which Christ is reproached, we should be willing rather to sacrifice ourselves, than that Christ should be reproached; and as Jonah, when he knew that the tempest rose for his sake, says he, "Cast me into the sea;" and so Nazianzen, when contention rose about him, says he, "Cast me into the sea, let me lose my place, rather than the name of Christ should suffer for me." *Jeremiah Burroughs.*

**Verse 10.** *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.* Behold here, virtue is accounted vice; truth, blasphemy; wisdom, folly. Behold, the peace maker of the world is judged a seditious person; the fulfiller of the law, a breaker of the law; our Saviour, a sinner; our God, a devil. O poor troubled heart! wherefore dost thou weakly wail for any injury or abuse that is offered to thee? God handleth thee no otherwise in this world than he handled his only Son, who hath pledged thee in this bitter potion; not only taking essay thereof, but drinking to thee a full draught. It is not only a comfort, but a glory, to be a partner and fellow sufferer with Christ, who delighteth also to see in us some representation of himself. Dogs bark not at those whom they know, and with whom they are familiar; but against strangers they usually bark; not always for any hurt which they feel or fear, but commonly by nature or depraved custom. How then canst thou be a stranger to the world, if it dost not molest thee; if it detracts not from thee? *Sir John Hayward (1560-1627), in "The Sanctuary of a Troubled Soul."*

**Verse 10.** There is nothing so well meant, but it may be ill interpreted. *Simon Patrick.*

**Verses 10-11.** That Christ was derided and scoffed at is plain, from Mark 5; for, when he said, "The girl is not dead, but sleepeth, they laughed him to scorn;" and when he spoke of the necessity of giving alms, "Now, the Pharisees, who were covetous heard all these things, and they derided him." And, in his passion, he was derided by the soldiers, by Herod, by the high priests, and many others. *Robert Bellarmine.*

**Verse 11.** *I made sackcloth also my garment,* etc. Though we nowhere read that Jesus put on sackcloth on any occasion, yet it is not improbable that he did; besides, the phrase may only intend that he mourned and sorrowed at certain times, as persons do when they put on sackcloth; moreover, as the common garb of his forerunner was raiment of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle; it is very likely his own was very mean, suitable to his condition, who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor. *And I became a proverb to them;* a byword; so that, when they saw any person in sackcloth or in vile raiment, behold, such an one looks like Jesus of Nazareth. *John Gill.*

**Verse 11.** *I became a proverb.* Two things are usually implied when a man is said to be a byword. First, that he is in a very low condition: some men are so high that the tongues of the common people dare not climb over them, but where the hedge is low every man goes over. Secondly, that he is in a despised condition; to be a byword, carries a reflection of disgrace. He that is much spoken of, in this sense, is ill spoken of; and he is quite lost in the opinion of men, who is thus found in their discourse... Hence, observe, great sufferers in many things of this world, are the common subject of discourses, and often the subject of disgrace. Such evils as few men have felt or seen, all men will be speaking of. Great sorrows, especially if they be the sorrows of great men, are turned into songs, and poetry plays its part with the saddest disasters... Holy David met with this measure from men in the day of his sorrows: *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb (or a byword) to them.* In the next verse he tells us in detail who did this: *They that sit in the gate (that is, great ones) speak against me, and I was the song of the drunkard,* that is, of the common sort. *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 12.** *They that sit in the gate: i.e.,* as it is generally interpreted, the judges or chief persons of the state; for the gates of cities were the places of judicature. But Hillary interprets this of those who sat *to beg* at the gates of the city; which seems a more probable interpretation, better to agree with the design of the psalmist, and to suit with the *drunkards*, mentioned in the next clause. *Samuel Burder.*

**Verse 12.** *They that sit in the gate.* The magistrates at the gate. Literally, "assessors at the gate; ""judges sitting to determine causes." *John Mason Good.*

**Verse 12.** *I was the song of the drunkards.* Holy walking is the *drunkard's song*, as David was; and so preciseness and strictness of walking is ordinarily: the world cannot bear the burning and shining conversations of some of the saints; they are so cuttingly reprov'd by them, that with those heathens, they curse the sun, that by its shining doth scorch them. It is no new thing; the seed of the serpent did always persecute the seed of the woman; and he that was born after the flesh, persecutes him that was born after the spirit; even so it is now, saith the apostle; and so it is now, may we say. Ishmael mocked Isaac, and is it not so still? Or, if it be not so bold a sin as formerly, it is because the times, not sinner's hearts, are changed; they malign them still, watch for their halting: "report, say they, and we will report it." *John Murcot.*

**Verse 12.** *I was the song of the drunkards.* When magistrates discountenance true religion, then it becometh a matter of derision to rascals, and to every base villain without control, and a table talk to every tippler. The shame of the cross is more grievous than the rest of the trouble of it: this is the fourth time that the shame of the cross is presented unto God, in these last four verses: *I was the song of the drunkards;* after complaining of his being reproach'd and being *made a proverb.* *David Dickson.*

**Verse 12.** There is a tavern, or profane mirth, in drinking, and roaring, and revelling, and instead of another minstrel, David must be *the song of the drunkards*; nor can the Philistines be merry unless Samson be made the fool in the play (Jud 16:25): "Unless they scoff and jeer the ways and servants of God" (as Mr. Greenham saith), "the fools cannot tell how to be merry; "and then the Devil is merry with them for company. But what? Not merry without abusing their host? This some must dearly pay for, when a reckoning is called for; or, they rather called to make it. Then they will be off from their merry pins, and will find that this was very far from being the "Comfort of the Holy Ghost, "wherein and whereby that good Spirit and our Comforter was grieved, and holiness scoffed and laughed at. *Anthony Tuckney (1599-1670), in "A Good Day Well Improved."*

**Verse 13.** *But as for me, my prayer,* etc. The phrase is full of emphasis; *And I, my prayer to thee:* that is, such am I altogether, this is my main occupation; as it is in Ps 109:4: *And I, a prayer;* this was my employment, this ever my only refuge, this my present help and remedy. *Venema.*

**Verse 13.** *An acceptable time.* All times are not alike. We will not always find admittance at the same rate, with the same ease. As we will not always be chiding, so he will not always be so pleasing neither. We may knock, and knock again, and yet stand without a while; sometimes, so long, till our knees are ready to sink under us, our eyes ready to drop out, as well as drop with expectation, and our hearts ready to break in pieces, while none heareth, or none regardeth. We should have come before, or pitched our coming at a better time... The prophet David expressly speaks of *an acceptable time* to make our prayers in. And, "Today if you will hear his voice, "in the psalmist, paraphrased by the apostle, "Today, while it is called today, "shows there is a set day, or days, of audience with God, wherein he sets himself, as it were, with all readiness to hear and help us—an *accepted time*. And will ye, next, know what it is that makes it so? There are but two things that do. Either God's being in a good or pleasing disposition towards us, or our being in a good and pleasing disposition towards him. Come we but to him in either of these, and we have nicked the time; we are sure to be accepted. *Mark Frank. 1613-1664.*

**Verse 13.**

Heavier the cross, the heartier prayer;  
The bruised herbs most fragrant are.  
If sky and wind were always fair,  
The sailor would not watch the star;  
And David's Psalms had never been sung  
If grief his heart had never wrung.

—*From the German.*

**Verse 15.** Faith in God giveth hope to be helped, and is half a deliverance before the full deliverance come; for the psalmist is now with his head above water, and not so afraid as when he began the

Psalm. *David Dickson*.

**Verse 15.** *The pit.* According to Dean Stanley, the word *Beer* here used is always rendered "well," except in this and three other cases. When such wells no longer yielded a full supply of water they were used as prisons, no care being taken to cleanse out the mire remaining at the bottom. The Dean also tells us in the Appendix to his "Sinai and Palestine," that "they have a broad margin of masonry round this mouth, and often a stone filling up the orifice." The rolling of this stone over the mouth of the well was the well's "shutting her mouth;" and the poor prisoner was, to all intents and purposes, buried alive. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 17.** *Hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble.* An upright servant, albeit he be troubled for God's cause, and do miss comfort from God; yet will he not change his Master, nor despair of his favour. *David Dickson*.

**Verse 17.** *Hide not thy face.* The proper sense of the word *rtm*, gives the meaning to the phrase, *veil not thy face from thy servant*. In this there is a reference to a king, who, to prevent promiscuous approach to his chamber, spreads a veil before it, and admits to his presence only his minister of high confidence. So in Ps 31:21. The face of God is his majesty, and his gracious and favourable presence; the *servant* of God is his minister enjoying intimate access, and *to veil the face from him* is to prevent him coming into the presence of God; and, therefore, it belongs to the servant of God to be treated in a widely different manner. *Hermann Venema*.

**Verse 17.** *Thy servant.* Hide not, he says, from thy servant; as if he should say, such as I am, I am thy servant. It belongs to the Master to take care of his servant, if in peril for his sake. In this same verse he says he is in a strait. In Ps 69:18 he declares that he is in jeopardy of his life. *Musculus*.

**Verse 19.** *Thou hast known my reproach,* etc. It is a great deal of comfort that God does take notice of our reproaches; this was the comfort of the psalmist. If a man suffer reproach, and disgrace, and trouble for his friends, while he is abroad from them; O, says he, did my friends know what I suffer, and suffer for them, it would comfort me: if it be comfort to be known, much more when they shall be accounted their own. Christ is acquainted with all the sufferings of every member; and, therefore, do not say, I am a poor creature; who takes notice of my sufferings? Heaven takes notice of your sufferings; Christ takes notice of them better than yourselves. *Jeremiah Burroughs*.

**Verse 20.** *Reproach hath broken my heart.* Mental emotions and passions are well known by all to affect the actions of the heart, in the way of palpitation, fainting, etc. That these emotions and passions, when in overwhelming excess, occasionally, though rarely, produce laceration or rupture of the walls of the heart, is stated by most medical authorities who have written on the affections of this organ; and our poets even allude to this effect as an established fact.

"The grief that does not speak,

Whispers the over fraught heart, and bids it break."

But, if ever human heart was riven and ruptured by the mere amount of mental agony that was endured, it would surely, we might even argue, *a priori*, be that of our Redeemer, when, during those dark and dreadful hours on the cross, he, "being made a curse for us, ""bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows, "and suffered for sin the malediction of God and man, "full of anguish, "and now "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." There are theological as well as medical arguments in favour of the opinion that Christ, in reality, died from a ruptured or broken heart. If the various wondrous prophecies and minute predictions in Psalms 22 and 69, regarding the circumstances connected with Christ's death, be justly held as literally true, such as, "They pierced my hands and my feet, ""They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture, "etc., why should we regard as merely metaphorical, and not as literally true, also, the declarations in the same Psalms, *Reproach hath broken my heart, "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels, " Sir James Young Simpson (1811-1870), in W. Stroud's "Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ."*

**Verse 20.** *I looked for some to take pity, but there was none.* Even under ordinary circumstances we yearn for sympathy. Without it, the heart will contract and droop, and shut like a flower in an unkindly atmosphere, but it will open again amidst the sounds of frankness and the scenes of love. When we are in trouble, this want is in proportion still more pressing; and, for the sorrowful heart to feel alone, is a grief greater than nature can sustain. A glance of sympathy seems to help it more than the gift of untold riches; and a loving look, even from a little child who is sorry for us, or a simple word from some homely friend, will sometimes brace the spirit to new exertions, and seem almost to waken life within the grasp of death. *Charles Stanford, in "Central Truths." 1859.*

**Verse 21.** *They gave me also gall,* etc. Such are the comforts often administered by the world, to an afflicted and deserted soul. *George Horne.*

**Verse 21.** *Gall and vinegar* are here put together to denote the most unpalatable forms of food and drink. The passion of our Lord was providentially so ordered as to furnish a remarkable coincidence with this verse. The Romans were accustomed to give sour wine, with an infusion of myrrh, to convicts on the cross, for the purpose of deadening the pain. This practice was adhered to in our Saviour's case (Mr 15:23). Though in itself not cruel, but the contrary, it formed part of the great process of murderous persecution. On the part of the Roman soldiery it may have been an act of kindness; but, considered as an act of the unbelieving Jews, it was giving *gall and vinegar* to one already overwhelmed with anguish. And so Matthew, in accordance with his general method, represents it as a verification of this passage (Mt 27:34). He does not contradict Mark's account, before referred to, but merely intimates that the wine and myrrh thus offered were to be regarded as identical with the gall and vinegar of this prediction. And, in order to prevent the coincidence from being overlooked, our Lord, before he died, complained of thirst, and vinegar was administered. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*



**Verse 21.** *Gall for my meat.* Since the life of sin first began in tasting, contrary to the obedience due to God, the Redeemer of sinners willed to be obedient even unto death, upon the cross, and to end his life, in fulfilment of the prophecy with the bitter taste of gall and vinegar, that, in this manner, we, seeing the beginning of our perdition and the end of our redemption, might feel ourselves to be most sufficiently redeemed and most perfectly cured. *Thome de Jesu (1582), in "The Sufferings of Jesus."*

**Verse 21.** *Vinegar.* Commentators have frequently remarked the refreshing quality of the Eastern vinegar. I shall not repeat their observations, but rather would ask, why the psalmist prophetically complains of the giving him *vinegar* to drink, in that *deadly thirst*, which, in another Psalm, he describes by the tongue's cleaving to the jaws, if it be so refreshing? Its refreshing quality cannot be doubted; but may it not be replied, that, besides the gall which he mentions, and which ought not to be forgotten, vinegar itself, refreshing as it is, was only made use of by the meanest people? When a *royal* personage has vinegar given him in his thirst, the *refreshment of a slave*, of a *wretched prisoner*, instead of that of a *prince*, he is greatly dishonoured, and may well complain of it as a bitter insult, or represent such insults by this image. *Sweet wines*, as appears from the ancient *Eastern* translators of the Septuagint, were chiefly esteemed formerly, for that which our version renders "*royal wine* in abundance, according to the state of the King, "(Es 1:7.) they translate, "much and *sweet wine*, such as the *King himself* drank." Perhaps, it was with a view to this, that the soldiers offered our Lord *vinegar* (wine that was become very sour), in opposition to that *sweet wine* princes were wont to drink: for Luke tells us that they did this in mockery (Lu 23:36.) "And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him vinegar." Medicated wine, to deaden their sense of pain, was wont, we are told, to be given to Jewish criminals, when about to be put to death; but, they gave our Lord vinegar, and that in mockery—in mockery (as they did other things) of his *claim to royalty*. But the force of this does not appear, if we do not recollect the quality of the wines drank anciently by princes, which, it seems, were of the *sweet* kind. *Thomas Harmer.*

**Verse 22.** The imprecations in this verse and those following it are revolting only when considered as the expression of malignant selfishness. If uttered by God, they shock no reader's sensibilities, nor should they, when considered as the language of an ideal person, representing the whole class of righteous sufferers, and particularly him, who though he prayed for his murderers while dying (Lu 23:34), had before applied the words of this very passage to the unbelieving Jews (Mt 23:38), as Paul did afterwards (Ro 11:9-10). The general doctrine of providential retribution, far from being confined to the Old Testament, is distinctly taught in many of our Saviour's parables. See Mt 21:41 22:7 24:51. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

**Verse 22.** *Let their table become a snare.* *Their table* figuratively sets forth their prosperity, the abundance of all things. It represents peace and security, as in Ps 33:5 Job 26:16. It likewise describes mutual friendship, a blending of minds and plans; the emblem and sign whereof *convivia*

are accustomed to be. Ps 41:10 Da 11:27. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 22.** *Let their table, etc.* One said well, *Licitis perimus omnes, etc.,* "Ruin usually ariseth from the use of lawful things; " there being most danger where it is least suspected. In all our comforts, there is a forbidden fruit, which seemeth fair and tasteth sweet, but which must not be touched. *Henry Wilkinson (1675), in "Morning Exercises."*

**Verse 22.** *Let their table become a snare.* Many would have excused themselves from following Christ, in the parable of the feast: some had bought land, some had married wives, and others had bought yokes of oxen, and could not come (Lu 14:18-20), that is, an immoderate love of the world hindered them: their lawful enjoyments, from servants, became their idols; they worshipped them more than God, and would not quit them to come to God. But this is recorded to their reproach; and we may herein see the power of self upon the worldly man, and the danger that comes to him by the abuse of lawful things. What, thy wife dearer to thee than thy Saviour! and thy land and oxen preferred to thy soul's salvation. O beware, that thy comforts prove not snares first, and then curses: to overrate them, is to provoke him that gave them to take them away again. Come, and follow him that giveth life eternal to the soul. *William Penn (1644-1718), in "No Cross, No Crown."*

**Verse 22.** *Let their table become a snare.* That is, for a recompense for their inhumanity and cruelty towards me. Michaelis shows how exactly these comminations were fulfilled in the history of the final siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. Many thousands of the Jews had assembled in the city to eat the paschal lamb, when Titus unexpectedly made an assault upon them. In this siege, the greater part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem miserably perished. *William Walford.*

**Verse 22-23.** Observe the Divine retribution of the Jews. They gave gall and vinegar as food and drink to Christ; and their own spiritual food and drink has become a snare to them. His eyes were blindfolded; their eyes were darkened. His loins were scourged; their loins were made to shake. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

**Verse 23-28.** He denounces ten plagues, or effects of God's wrath, to come upon them for their wickedness. *David Dickson.*

**Verse 24.** *Pour out.* Observe what is denoted by *pouring out.* First, the facility with which God is able, without any labour, to destroy his enemies, as easy is it as to incline a vial full of liquid and pour it out. Secondly, the pouring out denotes the abundance of his anger. Thirdly, that his wrath is sudden, overwhelming, and inevitable. When it drops, one must take care; when it is poured forth, it crushes the thoughtless. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 28.** *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.* All the Israelites who came up out of Egypt were put down in a muster roll of the living, called "the writing of the house of Israel" (Eze 13:9), and "the book of life." Those who had died were excluded when the names were written out afresh each year. They were, thereby, consigned to oblivion (Pr 10:7). Hence, *the book of life* was used as an

image for God's *book of predestination to eternal life* (Ps 139:16 Ex 32:32 Ps 87:6 Da 12:1 Php 4:3 Re 17:8 13:8 Re 21:27; Lu 10:20). The book of life, *in the human point of view*, has names written in it who have a name to live, but are dead, being in it only by external call, or in their own estimation, and in that of others. But, *in the divine point of view*, it contains only those who are elected finally to life. The former may be blotted out, as was Judas (Re 3:5 Mt 13:12 25:29 7:23 Ex 32:33); but the latter never (Re 20:12,15 Joh 10:28-29 Ac 13:48). *A. R. Fausset.*

**Verse 28.** *Let them be wiped out*, etc. This verse alludes to the ancient Jewish practice of recording the names of the inhabitants of every division, or tribe, of the people, in a volume somewhat similar to the *Dom-boc* of the Saxons. See Lu 2:1. The names of those who died were blotted out or *wiped* out, and appeared no longer on the list of the living. Such a book is attributed to God in Ps 139:16: and the *blotting out of Moses from God's book*, in Ex 32:32, is a figurative expression, for depriving him of life. *Richard Warner.*

**Verse 28.** *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living*, etc. We come to the question, Whether to be written in heaven be an infallible assurance of salvation; or, whether any there registered may come to be blotted out? The truth is, that none written in heaven can ever be lost; yet they object against it this verse. Hence, they infer, that some names once there recorded are afterwards put out; but this opinion casteth a double aspersion on God himself. Either it makes him ignorant of future things, as if he foresaw not the end of elect and reprobate, and so were deceived in decreeing some to be saved that shall not be saved; or, that his decree is mutable, in excluding those upon their sins whom he hath formerly chosen. From both these weaknesses St. Paul vindicates him (2Ti 2:19): "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." First, "The Lord knows them that are his; "this were not true if God's prescience could be deluded. Then, his "foundation stands sure; "but that were no sure foundation, if those he hath decreed to be his should afterwards fall out not to be his. The very conclusion of truth is this *impossibilis est deletio*; they which are "written in heaven" can never come into hell. To clear this from the opposed doubt, among many, I will cull out three proper distinctions:

1. One may be said to be written in heaven *simpliciter*, and *secundum quid*. He that is simply written there, *in quantum praedestinatus ad vitam*, because elected to life, can never be blotted out. He that is written after a sort may, for he is written *non secundum Dei praescientiam, sed secundum praesentem justitiam*—not according to God's former decree, but according to his present righteousness. So they are said to be blotted out, not in respect of God's knowledge, for he knows they never were written there; but according to their present condition, apostatising from grace to sin. (*Lyra.*)

2. Some are blotted out *non secundum rei veritatem, sed hominum opinionem*—not according to the truth of the thing but according to men's opinion. It is usual in the Scriptures to say a thing is done

*quando innotescat fieri*, when it is declared to be done. Hypocrites have a simulation of outward sanctity, so that men in charity judge them to be written in heaven. But when those glistening stars appear to be only *ignes fatui*, foolish meteors, and fall from the firmament of the church, then we say they are blotted out. The written *ex existentia*, by a perfect being, are never lost; but *ex apparentia*, by a dissembled appearance, may. Some God so writes, *in se ut simpliciter habituri vitam*—that they have life simply in themselves, though not of themselves. Others he so writes, *ut habeant non in se, sed in sua causa*; from which falling they are said to be obliterated. (*Aquinas.*)

3. Augustine says, we must not so take it, that God first writes and then dasheth out. For if a Pilate could say, *Quod scripsi, scripsi*—"What I have written, I have written," and it shall stand; shall God say, *Quod scripsi expungam*—What I have written, I will wipe out, and it shall not stand? They are written, then, *secundum spem ipsorum, qui ibi se scriptos putabant*—according to their own hope that presumed their names there; and are blotted out *quando ipsis constet illos non ibi fuisse*—when it is manifest to themselves that their names never had any such honour of inscription. This even that Psalm strengthens whence they fetch their opposition: *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous*. So that to be blotted out of that book, it is, indeed, never to be written there. To be wiped out in the end, is but a declaration that such were not written in the beginning. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 32.** *Your heart shall live that seek God.* As such who are poor in spirit, and truly humbled, do live upon God's alms, and are daily at his doors for relief of their necessities, and for communion with his gracious goodness; so shall they thrive well in this trade. *David Dickson.*

**Verse 32.** *Your heart shall live.* The *heart*, or the *soul*, is said *to live, to be converted*, or to return, when it is refreshed and cured of its pains and griefs. In this way it could be said of Jacob, when the good tidings were brought, that his *spirit revived*... On the contrary, when Nabal heard the bad news, it is recorded that *his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.* *Lorinus.*

**Verse 33.** *The Lord heareth the poor.* The consolation is much greater when it is said, "The Lord heareth the poor," than if it were written, He hath heard poor David. *Musculus.*

---

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Verse 1.** Our trials like waters.

1. They should be kept out of the heart.
2. There are, however, leaks which admit them.
3. Take note when the hold is filling.
4. Use the pumps, and cry for help.

**Verses 2-3.** The sinner aware of his position, unable to hope, overwhelmed with fear, finding no comfort in prayer, unvisited with divine consolation. Direct and console him.

**Verse 3.**

1. Here is faith in the midst of trouble: *My God.*
2. Hope in the midst of disappointment: *Mine eyes fail, etc.*
3. Prayer in the midst of discouragement: *I am weary, etc.; My throat, etc.* Or, (a) There is praying beyond prayer: *I am weary, etc.;* (b) Hoping beyond hope: *Mine eyes, etc. G. R.*

**Verse 4.** Jesus as the Restorer, the Christian imitating him in the same office; Christianity a power which will do this for the whole race in due season.

**Verse 5.** *Our foolishness.* Wherein it appears generally, how it may display itself in individuals, what its occasions, and what are the divine provisions to meet it.

**Verse 5.**

1. God's knowledge of sin is an inducement to repent.
  - (a) Because it is foolish to endeavour to hide any sin from him.
  - (b) Because it is impossible to confess all our sin to him.
2. It is an encouragement to hope for pardon.
  - (a) Because, in the full knowledge of sin, he has declared himself to be merciful and ready to forgive.
  - (b) Because he has made provision for pardon, not according to our knowledge of sin, but his own.

**Verses 8-9.**

1. A grievous trial.
2. An honourable reason for it: for Christ's sake.
3. Consoling supports under it.

**Verse 9.**

1. The object of zeal: *thy house; thy Zion; thy Church.*
2. The degree of zeal: *hath eaten me up.* Our Lord was consumed by his own zeal. So Paul: *And I if I be offered up, etc.*
3. The manifestation of zeal: *The reproaches, etc.;* of thy justice; of thy law; of thy moral government; of thy lovingkindness. "Who himself bare our sins," etc. *G. R.*

**Verses 10-12.** A prophecy.

1. Of the Saviour's tears: *When I wept.*
2. Of his fasting.
3. Of reproach.
4. Of his humiliation: *I made sackcloth, etc.*
5. Of the perversion of his words: as, "I will destroy this temple," etc.
6. Of the opposition of the Pharisees, and rulers: *They that sit in the gate, etc.*
7. Of the contempt of the lowest of the people: *I was the song, etc. G. R.*

**Verse 11.** Proverbial sayings of a scoffing character.

**Verse 13.** *An acceptable time.* While life lasts usually, and especially when we are repentant, feel our need, are importunate, give all glory to God, have faith in his promise, and expect a gracious reply.

**Verse 13.** *Multitude of thy mercy.* Seen in many forbearances before conversion, countless pardons, innumerable gifts, many promises, frequent visits, and abundant deliverances. Of all these who can count the thousandth part?

**Verse 13.** *The truth of thy salvation.* An instructive topic. Its reality, certainty, completeness, eternity, etc., all illustrate its *truth* under various aspects.

**Verses 14-16.**

1. The depth from which prayer may rise.
2. The height to which it may ascend. Thus Jonah, when at the bottom of the sea, says, "My prayer came up," etc. *G. R.*

**Verse 17.**

1. Prayer: *Hide not thy face.*
2. Person: *Thy servant.*
3. Plea: *For I am in trouble.*
4. Pressure: *Hear me speedily.*

**Verse 19.**

1. God knows what his people suffer; how much, how long, from whom, for what.
2. His people should find consolation in this knowledge.
  - (a) That trial is permitted by him.
  - (b) That it is apportioned by him.
  - (c) That it has its design from him.
  - (d) That when the design is accomplished, it will be removed by him. *G. R.*

**Verse 20.** The Saviour's broken heart. Broken hearts, such as are sentimental, caused by disappointed pride, penitence, persecution, sympathy, etc.

**Verse 21.** The conduct of men to Jesus throughout his entire life, rendering to him evil for all his good, and where good would have seemed to be the inevitable return.

**Verse 22.** *The table a snare.* Excess in feasting; looseness in conversation; want of principal in confederate councils; superstition in religion.

**Verse 23.** The judicial curse which falls on some despisers of Christ; their understandings fail to perceive the truth; and they tremble because they are unable to receive strengthening comforts.

**Verse 29.**

1. The humiliation that precedes exaltation.
  - (a) Deep: *I am poor and sorrowful.*
  - (b) Confessed: *I am poor,* etc.

2. The exaltation that follows humiliation.

(a) Divine: *Thy salvation, O Lord. Though the Lord be high, etc.*

(b) Complete: God does nothing by halves.

(c) Preeminent: *Set me up on high. G. R.*

**Verse 30-31.**

1. The effect of deliverance upon the people of God. It fills them with praise and thanksgiving.

2. The effect in relation to God. He is more pleased with it than with any other offerings: "Whoso offereth praise, "etc. *G. R.*

**Verse 32.**

1. The joy of a good man's heart is in the experience of others.

2. The life of his heart is in God.

**Verse 33.**

1. What the people of God are in their own esteem: "poor" and "prisoners."

2. What they are in the divine esteem: not unnoticed; not unheard; not despised.

**Verse 34.** *The sea, etc.* How God is, should be, and shall be praised by the sea.

**Verse 35.** Salvation, edification, preservation, peace, full assurance.

**Verses 35-36.** Observe the sequence:—"Save, ""build, ""dwell and have, ""inherit, ""love and dwell."

**Verse 36.**

1. The sure evidence of grace: "love his name."

2. The blessing given.

3. The enduring character of it: "shall dwell."

**Verse 36.**

1. The inheritance: "Inherit it; "we reign with Christ on earth, then in heaven.

2. The title.

(a) Legal: "Seed of his servants"—Abraham, Jacob, David—David's Lord and Son.

(b) Moral: "They that love his name." *G. R.*

**Psalm 70**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician, A Psalm of David.* So far the title corresponds with Psalm 40, of which this is a copy with variations. David appears to have written the full length Psalm, and also to have made this excerpt from it, and altered it to suit the occasion. It is a fit pendant to Psalm 69, and a

suitable preface to Psalm 71. *To bring to remembrance.* This is the poor man's memorial. David personally pleads with God that he may not be forgotten, but David's Lord may be heard here also. Even if the Lord seems to forget us, we must not forget him. This memorial Psalm acts as a connecting link between the two Psalms of supplicatory expostulation, and makes up with them a precious triad of song.

#### EXPOSITION

(The Reader is referred for full Exposition and Notes to Ps 40:13-17, in "*Treasury of David*, "Vol. 2, pp 267-268.)

**Verse 1.** This is the second Psalm which is a repetition of another, the former being Psalm 53, which was a rehearsal of Psalm 14. The present differs from the Fortieth Psalm at the outset, for that begins with, "Be pleased, "and this, in our version, more urgently with, Make haste; or, as in the Hebrew, with an abrupt and broken cry, *O God, to deliver me; O Lord, to help me hasten.* It is not forbidden us, in hours of dire distress, to ask for speed on God's part in his coming to rescue us. The only other difference between this and verse 13 of Psalm 40, is the putting of *Elohim* in the beginning of the verse for *Jehovah*, but why this is done we know not; perhaps, the guesses of the critics are correct, but perhaps they are not. As we have the words of this Psalm twice in the letter, let them be doubly with us in spirit. It is most meet that we should day by day cry to God for deliverance and help; our frailty and our many dangers render this a perpetual necessity.

**Verse 2.** Here the words, "together, "and, "to destroy it, "which occur in Psalm 40, are omitted: a man in haste uses no more words than are actually necessary. His enemies desired to put his faith to shame, and he eagerly entreats that they may be disappointed, and themselves covered with confusion. It shall certainly be so; if not sooner, yet at that dread day when the wicked shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt. Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them *be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt:* turned back and driven back are merely the variations of the translators. When men labour to turn others back from the right road, it is God's retaliation to drive them back from the point they are aiming at.

**Verse 3.** *Let them be turned back.* This is a milder term than that used in Psalm 40, where he cries, "let them be desolate." Had growing years matured and mellowed the psalmist's spirit? To be "turned back, "however, may come to the same thing as to be "desolate; " disappointed malice is the nearest akin to desolation that can well be conceived. For a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha. They thought to shame the godly, but it was their shame, and shall be their shame for ever. How fond men are of taunts, and if they are meaningless ahas, more like animal cries than human words, it matters nothing, so long as they are a vent for scorn and sting the victim. Rest assured, the enemies of Christ and his people shall have wages for their work; they shall be paid in their own coin; they loved



scoffing, and they shall be filled with it—yea, they shall become a proverb and a byword for ever.

**Verse 4.** Anger against enemies must not make us forget our friends, for it is better to preserve a single citizen of Zion, than to kill a thousand enemies. Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee. All true worshippers, though as yet in the humble ranks of seekers, shall have cause for joy. Even though the seeking commence in darkness, it shall bring light with it. And let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be *magnified*. Those who have tasted divine grace, and are, therefore, wedded to it, are a somewhat more advanced race, and these shall not only feel joy, but shall with holy constancy and perseverance tell abroad their joy, and call upon men to glorify God. The doxology, "Let the Lord's name be magnified, "is infinitely more manly and ennobling than the dog's bark of "Aha, aha."

**Verse 5.** *But I am poor and needy.* Just the same plea as in the preceding Psalm, Ps 69:29: it seems to be a favourite argument with tried saints; evidently our poverty is our wealth, even as our weakness is our strength. May we learn well this riddle. Make haste unto me, O God. This is written instead of "yet the Lord thinketh upon me, "in Psalm 40: and there is a reason for the change, since the key note of the Psalm frequently dictates its close. Psalm 40 sings of God's thoughts, and, therefore, ends therewith; but the peculiar note of Psalm 70 is "Make haste, "and, therefore, so it concludes. Thou art my help and my deliverer. My help in trouble, my deliverer out of it. O Lord, make no tarrying. Here is the name of "Jehovah" instead of "my God." We are warranted in using all the various names of God, for each has its own beauty and majesty, and we must reverence each by its holy use as well as by abstaining from taking it in vain. I have presumed to close this recapitulatory exposition with an original hymn, suggested by the watchword of this Psalm, "MAKE HASTE."

Make haste, O God, my soul to bless!

My help and my deliverer thou;

Make haste, for I am in deep distress,

My case is urgent; help me *now*.

Make haste, O God! make haste to save!

For time is short, and death is nigh;

Make haste ere yet I am in my grave,

And with the lost forever lie.

Make haste, for I am poor and low;

And Satan mocks my prayers and tears;

O God, in mercy be not slow,

But snatch me from my horrid fears.

Make haste, O God, and hear my cries;

Then with the souls who seek thy face,

And those who thy salvation prize,  
I will magnify thy matchless grace.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Verse 2.** *Let them be confounded; viz., among themselves, and in their own understandings: and put to shame; viz., in the sight and presence of men before whom they think to attain great glory, in banding themselves against me. Thomas Wilcocks.*

**Verse 3.** *Aha, aha.* In describing his human foes, our Saviour represents them as saying to him, *Aha, aha.* These exclamations are ebullitions of exulting insolence. They can escape from the lips of those only who are at once haughty and cruel, and insensible to the delicacies and decorum of demeanour. Doubtless, they would be the favourite expressions of the rude rabble that accompanied the traitor in his ignoble campaign against Incarnate Love, and of the rude aristocratic mob that held over the Apostle of Heaven the mockery of an ecclesiastical trial, and of the larger, more excited, and more rancorous multitude that insultingly accompanied him to the cross, and mocked him, and wagged their heads at him, and railed upon him as he meekly, but majestically, hung on the accursed tree. The prescient Saviour would, no doubt, catch in his ears the distant mutter of all the violent and ruthless exclamations with which his foes were about to rend the air; and, amid these heartless and sneering ejaculations, he could not but feel the keen and poisoning edge of the malevolent and hilarious cry, *Aha, aha.* O miracle of mercy! He who deserved the hallelujahs of an intelligent universe, and the special hosannas of all the children of men, had first to anticipate, and then to endure from the mouths of the very rebels whom he came to bless and to save, the malicious taunting of *Aha, aha.* *James Frame.*

**Verse 4.** *Such as love thy salvation.* They love it for its own sake; they love it for the sake of him who procured it by his obedience until death; they love it for the sake of that Holy Spirit who moved them to seek it and accept it; and they love it for the sake of their own souls, which they cannot but love, and which, without it, would be the most miserable outcasts in the universe. No wonder that in the light of its intrinsic importance, and of its intrinsic relations, they should be "such as love God's salvation." All men are lovers as well as seekers; for all men love. Some love money more than God's salvation; others love pleasure, even the pleasures of sin, more than God's salvation; and others love bustle and business more than God's salvation. But, as the stamp of the material, the temporal and the evanescent, is on all these earthly objects of men's love, the friends of Jesus elevate above them all, as the worthier object of their regard and embrace, the salvation of God. *James Frame.*

**Verse 4.** *Let God be magnified.* Not only *The Lord be magnified,* but also *alway.* Behold, when thou wast straying, and wast turned away from him; he recalled thee: *Be the Lord magnified.* Behold, he hath inspired thee with confession of sins; thou hast confessed, he hath given pardon: *Be the Lord*

*magnified....* Now, thou hast begun to advance, thou hast been justified, thou hast arrived at a sort of excellence of virtue; is it not a seemly thing that *thou* also sometime be magnified? No! *Let them say, Be the Lord alway magnified.* A sinner thou art, to be magnified in order that he may call; you confess, be he magnified in order that he may forgive: now thou livest justly, be he magnified in order that he may direct; you persevere even unto the end, be he magnified in order that he may glorify. *Be the Lord, then, alway magnified.* Let just men say this, let them say this that seek him. Whosoever doth not say this, doth not seek him... *Be the Lord magnified.* But, wilt thou thyself never be great? wilt thou be nowhere? In him was something, in me nothing; but if in him is whatsoever I am, *be he magnified,* not I. But, what of thee? *But I am poor and needy:* he is rich, he abounding, he needing nothing. Behold my light, behold whence I am illumined, for I cry, "Thou shalt illumine my candle, O Lord; my God, thou shalt illumine my darkness. The Lord doth loose men fettered, the Lord raiseth up men crushed, the Lord maketh wise the blind men, the Lord keepeth the proselytes." Ps 18:28 146:7. What, then, of thee? *But I am needy and poor.* I am like an orphan, my soul is like a widow destitute and desolate; help I seek, alway mine infirmity I confess. *But I am poor and needy.* There have been forgiven me my sins, now I have begun to follow the commandments of God; still, however, I am needy and poor. Why still needy and poor? Because I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind. Ro 7:23. Why needy and poor? Because, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Mt 5:6. Still I hunger, still I thirst. *Augustine.*

**Verse 5.** *But I am poor and needy.* He had been rich, but for our sake he had become poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. Out of the fulness of his grace he had voluntarily entered, for our sakes, into a state in which he had experience, and most bitter experience, of the want of the means of enjoyment... But the word here rendered *poor* is often elsewhere, translated afflicted; in various ways he was afflicted. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and the acquaintance of grief. He was reproached, and "reproach broke his heart." *James Frame.*

**Verse 5.** *I am poor and needy.* By this I hold to be meant the chastisements, and fiery trials that come from *God the Father;* the temptations and bitter assaults of that foul and fell fiend, *Satan;* the persecutions and vexations inflicted by the hands of unreasonable *and wicked men;* and (but in this following *Christ* must be exempted) the inward corruptions, disordered motions, unsettled affections, and the original pollutions brought from the mother's womb; with the soul and body's inaptness and unableness with cheerfulness and constancy to run the direct and just paths of God's commandments. Many of these made the Head, all of these (and more, too) the members, *poor and needy.* *John Barlow.* 1618.

**Verse 5.** *O Lord, make no tarrying.* His prayer for himself, like his prayer for his foes and for his friends, was answered. The Lord made no tarrying. Ere four and twenty hours had rolled past, his rescued spirit was in Paradise, and the crucified thief was with him. O, what a change! The morning

saw him condemned at the bar of an earthly tribunal, sentenced to death, and nailed to the bitter tree; before the evening shadowed the hill of Calvary, he was nestling in the bosom of God, and had become the great centre of attraction and of admiration to all the holy intelligences of the universe. The morning saw him led out through the gate of the Jerusalem below, surrounded by a ribald crowd, whose hootings rung in his ear; but ere the night fell, he had passed through the gate of the Jerusalem above, and his tread was upon the streets of gold, and angel anthems rose high through the dome of heaven, and joy filled the heart of God. *James Frame*.

**Verse 5.** (*third clause*). *Helper*, in all good works; *Deliverer*, from all evil ones. *Make no long tarrying*: it is the cry of the individual sinner. *Dionysius the Carthusian (1471) quoted in Neale and Littledale's Commentary*.

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

##### **Verse 1.**

1. Occasion of his prayer.
  - (a) Affliction.
  - (b) Helplessness.
2. Subject of his prayer. Deliverance, help.
3. Importunity of his prayer. The time of deliverance may be an answer to prayer, as well as deliverance itself.

##### **Verse 1.**

1. Times when such urgent prayer is allowable, praiseworthy, or faulty.
2. Reasons for expecting a speedy reply.
3. Consolations if delay should occur.

##### **Verse 2.**

1. There are those who seek our soul's hurt.
2. We must oppose them, not dally or yield.
3. Our best weapon is prayer to God.
4. Their defeat is here described.

##### **Verse 3.**

1. Who are these who cry "shame"?
2. What master do they serve?
3. What shall their wages be?

**Verse 4.** Joy for seekers, and employment for finders.

**Verse 4.** (*last clause*).

1. The character.

2. The saying.

3. The wish.

**Verse 5.**

1. Who needs help?

2. Who renders help?

3. What it comes to: "deliver."

4. What prayer it suggests.

**Verse 5.**

1. Confession! *I am poor and needy.*

2. Profession: *Thou art my help, etc.*

3. Supplication: *Make haste; Make no tarrying.*

**Psalm 71**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

---

**TITLE.** There is no title to this Psalm, and hence some conjecture that Psalm 70 is intended to be a prelude to it, and has been broken off from it. Such imaginings have no value with us. We have already met with five Psalms without title, which are, nevertheless, as complete as those which bear them. We have here *THE PRAYER OF THE AGED BELIEVER*, who, in holy confidence of faith, strengthened by a long and remarkable experience, pleads against his enemies, and asks further blessings for himself. Anticipating a gracious reply, he promises to magnify the Lord exceedingly.

**DIVISION.** The first four verses are faith's cry for help; the next four are a testimony of experience. From Ps 71:9-13, the aged saint pleads against his foes, and then rejoices in hope, Ps 71:14-16. He returns to prayer again in Ps 71:17-18, repeats the confident hopes which cheered his soul, Ps 71:19-21; and then he closes with the promise of abounding in thanksgiving. Throughout, this Psalm may be regarded as the utterance of struggling, but unstaggering, faith.

---

EXPOSITION

**Verse 2.** *Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape.* Be true, O God, to thy word. It is a righteous thing in thee to keep the promises which thou hast made unto thy servants. I have trusted thee, and thou wilt not be unrighteous to forget my faith. I am taken as in a net, but do thou liberate me from the malice of my persecutors. Incline thine ear unto me, and save me. Stoop to my

feebleness, and hear my faint whispers; be gracious to my infirmities, and smile upon me: I ask salvation; listen thou to my petitions, and save me. Like one wounded and left for dead by mine enemies, I need that thou bend over me and bind up my wounds. These mercies are asked on the plea of faith, and they cannot, therefore, be denied.

**Verse 3.** *Be thou my strong habitation.* Permit me to enter into thee, and be as much at home as a man in his own house, and then suffer me to remain in thee as my settled abode. Whereas foes molest me, I need a dwelling framed and bulwarked, to sustain a siege and resist the attacks of armies; let, then, thine omnipotence secure me, and be as a fortress unto me. Here we see a weak man, but he is in a strong habitation; his security rests upon the tower in which he hides, and is not placed in jeopardy through his personal feebleness. Whereunto I may continually resort. Fast shut is this castle against all adversaries, its gates they cannot burst open; the drawbridge is up, the portcullis is down, the bars are fast in their places; but, there is a secret door, by which friends of the great Lord can enter at all hours of the day or night, as often as ever they please. There is never an hour when it is unlawful to pray. Mercy's gates stand wide open, and shall do so, till, at the last, the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door. Believers find their God to be their habitation, strong and accessible, and this is for them a sufficient remedy for all the ills of their mortal life.

Thou hast given commandment to save me. Nature is charged to be tender with God's servants; Providence is ordered to work their good, and the forces of the invisible world are ordained as their guardians. David charged all his troops to spare the young man Absalom, but yet he fell. God's commandment is of far higher virtue, for it compels obedience, and secures its end. Destruction cannot destroy us, famine cannot starve us; but we laugh at both, while God's mandate shields us. No stones of the field can throw us down, while angels bear us up in their hands; neither can the beasts of the field devour us, while David's God delivers us from their ferocity, or Daniel's God puts them in awe of us. *For thou art my rock and my fortress.* In God we have all the security which nature which furnishes the rock, and art which builds the fortress, could supply; he is the complete preserver of his people. Immutability may be set forth by the rock, and omnipotence by the fortress. Happy is he who can use the personal pronoun "my"—not only once, but as many times as the many aspects of the Lord may render desirable. Is he a strong habitation? I will call him "*my strong habitation,*" and he shall be *my rock, my fortress, my God* (Ps 71:4), *my hope, my trust* (Ps 71:5), *my praise* (Ps 71:6). All mine shall be his, all his shall be mine. This was the reason why the psalmist was persuaded that God had commanded his salvation, namely, because he had enabled his to exercise a calm and appropriating faith.

**Verse 4.** *Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked.* God is on the same side with us, and those who are our enemies are also his, for they are wicked; therefore will the Lord surely rescue his own confederates, and he will not suffer the evil to triumph over the just. He who addresses such a

prayer as this to heaven, does more injury to his enemies than if he had turned a battery of Armstrongs upon them. Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. Being wicked to God, they become unrighteous towards men, and cruel in their persecutions of the godly. Two hands are here mentioned: they grasp and they crush; they strike and they would slay if God did not prevent; had they as many hands as Briarcus, the finger of God would more than match them.

**Verse 5.** *For thou art my hope, O Lord God.* God who gives us grace to hope in him, will assuredly fulfil our hope, and, therefore, we may plead it in prayer. His name is "Jehovah, the hope of Israel" (Jer 17:13); and, as he cannot be a false or failing hope, we may expect to see our confidence justified. Thou art my trust from my youth. David had proved his faith by notable exploits when he was a youth and ruddy; it was to him a cheering recollection, and he felt persuaded that the God of his youth would not forsake him in his age. They are highly favoured who can like David, Samuel, Josiah, Timothy, and others say, "Thou art my trust from my youth."

**Verse 6.** *By thee have I been holden up from the womb.* Before he was able to understand the power which preserved him, he was sustained by it. God knows us before we know anything. The elect of old lay in the bosom of God before they were laid on their mothers' bosoms; and when their infantile weakness had no feet strong enough to carry it, the Lord upheld it. We do well to reflect upon divine goodness to us in childhood, for it is full of food for gratitude. Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels. Even before conscious life, the care of God is over his chosen. Birth is a mystery of mercy, and God is with both mother and babe. If marriages are registered in heaven, we may be sure that births are also. Holy women do well to bless God for his mercy to them in nature's perilous hour; but every one who is born of woman has equal cause for thankfulness. She, whose life is preserved, should render thanks, and so should he whose life is given. My praise shall be continually of thee. Where goodness has been unceasingly received, praise should unceasingly be offered. God is the circle where praise should begin, continue, and endlessly revolve, since in him we live, and move, and have our being.

**Verse 7.** *I am as a wonder unto many.* "To thousand eyes a mark and gaze am I." The saints are men wondered at; often their dark side is gloomy even to amazement, while their bright side is glorious even to astonishment. The believer is a riddle, an enigma puzzling the unspiritual; he is a monster warring with those delights of the flesh, which are the all in all of other men; he is a prodigy, unaccountable to the judgments of ungodly men; a wonder gazed at, feared, and, by and by, contemptuously derided. Few understand us, many are surprised at us. But thou art my strong refuge. Here is the answer to our riddle. If we are strong, it is in God; if we are safe, our refuge shelters us; if we are calm, our soul hath found her stay in God. When faith is understood, and the grounds of her confidence seen, the believer is no longer a wonder; but the marvel is that so much unbelief remains among the sons of men.

**Verse 8.** *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.* What a blessed mouthful! A man never grows nauseated though the flavour of it be all day in his mouth. God's bread is always in our mouths, so should his praise be. He fills us with good; let us be also filled with gratitude. This would leave no room for murmuring or backbiting; therefore, may we well join with holy David in this sacred wish.

**Verse 9.** *Cast me not off in the time of old age.* David was not tired of his Master, and his only fear was lest his Master should be tired of him. The Amalekite in the Bible history left his Egyptian servant to famish when he grew old and sick, but not so the Lord of saints; even to hoar hairs he bears and carries us. Alas for us, if we were abandoned by our God, as many a courtier has been by his prince! Old age robs us of personal beauty, and deprives us of strength for active service; but it does not lower us in the love and favour of God. An ungrateful country leaves its worn out defenders to starve upon a scanty pittance, but the pensioners of heaven are satisfied with good things. Forsake me not when my strength faileth. Bear with me, and endure my infirmities. To be forsaken of God is the worst of all conceivable ills, and if the believer can be but clear of that grievous fear, he is happy: no saintly heart need be under any apprehension upon this point.

**Verse 10.** *For mine enemies speak against me.* Dogs howl over a dying lion. When David's arm was able to chastise his foes, they were yet impudent enough to slander him, and he fears that now they will take fresh license in the hour of his weakness. The text most properly means that his enemies had said that God would forsake him; and, therefore, he is the more earnest that the Lord's faithful dealings may give them the lie. And they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together. The psalmist had enemies, and these were most malicious; seeking his utter destruction, they were very persevering, and staid long upon the watch; to this they added cunning, for they lay in ambush to surprise him, and take him at a disadvantage; and all this they did with the utmost unanimity and deliberation, neither spoiling their design by want of prudence, nor marring its accomplishment by a lack of unity. The Lord our God is our only and all sufficient resort from every form of persecution.

**Verse 11.** *Saying, God hath forsaken him.* O bitter taunt! There is no worse arrow in all the quivers of hell. Our Lord felt this barbed shaft, and it is no marvel if his disciples feel the same. Were this exclamation the truth, it were indeed an ill day for us; but, glory be to God, it is a barefaced lie. Persecute and take him. Let loose the dogs of persecution upon him, seize him, worry him, for there is none to deliver him. Down with him, for he has no friends. It is safe to insult him, for none will come to his rescue. O cowardly boasts of a braggart foe, how do ye wound the soul of the believer: and only when his faith cries to his Lord is he able to endure your cruelty.

**Verse 12.** *O God, be not far from me.* Nearness to God is our conscious security. A child in the dark is comforted by grasping its father's hand. O my God, make haste for my help. To call God ours, as having entered into covenant with us, is a mighty plea in prayer, and a great stay to our faith. The cry



of "make haste" has occurred many times in this portion of the Psalms, and it was evoked by the sore pressure of affliction. Sharp sorrows soon put an end to procrastinating prayers.

**Verse 13.** *Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul.* It will be all this to them to see thy servant preserved; their envy and malice, when disappointed, will fill them with life consuming bitterness. The defeat of their plans shall nonplus them, they shall be confounded as they enquire the reason for their overthrow; the men they seek to destroy seem so weak, and their cause so contemptible, that they will be filled with amazement as they see them not only survive all opposition, but even surmount it. How confounded must Pharaoh have been when Israel multiplied, despite his endeavours to exterminate the race; and how consumed with rage must the Scribes and Pharisees have become when they saw the gospel spreading from land to land by the very means which they used for its destruction. Let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt. He would have their shame made visible to all eyes, by their wearing it in their blushes as a mantle. They would have made a laughing stock of the believer, if his God had forsaken him; therefore, let unbelief and atheism be made a public scoffing in their persons.

**Verse 14.** The holy faith of the persecuted saint comes to the front in these three verses. But I will hope continually. When I cannot rejoice in what I have, I will look forward to what shall be mine, and will still rejoice. Hope will live on a bare common, and sing on a branch laden down with snow. No date and no place are unsuitable for hope. Hell alone excepted, hope is a dweller in all regions. We may always hope, for we always have grounds for it: we will always hope, for it is a never failing consolation. And will yet praise thee more and more. He was not slack in thanksgiving; in fact, no man was ever more diligent in it; yet he was not content with all his former praises, but vowed to become more and more a grateful worshipper. When good things are both continual and progressive with us, we are on the right tack. We ought to be misers in going good, and our motto should be "more and more." While we do not disdain to "rest and be thankful," we cannot settle down into resting in our thankfulness. "*Superior*" cries the eagle, as he mounts towards the sun: higher and yet higher is also our aim, as we soar aloft in duty and devotion. It is our continual hope that we shall be able more and more to magnify the Lord.

**Verse 15.** *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day.* We are to bear testimony as experience enables us, and not withhold from others that which we have tasted and handled. The faithfulness of God in saving us, in delivering us out of the hand of our enemies, and in fulfilling his promises, is to be everywhere proclaimed by those who have proved it in their own history. How gloriously conspicuous is righteousness in the divine plan of redemption! It should be the theme of constant discourse. The devil rages against the substitutionary sacrifice, and errorists of every form make this the main point of their attack; be it ours, therefore, to love the doctrine, and to spread its glad tidings on every side, and at all times. Mouths are never so usefully employed as in

recounting the righteousness of God revealed in the salvation of believers in Jesus. The preacher who should be confined to this one theme would never need seek another: it is the *medulla theologae*, the very pith and marrow of revealed truth. Has our reader been silent upon this choice subject? Let us, then, press him to tell abroad what he enjoys within: he does not well who keeps such glad tidings to himself. For I know not the numbers thereof. He knew the sweetness of it, the sureness, the glory, and the truth of it; but as to the full reckoning of its plenitude, variety, and sufficiency, he felt he could not reach to the height of the great argument. Lord, where I cannot count I will believe, and when a truth surpasses numeration I will take to admiration. When David spoke of his enemies, he said they were more in number than the hairs of his head; he had, therefore, some idea of their number, and found a figure suitable to set it out; but, in the case of the Lord's covenant mercies, he declares, "I know not the number, "and does not venture upon any sort of comparison. To creatures belong number and limit, to God and his grace there is neither. We may, therefore, continue to tell out his great salvation all day long, for the theme is utterly inexhaustible.

**Verse 16.** *I will go in the strength of the Lord God.* Our translators give us a good sense, but not the sense in this place, which is on this wise, "I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord Jehovah." He would enter into those deeds by admiring study, and then, wherever he went, he would continue to rehearse them. He should ever be a welcome guest who can tell us of the mighty acts of the Lord, and help us to put our trust in him. The authorised version may be used by us as a resolve in all our exertions and endeavours. In our own strength we must fail; but, when we hear the voice which saith, "Go in this thy might, "we may advance without fear. Though hell itself were in the way, the believer would pursue the path of duty, crying: I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy *righteousness, even of thine only*. Man's righteousness is not fit to be mentioned—filthy rags are best hidden; neither is there any righteousness under heaven, or in heaven, comparable to the divine. As God himself fills all space, and is, therefore, the only God, leaving no room for another, so God's righteousness, in Christ Jesus, fills the believer's soul, and he counts all other things but dross and dung "that he may win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith." What would be the use of speaking upon any other righteousness to a dying man? and all are dying men. Let those who will cry up man's natural innocence, the dignity of the race, the purity of philosophers, the loveliness of untutored savages, the power of sacraments, and the infallibility of pontiffs; this is the true believer's immovable resolve: "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." For ever dedicated to thee, my Lord, be this poor, unworthy tongue, whose glory it shall be to glorify thee.

**Verse 17.** *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth.* It was comfortable to the psalmist to remember that from his earliest days he had been the Lord's disciple. None are too young to be taught of God, and they make the most proficient scholars who begin betimes. And hitherto have I

declared thy wondrous works. He had learned to tell what he knew, he was a pupil teacher; he continued still learning and declaring, and did not renounce his first master; this, also, was his comfort, but it is one which those who have been seduced from the school of the gospel, into the various colleges of philosophy and scepticism, will not be able to enjoy. A sacred conservatism is much needed in these days, when men are giving up old lights for new. We mean both to learn and to teach the wonders of redeeming love, till we can discover something nobler or more soul satisfying; for this reason we hope that our gray heads will be found in the same road as we have trodden, even from our beardless youth.

**Verse 18.** *Now also when I am old and grey headed, O God, forsake me not.* There is something touching in the sight of hair whitened with the snows of many a winter: the old and faithful soldier receives consideration from his king, the venerable servant is beloved by his master. When our infirmities multiply, we may, with confidence, expect enlarged privileges in the world of grace, to make up for our narrowing range in the field of nature. Nothing shall make God forsake those who have not forsaken him. Our fear is lest he should do so; but his promise kisses that fear into silence. Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation. He desired to continue his testimony and complete it; he had respect to the young men and little children about him, and knowing the vast importance of training them in the fear of God, he longed to make them all acquainted with the power of God to support his people, that they also might be led to walk by faith. He had leaned on the almighty arm, and could speak experimentally of its all sufficiency, and longed to do so ere life came to a close. And thy power to every one that is to come. He would leave a record for unborn ages to read. He thought the Lord's power to be so worthy of praise, that he would make the ages ring with it till time should be no more. For this cause believers live, and they should take care to labour zealously for the accomplishment of this their most proper and necessary work. Blessed are they who begin in youth to proclaim the name of the Lord, and cease not until their last hour brings their last word for their divine Master.

**Verse 19.** *Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high.* Very sublime, unsearchable, exalted, and glorious is the holy character of God, and his way of making men righteous. His plan of righteousness uplifts men from the gates of hell to the mansions of heaven. It is a high doctrine gospel, gives a high experience, leads to high practice, and ends in high felicity. Who hast done great things. The exploits of others are mere child's play compared with thine, and are not worthy to be mentioned in the same age. Creation, providence, redemption, are all unique, and nothing can compare with them. O God, who is like unto thee. As thy works are so transcendent, so art thou. Thou art without compeer, or even second, and such are thy works, and such, especially, thy plan of justifying sinners by the righteousness which thou hast provided. Adoration is a fit frame of mind for the believer. When he draws near to God, he enters into a region where everything is surpassingly sublime; miracles of love

abound on every hand, and marvels of mingled justice and grace. A traveller among the high Alps often feels overwhelmed with awe, amid their amazing sublimities; much more is this the case when we survey the heights and depths of the mercy and holiness of the Lord. O God, who is like unto thee.

**Verse 20.** *Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again.* Here is faith's inference from the infinite greatness of the Lord. He has been strong to smite; he will be also strong to save. He has shown me many heavy and severe trials, and he will also show me many and precious mercies. He has almost killed me, he will speedily revive me; and though I have been almost dead and buried, he will give me a resurrection, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth. However low the Lord may permit us to sink, he will fix a limit to the descent, and in due time will bring us up again. Even when we are laid low in the tomb, the mercy is that we can go no lower, but shall retrace our steps and mount to better lands; and all this, because the Lord is ever mighty to save. A little God would fail us, but not Jehovah the Omnipotent. It is safe to lean on him, since he bears up the pillars both of heaven and earth.

**Verse 21.** *Thou shalt increase my greatness.* As a king, David grew in influence and power. God did great things for him, and by him, and this is all the greatness believers want. May we have faith in God, such as these words evince. And comfort me on every side. As we were surrounded with afflictions, so shall we be environed with consolations. From above, and from all around, light shall come to dispel our former gloom; the change shall be great, indeed, when the Lord returns to comfort us. Here is the final vow of praise.

**Verse 22.** *I will also praise thee with the psaltery.* Love so amazing calls for sweetest praise. David would give his best music, both vocal and instrumental, to the Best of Masters. His harp should not be silent, nor his voice. Even thy truth, O my God. This is ever a most enchanting attribute—viz., the truth or faithfulness of our covenant God. On this we rest, and from it we draw streams of richest consolation. His promises are sure, his love unalterable, his veracity indisputable. What saint will not praise him as he remembers this? Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. Here is a new name, and, as it were, a new song. The Holy One of Israel is at once a lofty and an endearing name, full of teaching. Let us resolve, by all means within our power, to honour him. Here is the final vow of praise.

**Verse 23.** *My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee.* It shall be no weariness to me to praise thee. It shall be a delightful recreation, a solace, a joy. The essence of song lies in the holy joy of the singer. And my soul, which thou hast redeemed. Soul singing is the soul of singing. Till men are redeemed, they are like instruments out of tune; but when once the precious blood has set them at liberty, then are they fitted to magnify the Lord who bought them. Our being bought with a price is a more than sufficient reason for our dedicating ourselves to the earnest worship of God our Saviour.

Here is the final vow of praise.

**Verse 24.** *My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long.* I will talk to myself, and to thee, my God, and to my fellow men: my theme shall be thy way of justifying sinners, the glorious display of thy righteousness and grace in thy dear Son; and this most fresh and never to be exhausted subject shall be ever with me, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Others talk of their beloveds, and they shall be made to hear of mine. I will become an incessant talker, while this matter lies on my heart, for in all company this subject will be in season. For they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my *hurt*. As in many other Psalms, the concluding stanzas speak of that as an accomplished fact, which was only requested in former verses. Faith believes that she has her request, and she has it. She is the substance of things hoped for—a substance so real and tangible, that it sets the glad soul singing. Already sin, Satan, and the world are vanquished, and the victory is ours.

"Sin, Satan, Death appear  
To harass and appal:  
Yet since the gracious Lord is near,  
Backward they go, and fall."  
"We meet them face to face,  
Through Jesus' conquest blest;  
March in the triumph of his grace,  
Right onward to our rest."

---

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Whole Psalm.** This Psalm, which has no title in the Hebrew, in the LXX has the title, *By David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who were first made prisoners*. If any authority be allowed to this title, we must suppose that this was a Psalm written by David, which was used, as particularly adapted to the circumstances of their condition, by the Rechabites, who were descended from Jonadab (Jeremiah 35), and the Jews, who were taken by the Chaldeans as captives to Babylon. However this may be, it seems probable that David was the author of this Psalm, and that he wrote it in his extreme age, and but a little while before he died. The line which follows the next Psalm, and closes the second book, perhaps has a reference to this fact. Some of the Fathers interpret the Psalm mystically of the church in her old age, and her trials at the end of the world. "*Plain Commentary.*"

**Whole Psalm.** The Psalm, I am aware, is anonymous, and is, therefore, by many recent critics referred to some later writer; but I am satisfied that Venema and Hengstenberg have adduced sufficient reasons for retaining the opinion of Calvin and the older expositors, that it is from David's pen, and is the plaintive song of his old age. It shows us the soul of the aged saint, darkened by the

remembrance of his great transgression, and by the swarms of sorrows with which that sin filled all his later years. But he finds comfort in reverting to the happy days of his childhood, and especially to the irrevocable trust which he was then enabled to repose in God. The thoughts and feelings expressed remind one of those which invest with such a solemn, tender interest the Second Epistle to Timothy, which embalms the dying thoughts of the great apostle. Like Paul, David takes a retrospect of the Lord's dealings with him from the beginning; and, in effect, declares, with the dying apostle: "I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2Ti 1:12. Only, there is this notable difference between the two, that while Paul gathered confirmation of his faith from the experience of a thirty years' walk with his Lord, David's experience stretched over more than twice so many years; for it began with his childhood. *William Binnie.*

**Whole Psalm.** It will be asked how Christ could use such verses as Ps 71:9,18, since these look forward apparently to the frailty of age. The reply to this felt difficulty is, these expressions are used by him in sympathy with his members, and in his own case denote the state equivalent to age. *His* old age was, ere he reached three and thirty years, as Joh 8:57 is supposed to imply: for "Worn out men live fast." Barclay seems to give the right sense in the following lines:—

"Grown old and weak, with pain and grief,  
Before his years were half complete."

Besides, the words signify, "Forsake me not from this time onward, even were I to live to grey hairs." This is a view that conveys precious consolation to aged ones, who might be ready to say that Christ could not altogether enter into their feelings, having never experienced the failing weakness of age, the debility, the decay, the bodily infirmities so trying to the spirit. But this Psalm shows us, that in effect he did pass through that stage of our sojourning, worn out and wasted in bodily frame and feeling, by living so much in so short a time. The aged members of his church may find his sweet sympathy breathed out in Isa 46:3-4; and, here they may almost see him learning the lesson in a human way, as he bends under the weight of our frailties. For this reason, among others, this Psalm was specially prized by Robert Blair, one of our godly forefathers. He used to call it "*His Psalm.*" *Andrew A. Bonar.*

**Verse 1.** *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.* As if he should say: O Lord, permit not those who put their trust in thee to be confounded, and to be held up as a laughing stock. I have placed all my hope in thee, and thou art that God who, for the sake of thy goodness and truth, hast never deserted those who hope in thee. If thou shalt suffer me to be confounded, the enemies to triumph, and my hope to be placed in thee in vain, certainly this shame shall fall upon thine own name... Let us, therefore, learn from this place to be more anxious about what may happen to the name of God through us, than to our own; whether it be through us in doing, or in us in suffering. The prophet is fearful lest he

should be confounded on account of his hope placed in God, although it was not in his own power, nor could he prevent it... It is necessary, first, that we should be of those who place their hope in God, then it is necessary that this piety of our hearts should not be confined to ourselves only, but should be known to all those who come in contact with us, even our opponents and enemies; else it is not possible for us to dread this kind of confusion feared by the prophet, when nobody knows that our hope is placed in God. No artist suffers confusion, if he has never shared the good opinion of his fellow men. To no sick man can it be said, Physician, heal thyself, if his reputation for medical skill has never stood high. So of those, it cannot be said, They hoped in God, let him save them if he will have them, of whom it was never remarked that they placed any hope in God. His solicitude, therefore, belongs only to those whose hope is in the Lord; upon others it cannot fall. *Musculus*.

**Verse 1.** *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.* It is a good beginning, and a recommendation to our prayers, when we can declare our faith and trust to be in God alone. *Edward Walter, in "A Help to the profitable reading of the Psalms."* 1854.

**Verse 2.** *Deliver me in thy righteousness. Incline thine ear.* Let my deliverance be the fruit of thy promise, and of my prayer; and so it will be much the sweeter. *John Trapp*.

**Verse 2.** *In thy righteousness.* The *righteousness* of God is in this place that virtue by which he makes good his promises—revenges injuries and rewards piety—which is elsewhere called his *veracity*. Upon this perfection David here calls, not because he was innocent before God, but because God had bound himself to him by promises, as if he were, in the presence of the men who were persecuting him, both innocent and righteous; and, therefore, worthy of being delivered from this last terrible calamity into which he has fallen through Absalom, since God had thus acted towards him. *Hermann Venema*.

**Verse 2.** *Thy righteousness.* Not *mine*. He knew that he was being chastened for his sin against Uriah. He pleads no merit of his own. *Simon de Muis*.

**Verse 2.** *Incline thine ear.* And since I am so wounded that I am not able to send up my cry to thee, the Most High, do thou *incline thine ear to me* as I lie half dead, left by the robbers who have wounded and spoiled me. *Gerhohus*.

**Verse 3.** *Whereunto I may continually resort.* Would he then want to repair to him always? Our necessities, our work, our danger require it constantly. We are commanded to pray without ceasing. And if, while we acknowledge and feel the obligation, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, we shall not lament it. Loving him, as well as depending upon him, we shall find it good to draw near to God, and delight ourselves in the Almighty; and we shall never find him, when we want him, inaccessible. There is a way to our *strong habitation*, and we know the way. There is a door, and we have the key. No sentinel keeps us back; the dwelling is our *own*: and who dares to forbid us all its accommodations and contents? Kings, however disposed, cannot be always approachable. Owing to

the multitude of their claims, and the limitation of their powers, and the importance of keeping up a sense of their dignity, they are only accessible at certain times, and with stately formalities. But the King of kings allows us to come boldly to the throne of grace; and enjoins us in every thing, by prayer and supplication, to make our requests unto him. We cannot be too importunate, or by our continual coming weary him. *William Jay.*

**Verse 3.** *Thou hast given commandment to save me.* Let us observe his words; he ascribes to the word and command of God a saving virtue, which no power on earth, none in hell, nor death itself can resist. Only, he says, give the command that I may be saved, and, in a moment, I shall be wholly saved. *Musculus.*

**Verse 4.** *The cruel man* is literally the leavened man, leavened with hatred of truth and enmity to God; and, therefore, a violent opposer of his people. So, in 1Co 5:8 we are cautioned against the "leaven of malice and wickedness, "which, in accordance with the figure, may pervade the whole natural character of an ungodly man, his faculties and affections. *W. Wilson.*

**Verse 5.** *Thou art my hope.* Not only is our hope *in* him but he himself is our hope. "God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, "saith St. Paul, "our hope." 1Ti 1:1. Yea, there is a deeper, nearer depth: "The glory of the mystery of the gospel, "says St. Paul, "is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ himself is our hope, as the only Author of it; Christ is our hope, as the End of it; and Christ, who is the Beginning and the End, is our hope also by the way; for he saith, "Christ *in* you, the hope of glory." Col 1:27. Each yearning of our hearts, each ray of hope which gleams upon us, each touch which thrills us, each voice which whispers in our inmost hearts of the good things laid up in store for us, if we will love God, are the light of Christ enlightening us, the touch of Christ raising us to new life, the voice of Christ, "Whoso cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out; "it is "Christ in us, the hope of glory, "drawing us up by his spirit who dwelleth in us, unto himself our hope. For our hope is not the glory of heaven, not joy, not peace, not rest from labour, not fulness of our wishes, nor sweet contentment of the whole soul, nor understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, not only a torrent of delight; it is "Christ our God, ""the hope of glory." Nothing which God *could* create is what we hope for; nothing which God could give us out of himself, no created glory, or bliss, or beauty, or majesty, or riches. What we hope for is our Redeeming God himself, his love, his bliss, the joy of our Lord himself who hath so loved us, to be our joy and our portion for ever. *E. B. Pusey.*

**Verse 5.** *From my youth.* The remembering and acknowledging of God in youth will be great satisfaction in old age. O what joy will reflection upon youthful piety yield! Even Seneca, a heathen, could say: "Youth well spent is the greatest comfort of old age." David could confidently plead with God for deliverance out of the hand of the wicked: *For, saith he, thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth.* "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth" (Ps 71:9,17-18). An ingenuous master will not turn off a superannuated servant. When the



proconsul bade Polycarp deny Christ and swear by the emperor, he answered: "I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and he hath not once injured me, and shall I now deny him?" Jacob could say: "God hath fed me all my life long unto this day; he hath been kind to me all my days, and I trust he will look to me even in the end; and shall I now turn my back on him?" Whither can I go to mend myself for a master? "Thou only hast the words of eternal life." He that hath been the stay of my youth, will be the staff of my age. I dare venture my soul upon his promise who hath hitherto maintained me by his providence. "In the days of my youth, the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, his candle did shine upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness; "and, though now "the sun, and the light, and moon and stars be darkened, "in this my natural horizon, yet "the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." I have abundant experience of his grace and presence. O the days of mercy I have had many years ago! A good man said: "I got that in my youth, which I would not for all the world have to get now." *Oliver Heywood. 1629-1702.*

**Verse 6.** He did not, like most men, recognise the hand of God only when, in an extraordinary manner, it became manifest in life; but his eye of faith regards the ordinary works of God as miracles. The translation from his mother's womb to the light of day is to him an object of praise. (Ps 22:9-10.) And, really, is not the preservation of the embryo, in its narrow confines, a miracle? Is it not a pledge, simultaneously with man's growing into being, of our after experience in life, that we have a God "who bringeth us out of death to light?" (Ps 68:20.) Is not the reason of our finding so little of praise, to be sought in our having no eyes for his daily miracles? The psalmist *has* eyes for the daily miracles of the Lord; and, therefore, his mouth is daily full of the praise of the Lord. *Augustus F. Tholuck.*

**Verse 6.** Blessed be God that ever I was born. *Halyburton.*

**Verse 6.** This verse corresponds with the preceding, except that David proceeds farther. He not only celebrates the goodness of God, which he had experienced from his childhood, but, also, those proofs of it which he had received previous to his birth. An almost similar confession is contained in Ps 22:9-10, by which is magnified the wonderful power and inestimable goodness of God in the generation of men, the way and manner of which would be altogether incredible, were it not a fact with which we are quite familiar. If we are astonished at that part of the history of the flood, in which Moses declares (Ge 8:13), that Noah and his household lived ten months amidst the offensive nuisance produced by so many living creatures, when he could not draw the breath of life, have we not equal reason to marvel that the infant, shut up within its mother's womb, can live in such a condition as would suffocate the strongest man in half an hour? But we thus see how little account we make of the miracles which God works, in consequence of our familiarity with them. The Spirit, therefore, justly rebukes this ingratitude, by commending to our consideration this memorable instance of the grace of God which is exhibited in our birth and generation. When we are born into the

world, although the mother do her office, and the midwife may be present with her, and many others may lend their help, yet did not God, putting, so to speak, his hand under us, receive us into his bosom, what would become of us? and what hope would there be in the continuance of our life? Yea, rather, were it not for this, our very birth would be an entrance into a thousand deaths. God, therefore, is with the highest propriety said *to take us out of our mother's bowels*. To this corresponds the concluding part of the verse, *My praise shall be continually of thee* by which the psalmist means that he has been furnished with matter for praising God without intermission. *John Calvin*.

**Verse 8.** *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise. Let my mouth, I say, be so filled with thy praise*, that from the bottom of my heart, even to the lips of my mouth, the plenitude of thy grace, O God, infused into my heart, and diffused over my lips, may loyally magnify thee; so shall I not be found like that people, of whom thou dost say: "This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." *Isa 29:13. Gerhohus*.

**Verse 9.** *Cast me not off in the time of old age*, etc.; for now I have most need of thee. The white rose is soonest cankered; so is the white head soonest corrupted. *Saepe nigrum cor est, caput album*. Satan maketh a prey of old Solomon, Asa, Lot, others; whom when young he could never so deceive. The heathens, therefore, well warn us to look well to our old age, as that which cometh not alone, but is infested with many diseases, both of body and mind. This David knew, and, therefore, prayed as here: *Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth*. He is a rare old man that can say with Caleb (Jos 14:10,14), "Behold, the Lord hath kept me alive," etc. *John Trapp*.

**Verse 9.** *Cast me not off in the time of old age*, etc. It is not unnatural or improper for a man who sees old age coming upon him to pray for special grace, and special strength, to enable him to meet what he cannot ward off, and what he cannot but dread; for who can look upon the infirmities of old age, as coming upon himself, but with sad and pensive feelings? Who would wish *to be* an old man? Who can look upon a man tottering with years, and broken down with infirmities; a man whose sight and hearing are gone; a man who is alone amidst the graves of all the friends that he had in early life; a man who is a burden to himself, and to the world; a man who has reached the "Last scene of all that ends the strange, eventful history"—that scene of

"Second childishness, and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything; "  
that scene when one can say—  
"I have lived long enough; my way of life  
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;  
And that which should accompany old age,  
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,  
I must not look to have; "

Who can think of all this and not pray for special grace for himself, should he live to see those days of infirmity and weakness? And who, in view of such infirmities, can fail to see the propriety of seeking the favour of God in early years? *Albert Barnes.*

**Verse 9.** *Cast me not off in the time of old age,* etc. David, mindful of the noble actions which, through God's assistance, he had achieved in his youth, beseeches him not to desert his servant, when persecuted by a rebellious son, in his old age. The weakness and temptations peculiar to that time of life, render this a petition necessary for all to make, before we are overtaken by it. The church findeth but too much occasion to make the same, now that she is sunk in years; when faith languisheth, charity waxeth cold, and the infirmities of a spiritual old age are coming fast upon her. *George Horne.*

**Verse 9.** *Cast me not off.* God had cast of his predecessor, Saul, and things looked as if he now meant to cast *him* off. His people also seemed disposed, by their joining with Absalom, to cast him off: hence the force of the petition. *Andrew Fuller.*

**Verse 9.** *Forsake me not when my strength faileth.* Neither will Christ forsake his church in the latter days of its age, when the weakness of faith becomes more prevalent. *W. Wilson.*

**Verse 9.** *Forsake me not when my strength faileth.* June 28. This day I enter on my eighty-sixth year. I now find I grow old:

1. My sight is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light.
  2. My strength is decayed, so that I walk much slower than I did some years since.
  3. My memory of names, whether of persons, or places, is decayed, till I stop a little to recollect them.
- What I should be afraid of, is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities; But thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God. *John Wesley.*

**Verse 11.** All kinds of distresses are obnoxious to the worst of misjudgings from malevolent minds. The sufferings of Christ produced this censorious scoff, "Let God deliver him, if he will have him." (Mt 27:43.) David's trouble easily induced his adversaries to conclude that *God had forsaken him, and that there was none to deliver him.* But in troubles of this nature, where especially there are frightful complainings against themselves, men are more easily drawn out to be peremptory in their uncharitable judgments concerning them, because the trouble itself is somewhat rare, and apt to beget hideous impressions, and, withal, the vent which the afflicted parties give by their bemoaning of their estate, in hope to ease themselves thereby, is but taken as a testimony against themselves and the undoubted echoes of their real feelings. *Richard Gilpin (1625-1700), in "Daemonologia Sacra; or, a Treatise of Satan's Temptations."* (In Nichols Series of Puritan Divines.)

**Verse 13.** *Let them be confounded,* etc. Let them, who were so wicked that they never hoped anything good of me, *be confounded* by the evidence of the blessings which manifestly fall upon me;

and, *let them fail*, the grounds of their abuse being taken away, as a fire fails when the fagots are removed. *Gerhohus*.

**Verse 13.** *Let them be confounded*, etc. By the law of retaliation (*talio*), he might have said: "Be thou an adversary to their souls, and seek their hurt." Nothing of this is hinted at: his only desire is that they may be confounded and fail, that they may be covered with disgrace and shame. He seeks nothing beyond the frustration of their attempts, that they may begin to be ashamed, and have no cause for boasting that they came off victorious. *Musculus*.

**Verse 13.** Shame ariseth from utter disappointments. If hope deferred causeth shame, then much more hope destroyed. When a man sees his hopes quite cut off, so that he can no way reach the thing he looked for, shame takes hold of him strongly. *Joseph Caryl*.

**Verse 13.** *That are adversaries to my soul*. That hated him with a diabolical hatred, as the devil hates the souls of men, and who has his name *Satan* from the word here used. All wicked men are Satans, full of enmity against God and all good men; and such were David's enemies, spiteful and malicious, and nothing would satisfy them but his life. *John Gill*.

**Verse 14.** *But I will hope continually*. Behold, O Lord, I have prayed to thee, and I am comforted. Hope has thus taught me. I am glad; because in thee have I trusted, I shall never be confounded. Sorrow returned, equipped with vast array, fortified at all points with swords and spears, and with great clamour beleaguered my city. The din of his horsemen terrified me; and, standing at the gates, he commanded silence, and thus loudly spake: "Behold the man who trusted in God; who said, I shall not be confounded for ever; who took hope for a consoler." And, when he observed me blushing at these words, he drew nearer, and said: "Where are the promises which were thy trust? Where the consolation? Where the deliverance? What have thy tears availed thee? What help have thy prayers brought thee from heaven? Thou hast cried, and no one has answered; thou hast wept, and who have been moved with pity for thee? Thou hast called upon thy God, and he has been silent. Thou hast prayed to him, and he has hidden himself from thee: there has come no voice nor sound... Arise, therefore, and flee for help to man, that he may free thee from thy prison." With these words, there arose such a din of arms in the camp—such a clamour of men and sounding of trumpets—that I could hardly keep up heart; and, unless my beloved Hope had brought me help, Sorrow would have seized and carried me off in chains to his own place. Comes Hope to me, gleaming in divine brightness, and, smiling, said: "O soldier of Christ, how is thy heart? What is this struggle in thy mind?" At these words, I began to blush. "Fear not," she said, "Evil shall not capture thee; thou shalt never perish. Behold, I am with thee, to deliver thee. Dost thou not know what is written (Psalm 12), 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' As one of the foolish women hath this Sorrow spoken; never shall he be able to persuade thee that there is no God, or that God does not exercise a providence over all." *Girolamo Savonarola*. 1452-1498.

**Verse 14.** *And I will always hope, and add to (literally, add upon, accumulate, increase) all thy praise.* To all thy praise which I have uttered hitherto, I will continue still to add. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

**Verse 14.** *I will expect continually.* But what did he *expect*? That for which he prayed in the ninth verse—the preservation of his prosperity, the presence and the help of God to the very end of life. Wherefore, he adds, *continually*, in perpetuity, in the time of old age,—*usque ad mortem.* *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 14.** As there is no end to the lovingkindness of Jehovah, there should be none to our gratitude. The hope of a Christian enableth him to be thankful, even in the dark season of affliction. *Mrs. Thomson.*

**Verse 15.** The *righteousness* of God, here mentioned, includes not only the rectitude of his nature, and the equity of his proceedings, but likewise that everlasting righteousness which his Son hath brought in for our justification. God's *righteousness* and *salvation* are here joined together; and, therefore, let no man think to put them asunder, or expect salvation without righteousness. *Mrs. Thomson.*

**Verse 15.** *I know not the numbers.* David began his arithmetic, in Ps 71:14, with *addition*: "I will yet praise thee more and more; "but he is fairly beaten in this first rule of sacred mathematics. His calculation fails him, the mere enumeration of the Lord's mercies overwhelms his mind; he owns his inadequacy. Reckon either by time, by place, or by value, and the salvation of God baffles all powers of estimation. *C. H. S.*

**Verse 16.** *I will go.* The word *to go* must be here taken in the sense of going to battle against enemies. This, he says, he will do, trusting not to his own, but to the power of the Lord, his heart fired with the memory of the righteousness of God. So is it in another place: "Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we in the name of our God." *Musculus.*

**Verse 16.** *I will go in the strength of the Lord.* The minister goes thus by realising this strength and depending on it. In this strength he goes into the path of communion with God, into the fields of conflict, in the privacy of domestic life, and in all the walks of active life. His boast is in the *righteousness* of Christ; and he *mentions* this to God as the ground of his confidence, to himself as the spring of his comforts, to others as the hope of salvation. *Substance of Sermon by James Sherman. The first preached by him after his settlement at Surrey Chapel. September 4th, 1836.*

**Verse 16.** *The strength of the Lord God.* The power of God is expressed in the plural number, to show the greatness of it, which is as a garrison to the believer. *John Gill.*

**Verse 16.** *I will go in the strength of the Lord.* The phrase, *to go in*, or, *with the strengths of God*, does not teach us that he *would go* by means of them, by their help and assistance, as many have thought, *first*, because the word is used to signify the illustrious and mighty deeds of God; *secondly*, because it denotes the *subject* of praise; but *to go with the strength of Jehovah*, as the rendering ought to be...

is to go as if girt with his former deeds of power—girt with them as if with the *material* of praise.  
*Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 17.** *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth.* Whence was it that David understood "more than the ancients"? (Ps 119:100.) He had a Father to teach him; God was his instructor. Many a child of God complains of ignorance and dulness; remember this, thy Father will be thy tutor; he hath promised to give "his Spirit to lead thee into all truth" (Joh 6:13); and God doth not only inform the understanding, but inclines the will; he doth not only teach us what we should do, but enables us to do it. (Eze 36:27); "I will cause you to walk in my statutes." What a glorious privilege is this, to have the star of the word pointing us to Christ, and the loadstone of the Spirit drawing! *Thomas Watson.*

**Verse 17.** *Thou hast taught me from my youth.* If you ask me what were the ways by which David was taught, I might ask you what they were not... God taught him by his shepherd's crook; and by the rod and sceptre of a king he taught him. He taught him by the shouts of the multitude—"Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands; "and he taught him just as much, if not more, by the contempt he met in the court of the Philistines. He taught him by the arrows of Jonathan, levelled in friendship; and he taught him by the javelin of Saul levelled at his life. He taught him by the faithlessness of Abiathar, and the faithlessness of even his faithful Joab; and he taught him by the faithfulness of Abishai, and the faithfulness of Mephibosheth; and, let me add too, by the rebellion of Absalom, and the selfishness of Adonijah; they were all means, by which the Lord taught this his servant. And be assured, you that are under his teaching, there is nothing in your lives, but he can teach you by it: by comforts and crosses, by your wounds and your healings, by that which he gives and by what he takes away. He unteaches his child, that he may teach him; shows him his folly, that he may make him wise; strips him of his vain confidence, that he may give him strength; makes him know that he is nothing, that he may show him that he has all in the Lord—in Jesus his Beloved one.  
*James Harrington Evans.*

**Verse 17.** *Thou hast taught me from my youth.* Youth needs a teacher that it may embrace virtue. Seneca says, *Virtue is a hard thing to youth, it needs a ruler and guide; vices are acquired without a master.* How prone he was in his boyhood and youth to vices, we may see in Psalm 25. "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." Jerome, in his Epistle to Nepotianus, says: "As fire in green wood is stifled, so wisdom in youth, impeded by temptations and concupiscence, does not unfold its brightness, unless by hard work, and steady application and prayer, the incentives of youth are inwardly repelled." Hence it is that almost all nations have provided good and wise teachers of the young. Among the Spartans, one was chosen from the Magistrates and Senators to be *paidonomos*, rector of the boys... At Athens there were twelve men named *Sophronistae*, elected by the suffrages of all the tribes, to moderate the manners of youth... God is the teacher of his servants. Plato says, *oiden einai yeioteron*, that there is nothing more divine than the education of children. Of

God the Father, or of the whole Trinity, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, says, 1Sa 2:3: "The Lord is a God of knowledge; "(*Scientiarum*, Vulg.) that is, as the Chaldee has it, he knows all things... Socrates says, that he is *the mind of the universe*. Without him, therefore, all are demented; but with him, and through him, in a single moment they become wise. Philo, in his treatise of the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, says, Masters cannot fill the mind of their pupils as if they were pouring water into a vessel; but when God, the fountain of wisdom, communicates knowledge to the human race, he does it without delay, in the twinkling of an eye... *His anointing shall teach you of all things*. 1Jo 2:27. *Thomas Le Blanc*.

**Verse 17.** *From my youth*. Is it such "a crown of glory" to be found old in the ways of righteousness? Do you then begin to be godly betimes; that, if you live in this world you may have this crown set upon your heads when you are ancient; for is it not better for you to be plants of God's house, than weeds upon the dunghill? Those that are wicked are but as weeds upon a dunghill, but you that are godly are as plants in God's own orchard. In Ro 16:7, we find that *Andronicus and Junia* are commended because they were in Christ before Paul: "They were in Christ before me." It is an honourable thing to be in Christ before others; this is honourable when you are young; and then going on in the ways of godliness all your young time, and so in your middle age, and till you come to be old. *Jeremiah Burroughs*.

**Verse 17.** *Wondrous works*. Observe that he calls the blessing of divine aid so often received in affliction, *wondrous works*. By this expression, he shows us, with what grievous perils he was tossed; then how he had been snatched from them by the hand of God, contrary to the expectation of all men. Therefore, God is wonderful among his saints. To this end the adversities of the saints tend, that they may show forth in them the wonderful works of God. *Musculus*.

**Verses 17-18.** The integrity of our hearts and ways, in former walkings after God, and service for God, may by faith in Christ, as in all our justification, be pleaded. See also Isa 38:3 and Ps 119:10. The Lord himself maketh it to himself a motive to show mercy to his people (Isa 63:8 Jer 2:2); only we must use this plea more rarely and sparingly, in a self denying way, in faith in Christ's righteousness, as made ours. *Thomas Cobbet*.

**Verse 18.** *Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not*. God exalts pardoning grace to some more, and sanctifying grace to others; he is the God of grace. Those ships that have been in long voyages at sea, three or four years out, have gone through hot climates and cold, passed the equinoctial line again and again, and have run through many a difficulty, and great storms, and yet have been kept alive at sea, as they speak, when these shall meet one another at sea near the haven, how will they congratulate? And old disciples should do so, that God hath kept grace alive in their souls. And I would ask you how many thousand ships have you seen cast away before your eyes? How many that have made "shipwreck of faith and a good conscience," as the

apostle speaks? This and that profession, that has run into this and that error damnable, or false opinions and teaching, though all of smaller moment; others that have struck upon quicksands of worldly preferments, and many split upon rocks, and yet you have been kept. This should move you to bless this your God, the God of grace, the more. Come, let me knock at your hearts; are none of you old professors, like old hollow oaks, who stand in the woods among professors still, and keep their stand of profession still, and go to ordinances, etc.; but the "rain they drink in, "as the apostle's word is, serves to no other end but to rot them. "These are nigh unto cursing." Or, have you green fruits still growing on you, as quickly and lively affections to God and Christ, and faith and love, as at the first, and more abounding? O bless God you are so near the haven, and lift up your hearts, your redemption draws near; and, withal, raise your confidence, that that God of grace, who hath called you into his eternal glory, will keep you for it, and possess you of it shortly. *Thomas Goodwin.*

**Verse 18.** *Forsake me not; until,* etc. Apostasy in old age is fearful. He that climbs almost to the top of a tower, then slipping back, hath the greater fall. The patient almost recovered, is more deadly sick by a relapse. There were stars struck from heaven by the dragon's tail (Re 12:4); they had better never have perched so high. The place where the Israelites fell into that great folly with the daughters of Moab, was in the plain, within the prospect of the Holy Land; they saw their inheritance, and yet fell short of it. So wretched is it for old men to fall near to their very entry of heaven, as old Eli in his indulgence (1 Samuel 2); old Judah in his incest (Genesis 38); old David with Bathsheba; old Asa trusting in the physicians more than in God (2Ch 16:12); and old Solomon built the high places. Some have walked like cherubs in the midst of the stones of fire, yet have been cast as profane out of God's mountain. Eze 28:14,16. Thus the seaman passeth all the main, and suffers wreck in the haven. The corn often promises a plenteous harvest in the blade, and shrinks in the ear. You have seen trees loaden with blossoms, yet, in the season of expectation, no fruit. A comedy that holds well many scenes, and goes lamely off in the last act, finds no applause. Remember Lot's wife (Lu 17:32): think on that pillar of salt, that it may season thee. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 18.** *Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation,* etc. Are there better preachers of the works of God to be found than hoary parents in the circle of their children; or grandparents in that of their grandchildren? *Augustus F. Tholuck.*

**Verse 18.**

With years oppressed, with sorrows worn,  
Dejected, harassed, sick, forlorn,  
To thee, O God, I pray;  
To thee my withered hands arise,  
To thee I lift these failing eyes:  
Oh, cast me not away!



Thy mercy heard my infant prayer;  
Thy love, with all a mother's care,  
Sustained my childish days:  
Thy goodness watched my ripening youth,  
And formed my heart to love thy truth,  
And filled my lips with praise.  
O Saviour! has thy grace declined?  
Can years affect the Eternal Mind,  
Or time its love destroy?  
A thousand ages pass thy sight,  
And all their long and weary flight  
Is gone like yesterday.  
Then, even in age and grief, thy name  
Shall still my languid heart inflame,  
And bow my faltering knee:  
Oh, yet this bosom feels the fire,  
This trembling hand and drooping lyre,  
Have yet a strain for thee!  
Yes, broken, tuneless still, O Lord,  
This voice, transported, shall record  
Thy goodness tried so long;  
Till, sinking slow, with calm decay,  
Its feeble murmurs melt away,  
Into a seraph's song.

—*Sir Robert Grant.*

**Verse 19.** *O God, who is like unto thee?* Either for greatness or goodness, for power or for mercy, for justice, truth, and faithfulness; for the perfections of his nature, or the works of his hands; and to be praised, revered, and adored, as he is. *John Gill.*

**Verse 19.** *Who is like unto thee! Krmk ym, Mi camocha.* God is alone: who can resemble him? He is eternal; he can have none *before*, and there can be none *after*; for, in the infinite *unity* of *trinity*, he is that eternal, unlimited, impartible, incomprehensible, and uncompounded, ineffable Being, whose *essence* is hidden from all created intelligences, and whose *counsels* cannot be fathomed by any creature that even his own hand can form. "WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE!" will excite the wonder, amazement, praise, and adoration of angels and men to all eternity. *Adam Clarke.*

**Verse 20.** *Thou shalt quicken me again,* etc. Here Jerome triumphs over the Jews, challenging them

when this was ever verified in David, for he was never dead and quickened again; and, therefore, this must needs be expounded of him as that in Psalm 16: "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave; "and to "the depths of the earth, "here, answer those words, Eph 4:9, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" Yet, this may also be applied to David, being figuratively understood, as a like speech of Hannah, 1 Samuel 2. John Mayer.*

**Verse 20.** *And thou shalt bring me up, etc.* This is an allusion to men who are unhappily fallen into a deep pit of water. The meaning is, Thou shalt draw me out of the extreme danger into which I am plunged, and wherein I shall perish without thy help. *Thomas Fenton.*

**Verse 21.** Greatness increasing with comfort, and comfort increasing with greatness; very rarely united. *George Rogers.*

**Verse 22.** *With the psaltery... with the harp.* There was a typical signification in them; and upon this account they are not only rejected and condemned by the whole army of Protestant divines, as for instance, by Zuinglius, Calvin, Peter Martyr, Zepperus, Paraeus, Willet, Ainsworth, Ames, Calderwood, and Cotton; who do, with one mouth, testify against them, most of them expressly affirming that they are a part of the abrogated legal pedagogy; so that we might as well recall the incense, tapers, sacrifices, new moons, circumcision, and all the other shadows of the law into use again. But Aquinas himself also, though a Popish schoolman, pleads against them upon the same account, *quia aliquid figurabant*, and saith, the Church in his time did not use them, *ne videatur judaizare*, lest they should seem to judaize. *Samuel Mather, on The Types.*

**Verse 22.** *Psaltery... harp.* Suppose singing with instruments were not typical, but only an external solemnity of worship, fitted to the solace of the outward senses of children under age, such as the Israelites were in the Old Testament (Ga 4:1-3); yet now, in the grown age of the heirs of the New Testament, such external pompous solemnities are ceased, and no external worship reserved, but such as holdeth forth simplicity and gravity; nor is any voice now to be heard in the church of Christ, but such as is significant and edifying by signification (1Co 14:10-11,26), which the voice of instruments is not. *John Cotton, 1585-1652.*

**Verse 22.** *Holy One of Israel.* This name of God occurs in the Psalms only in two other places, Ps 71:78,41 89:18 these last two being, according to Delitzsch, older Psalms than this. In Isaiah, this name of God occurs thirty times; in Habakkuk once; in Jeremiah (who may have adopted it from Isaiah) twice (Jer 50:29 51:5). *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

**Verse 23.** *My lips; my soul.* Hypocrites praise God with the *lips* only; but David joins the *soul* to the lips. *William Nicholson.*

**Verse 23.** *Greatly.* See how the word great is repeated. Great things done, Ps 71:19; great troubles shown, Ps 71:20; greatness increased, Ps 71:21; and great rejoicing consequent thereon, in Ps 71:23. In a great God, doing great things, it is meet greatly to rejoice. *C. H. S.*

## HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Arguments used to induce to Lord to hear, drawn,

1. From his *justice and equity*: *Deliver me in thy righteousness.*
2. From his *word and promise*: *Thou hast given commandment, etc.*
3. From his *power*: *Thou art my rock. etc.*
4. From his *relation* to him: *My God, my hope.*
5. From the *qualities* of his *adversaries*: *They were wicked, unrighteous, and cruel.*
6. From his *confidence*: *Thou art my hope.*
7. From his *gracious providence*: *By thee have I been holden up, etc.*
8. From his *thankful heart*: *My praise shall be continually, etc.*
9. He had *none to trust to* but God: *Thou art my refuge. Adam Clarke.*

**Verse 1.** Faith is a present act; faith is a personal act, faith deals only with God, faith knows what she is about, faith kills her fears by prayer.

**Verse 2.** An appeal.

1. To the power of God: *Deliver me.*
2. To the faithfulness of God: *In thy righteousness.*
3. To the providence of God: *Cause me to escape.*
4. To the condescension of God: *Incline thine ear.*
5. To the mercy of God: *Save me.*

**Verse 2.** *Cause me to escape.* From whom? From what? How? By what power? For what end?

**Verse 3.** (*first two clauses*). The believer abiding in God and continually resorting to him.

**Verse 3.** (*Third clause*). A command based on the divine promise, clothed with divine power, addressed to all necessary agencies, and embracing all exigencies.

**Verse 4.**

1. When God is for us, the wicked are against us.
2. When the wicked are against us, God is for us.

**Verse 5.** God the essence of hope and faith.

**Verse 7.** (*first clause*). may be accommodated to,

1. *The Saviour.*
2. *The Saint.* He is a *wonder* in reference to
  - (a) What he once was;
  - (b) What he now is;
  - (c) What he will hereafter be.
3. *The sinner* is "a wonder unto many;" a wonder to three worlds: to

- (a) angels;
- (b) saints;
- (c) devils and lost souls.

—*Warwell Fenn*. 1830.

**Verse 7.** Consider the text, with reference to *David*, to *Christ*, and to the *Christian*.

1. With reference to *David*.

- (a) David was a wonder as a man.
- (b) As a king.
- (c) As a servant of God.

2. With respect to *Christ*.

- (a) Christ was a wonder in his person.
- (b) In his life.
- (c) In his miracles.
- (d) In his teaching.
- (e) In his sufferings.
- (f) In his ascension and mediatorial glory.

3. With regard to the *Christian*.

- (a) The Christian is a wonder to himself.
- (b) To the world.
- (c) To wicked spirits.
- (d) To the angels in heaven.

—*John Cawood*. 1830.

**Verse 8.**

1. What? filled with what?—murmurings? doubts? fears? No! Praise. My own?—of men? No. *Thy praise. Thy honour.*

2. When? *All the day.*

- (a) The whole day.
- (b) Every day; a good preparation for heaven.

**Verse 9.** There are some peculiar circumstances of old age which render this blessing—the favour and presence of God—necessary.

1. Old age is a time of but little natural enjoyment, as Barzillai acknowledged, 2Sa 19:35.

2. It is a time of life in which the troubles of life are often known to increase.

3. Old age is a time in which the troubles of life not only increase, but become less tolerable.

4. Old age is a time which ought to command respect, and does so among dutiful children and all serious Christians: but it is often known to be attended with neglect. This is the case especially where

they are poor and dependent. It has been the case where public characters have lost their youthful vivacity, and the brilliancy of their talents. *A. Fuller.*

**Verse 9.** There is,

1. Fear, mixed with faith.

(a) Natural to old age.

(b) Suggested by the usage of the world.

2. Faith mixed with fear: "Cast me not, "etc.

(a) Old age is not a sin.

(b) It is a crown of glory if found, etc.

**Verses 11-12.** Two great lies and two sweet prayers.

**Verses 13-14.**

1. What the wicked gain by opposing the righteous: Let them, etc. Ps 71:13.

2. What the righteous gain from being opposed by them, Ps 71:14: *But I*, etc.

**Verse 14.** See "Spurgeon's Sermons, "No. 998; "More and More."

**Verse 15.**

1. The determination avowed.

(a) To recount the instances of the divine faithfulness in his deliverances.

(b) To recount them publicly: *My mouth*, etc.

(c) Constantly: *All the day*.

2. The reason assigned: *For I know not*, etc. "Eternity's too short to utter all thy praise." Therefore I begin it now, and will continue it.

**Verse 16.**

1. The resolution: *I will go*.

2. The reservation: *Thy strength only—thy righteousness only*.

**Verse 17.** *O God, thou hast taught me.* None but God can teach us experimentally; and the lessons he teaches are always useful and important. He teaches all his scholars to know themselves—their depravity, poverty, and slavery. He teaches them his law—its purity, claims, and penalty. He teaches them his gospel—its fulness, freeness, and sensibility. He teaches them to know himself; as a reconciled God, as their Father and faithful friend. His teaching is accompanied with power and authority. We may know divine teaching by its effects: it always produces humility—they sit as his feet; dependence upon him; abhorrence of sin; love to God as a teacher; obedience to the lessons taught; thirst for further attainments; and it brings us daily to Jesus. *James Smith.*

**Verse 18.** The peculiar testimony of pious old age, what it is based upon, to whom it should be directed, and what we may hope from it.

**Verse 19.** A sermon might be instructively worked out upon "the high things of God."

**Verse 20.**

1. The future benefit of present trials: "Hereafter," said Aneas to his shipwrecked companions. "It will delight us to think of these things."

2. The present benefit of future mercies: "Glory to thee for all the grace we have not tasted yet."

**Verse 22.** A choice subject for song—"thy truth, "which may mean either doctrinal truth, or the attribute of faithfulness, its manifestation in history, and in our own experience.

**Verse 22-23.**

1. The soul of music: Not in the instrument or the voice, but in the soul. "I will sing with the understanding also." "Making melody in the heart, "etc.

2. The music of the soul. The *soul which thou hast redeemed*. Redemption is the music of souls once lost. Their only song in heaven.

**Verse 24.** How to make familiar talk edifying and useful.

---

**WORK UPON THE SEVENTY-FIRST PSALM**

Hieronymi Savonarolae Ferrariensis Meditationes in Psalmos—*Miserere—In Te Domine Speravi, et Qui Regis Israel* (12mo. Leyden: 1633).

**Psalm 72**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

---

**TITLE.** *A Psalm for Solomon.* The best linguists affirm that this should be rendered, *of or by Solomon.* There is not sufficient ground for the rendering *for.* It is pretty certain that the title declares Solomon to be the author of the Psalm, and yet from Ps 72:20 it would seem that David uttered it in prayer before he died. With some diffidence we suggest that the spirit and matter of the Psalm are David's, but that he was too near his end to pen the words, or cast them into form: Solomon, therefore, caught his dying father's song, fashioned it in goodly verse, and, without robbing his father, made the Psalm his own. It is, we conjecture, the Prayer of David, but the Psalm of Solomon. Jesus is here, beyond all doubt, in the glory of his reign, both as he now is, and as he shall be revealed in the latter day glory.

**DIVISION.** We shall follow the division suggested by Alexander. "A glowing description of the reign of Messiah as righteous, Ps 72:1-7; universal, Ps 72:8-11; beneficent, Ps 72:12-14; and perpetual, Ps 72:15-17; to which are added a doxology, Ps 72:18-19; and a postscript, Ps 72:20."

## EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Give the king thy judgments, O God.* The right to reign was transmitted by descent from David to Solomon, but not by that means alone: Israel was a theocracy, and the kings were but the viceroys of the greater King; hence the prayer that the new king might be enthroned by divine right, and then endowed with divine wisdom. Our glorious King in Zion hath all judgment committed unto him. He rules in the name of God over all lands. He is king "Dei Gratia" as well as by right of inheritance. And thy righteousness unto the king's son. Solomon was both king and king's son; so also is our Lord. He has power and authority in himself, and also royal dignity given of his Father. He is the righteous king; in a word, he is "the Lord our righteousness." We are waiting till he shall be manifested among men as the ever righteous Judge. May the Lord hasten on his own time the long looked for day. Now wars and fightings are even in Israel itself, but soon the dispensation will change, and David, the type of Jesus warring with our enemies, shall be displaced by Solomon the prince of peace.

**Verse 2.** *He shall judge thy people with righteousness.* Clothed with divine authority, he shall use it on the behalf of the favoured nation, for whom he shall show himself strong, that they be not misjudged, slandered, or in any way treated maliciously. His sentence shall put their accusers to silence, and award the saints their true position as the accepted of the Lord. What a consolation to feel that none can suffer wrong in Christ's kingdom: he sits upon the great white throne, unspotted by a single deed of injustice, or even mistake of judgment: reputations are safe enough with him. *And thy poor with judgment.* True wisdom is manifest in all the decisions of Zion's King. We do not always understand his doings, but they are always right. Partiality has been too often shown to rich and great men, but the King of the last and best of monarchies deals out even handed justice, to the delight of the poor and despised. Here we have the poor mentioned side by side with the king. The sovereignty of God is a delightful theme to the poor in spirit; they love to see the Lord exalted, and have no quarrel with him for exercising the prerogatives of his crown. It is the fictitious wealth which labours to conceal real poverty, which makes men cavil at the reigning Lord, but a deep sense of spiritual need prepares the heart loyally to worship the Redeemer King. On the other hand, the King has a special delight in the humbled hearts of his contrite ones, and exercises all his power and wisdom on their behalf, even as Joseph in Egypt ruled for the welfare of his brethren.

**Verse 3.** *The mountains shall bring peace to the people.* Thence, aforetime, rushed the robber bands which infested the country; but now the forts there erected are the guardians of the land, and the watchmen publish far and near the tidings that no foe is to be seen. Where Jesus is there is peace, lasting, deep, eternal. Even those things which were once our dread, lose all terror when Jesus is owned as monarch of the heart: death itself, that dark mountain, loses all its gloom. Trials and afflictions, when the Lord is with us, bring us an increase rather than a diminution of peace. And the

little hills, by righteousness. Seeing that the rule of the monarch was just, every little hill seemed clothed with peace. Injustice has made Palestine a desert; if the Turk and Bedouin were gone, the land would smile again; for even in the most literal sense, justice is the fertilizer of lands, and men are diligent to plough and raise harvests when they have the prospect of eating the fruit of their labours. In a spiritual sense, peace is given to the heart by the righteousness of Christ; and all the powers and passions of the soul are filled with a holy calm, when the way of salvation, by a divine righteousness, is revealed. Then do we go forth with joy, and are led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills break forth before us into singing.

**Verse 4.** *He shall judge the poor of the people.* He will do them justice, yea, and blessed be his name, more than justice, for he will delight to do them good. He shall save the children of the needy. Poor, helpless things, they were packhorses for others, and paupers themselves, but their King would be their protector. Happy are God's poor and needy ones; they are safe under the wing of the Prince of Peace, for he will save them from all their enemies. And shall break in pieces the oppressor. He is strong to smite the foes of his people. Oppressors have been great breakers, but their time of retribution shall come, and they shall be broken themselves. Sin, Satan, and all our enemies must be crushed by the iron rod of King Jesus. We have, therefore, no cause to fear; but abundant reason to sing—

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall,  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him lord of all."

It is much better to be poor than to be an oppressor; for both the needy and their children find an advocate in the heavenly Solomon, who aims all his blows at haughty ones, and rests not till they are utterly destroyed.

**Verse 5.** *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure.* And well they may. Such righteousness wins the cheerful homage of the poor and the godly, and strikes dismay into the souls of unrighteous oppressors; so that all through the lands, both good and bad are filled with awe. Where Jesus reigns in power men must render obeisance of some sort. His kingdom, moreover, is no house of cards, or dynasty of days; it is as lasting as the lights of heaven; days and nights will cease before he abdicates his throne. Neither sun nor moon as yet manifest any failure in their radiance, nor are there any signs of decrepitude in the kingdom of Jesus; on the contrary, it is but in its youth, and is evidently the coming power, the rising sun. Would to God that fresh vigour were imparted to all its citizens to push at once the conquests of Immanuel to the uttermost ends of the earth. Throughout all generations shall the throne of the Redeemer stand. Humanity shall not wear out the religion of the Incarnate God. No infidelity shall wither it away, nor superstition smother it; it shall rise immortal



from what seemed its grave; as the true phoenix, it shall revive from its ashes! As long as there are men on earth Christ shall have a throne among them. Instead of the fathers shall be the children. Each generation shall have a regeneration in its midst, let Pope and Devil do what they may. Even at this hour we have before us the tokens of his eternal power; since he ascended to his throne, eighteen hundred years ago, his dominion has not been overturned, though the mightiest of empires have gone like visions of the night. We see on the shore of time the wrecks of the Caesars, the relics of the Moguls, and the last remnants of the Ottomans. Charlemagne, Maximilian, Napoleon, how they flit like shadows before us! They were and are not; but Jesus for ever is. As for the houses of Hohenzollern, Guelph, or Hapsburg, they have their hour; but the Son of David has all hours and ages as his own.

**Verse 6.** *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass.* Blessings upon his gentle sway! Those great conquerors who have been the scourges of mankind have fallen like the fiery hail of Sodom, transforming fruitful lands into deserts; but he with mild, benignant influence softly refreshes the weary and wounded among men, and makes them spring up into newness of life. Pastures mown with the scythe, or shorn by the teeth of cattle, present, as it were, so many bleeding stems of grass, but when the rain falls it is balm to all these wounds, and it renews the verdure and beauty of the field; fit image of the visits and benedictions of "the consolation of Israel." My soul, how well it is for thee to be brought low, and to be even as the meadows eaten bare and trodden down by cattle, for then to thee shall the Lord have respect; he shall remember thy misery, and with his own most precious love restore thee to more than thy former glory. Welcome Jesus, thou true *Bien-aime*, the Well beloved, thou art far more than Titus ever was—the Delight of Mankind. As showers that water the earth. Each crystal drop of rain tells of heavenly mercy, which forgets not the parched plains: Jesus is all grace, all that he does is love, and his presence among men is joy. We need to preach him more, for no shower can so refresh the nations. Philosophic preaching mocks men as with a dust shower, but the gospel meets the case of fallen humanity, and happiness flourishes beneath its genial power. Come down, O Lord, upon my soul, and my heart shall blossom with thy praise:—

"He shall come down as still and light  
As scattered drops on genial field;  
And in his time who loves the right,  
Freely shall bloom, sweet peace her harvest yield."

**Verse 7.** *In his days shall the righteous flourish.* Beneath the deadly Upas of unrighteous rule no honest principles can be developed, and good men can scarcely live; but where truth and uprightness are on the throne, the best of men prosper most. A righteous king is the patron and producer of righteous subjects. None flourish under Nero but those who are monsters like himself: like will to like; and under the gentle Jesus the godly find a happy shelter. And abundance of peace

so long as the moon endureth. Where Jesus reigns he is known as the true Melchizedek, king both of righteousness and peace. Peace based upon right is sure to be lasting, but no other will be. Many a so called Holy Alliance has come to the ground ere many moons have filled their horns, because craft formed the league, perjury established it, and oppression was the design of it; but when Jesus shall proclaim the great Truce of God, he will ordain perpetual peace, and men shall learn war no more. The peace which Jesus brings is not superficial or short lived; it is abundant in its depth and duration. Let all hearts and voices welcome the King of nations; Jesus the Good, the Great, the Just, the Ever blessed.

**Verse 8.** *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea. Wide spread shall be the rule of Messiah; only the Land's End shall end his territory: to the Ultima Thule shall his sceptre be extended. From Pacific to Atlantic, and from Atlantic to Pacific, he shall be Lord, and the oceans which surround each pole shall be beneath his sway. All other power shall be subordinate to his; no rival nor antagonist shall he know. Men speak of the Emperor of all the Russias, but Jesus shall be Ruler of all mankind. And from the river unto the ends of the earth. Start where you will, by any river you choose, and Messiah's kingdom shall reach on to the utmost bounds of the round world. As Solomon's realm embraced all the land of promise, and left no unconquered margin; so shall the Son of David rule all lands given him in the better covenant, and leave no nation to pine beneath the tyranny of the prince of darkness. We are encouraged by such a passage as this to look for the Saviour's universal reign; whether before or after his personal advent we leave for the discussion of others. In this Psalm, at least, we see a personal monarch, and he is the central figure, the focus of all the glory; not his servant, but himself do we see possessing the dominion and dispensing the government. Personal pronouns referring to our great King are constantly occurring in this Psalm; *he* has dominion kings fall down before *him*, and serve *him*; for *he* delivers, *he* spares, *he* saves, *he* lives, and daily is *he* praised.*

**Verse 9.** *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him.* Unconquered by arms, they shall be subdued by love. Wild and lawless as they have been, they shall gladly wear his easy yoke; then shall their deserts be made glad, yea, they shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. And his enemies shall lick the dust. If they will not be his friends, they shall be utterly broken and humbled. Dust shall be the serpent's meat; the seed of the serpent shall be filled therewith. Homage among Orientals is often rendered in the most abject manner, and truly no sign is too humiliating to denote the utter discomfiture and subjugation of Messiah's foes. Tongues which rail at the Redeemer deserve to lick the dust. Those who will not joyfully bow to such a prince richly merit to be hurled down and laid prostrate; the dust is too good for them, since they trampled on the blood of Christ.

**Verse 10.** *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents.* Trade shall be made subservient to the purposes of mediatorial rule; merchant princes, both far and near, shall joyfully contribute of their wealth to his throne. Seafaring places are good centres from which to spread the

gospel; and seafaring men often make earnest heralds of the cross. Tarshish of old was so far away, that to the eastern mind it was lost in its remoteness, and seemed to be upon the verge of the universe; even so far as imagination itself can travel, shall the Son of David rule; across the blue sea shall his sceptre be stretched; the white cliffs of Britain already own him, the gems of the Southern Sea glitter for him, even Iceland's heart is warm with his love. Madagascar leaps to receive him; and if there be isles of the equatorial seas whose spices have as yet not been presented to him, even there shall he receive a revenue of glory. He has made many an islet to become a Holy Isle, and hence, a true Formosa. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Agriculture and pasturage shall contribute their share. Foreign princes from inland regions, as yet unexplored, shall own the all embracing monarchy of the King of kings; they shall be prompt to pay their reverential tribute. Religious offerings shall they bring, for their King is their God. Then shall Arabia Felix be happy indeed, and the Fortunate Isles be more than fortunate. Observe, that true religion leads to generous giving; we are not taxed in Christ's dominions, but we are delighted to offer freely to him. It will be a great day when kings will do this: the poor widow has long ago been before them, it is time that they followed; their subjects would be sure to imitate the royal example. This free will offering is all Christ and his church desire; they want no forced levies and distraints, let all men give of their own free will, kings as well as commoners; alas! the rule has been for kings to give their subjects' property to the church, and a wretched church has received this robbery for a burnt offering; it shall not be thus when Jesus more openly assumes the throne.

**Verse 11.** *Yea, all kings shall fall down before him.* Personally shall they pay their reverence, however mighty they may be. No matter how high their state, how ancient their dynasty, or far off their realms, they shall willingly accept him as their Imperial Lord. All nations shall serve him. The people shall be as obedient as the governors. The extent of the mediatorial rule is set forth by the two far reaching *alls*, all kings, and all nations: we see not as yet all things put under him, but since we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour in heaven, we are altogether without doubt as to his universal monarchy on earth. It is not to be imagined that an Alexander or a Caesar shall have wider sway than the Son of God. "Every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Hasten it, O Lord, in thine own time.

**Verse 12.** *For he shall deliver the needy.* Here is an excellent reason for man's submission to the Lord Christ; it is not because they dread his overwhelming power, but because they are won over by his just and condescending rule. Who would not fear so good a Prince, who makes the needy his peculiar care, and pledges himself to be their deliverer in times of need? When he crieth. He permits them to be so needy as to be driven to cry bitterly for help, but then he hears them, and comes to their aid. A child's cry touches a father's heart, and our King is the Father of his people. If we can do no more than cry it will bring omnipotence to our aid. A cry is the native language of a spiritually

needy soul; it has done with fine phrases and long orations, and it takes to sobs and moans; and so, indeed, it grasps the most potent of all weapons, for heaven always yields to such artillery. The poor also, and him that hath no helper. The proverb says, "God helps those that help themselves;" but it is yet more true that Jesus helps those who cannot help themselves, nor find help in others. All helpless ones are under the especial care of Zion's compassionate King; let them hasten to put themselves in fellowship with him. Let them look to him, for he is looking for them.

**Verse 13.** *He shall spare the poor and needy.* His pity shall be manifested to them; he will not allow their trials to overwhelm them; his rod of correction shall fall lightly; he will be sparing of his rebukes, and not sparing in his consolations. And shall save the souls of the needy. His is the dominion of souls, a spiritual and not a worldly empire; and the needy, that is to say, the consciously unworthy and weak, shall find that he will give them his salvation. Jesus calls not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He does not attempt the superfluous work of aiding proud Pharisees to air their vanity; but he is careful of poor Publicans whose eyes dare not look up to heaven by reason of their sense of sin. We ought to be anxious to be among these needy ones whom the Great King so highly favours.

**Verse 14.** *He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence.* These two things are the weapons with which the poor are assailed: both law and no law are employed to fleece them. The fox and the lion are combined against Christ's lambs, but the Shepherd will defeat them, and rescue the defenceless from their teeth. A soul hunted by the temptations of Satanic craft, and the insinuations of diabolical malice, will do well to fly to the throne of Jesus for shelter. And precious shall their blood be in his sight. He will not throw away his subjects in needless wars as tyrants have done, but will take every means for preserving the humblest of them. Conquerors have reckoned thousands of lives as small items; they have reddened fields with gore, as if blood were water, and flesh but manure for harvests; but Jesus, though he gave his own blood, is very chary of the blood of his servants, and if they must die for him as martyrs, he loves their memory, and counts their lives as his precious things.

**Verse 15.** *And he shall live. Vive le Roi! O King! live for ever!* He was slain, but is risen and ever liveth. And to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba. These are coronation gifts of the richest kind, cheerfully presented at his throne. How gladly would we give him all that we have and are, and count the tribute far too small. We may rejoice that Christ's cause will not stand still for want of funds; the silver and the gold are his, and if they are not to be found at home, far off lands shall hasten to make up the deficit. Would to God we had more faith and more generosity. Prayer also shall be made for him continually. May all blessings be upon his head; all his people desire that his cause may prosper, therefore do they hourly cry, "Thy kingdom come." Prayer for Jesus is a very sweet idea, and one which should be for evermore lovingly carried out; for the church is Christ's body, and the truth is his sceptre; therefore we pray for him when we plead for these. The verse may, however, be read as "through him, "for it is by Christ as our Mediator that prayer enters heaven and prevails. "Continue in

prayer" is the standing precept of Messiah's reign, and it implies that the Lord will continue to bless. And daily shall he be praised. As he will perpetually show himself to be worthy of honour, so shall he be incessantly praised:—

"For him shall constant prayer be made,  
And praises throng to crown his head;  
His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise  
With every morning's sacrifice."

**Verse 16.** *There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains.* From small beginnings great results shall spring. A mere handful in a place naturally ungenial shall produce a matchless harvest. What a blessing that there is a handful; "except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah:" but now the faithful are a living seed, and shall multiply in the land. The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon. The harvest shall be so great that the wind shall rustle through it, and sound like the cedars upon Lebanon:—

"Like Lebanon, by soft winds fanned,  
Rustles the golden harvest far and wide."

God's church is no mean thing; its beginnings are small, but its increase is of the most astonishing kind. As Lebanon is conspicuous and celebrated, so shall the church be. And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. Another figure. Christ's subjects shall be as plentiful as blades of grass, and shall as suddenly appear as eastern verdure after a heavy shower. We need not fear for the cause of truth in the land; it is in good hands, where the pleasure of the Lord is sure to prosper. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." When shall these words, which open up such a vista of delight, be fulfilled in the midst of the earth?

**Verse 17.** *His name shall endure for ever.* In its saving power, as the rallying point of believers, and as renowned and glorified, his name shall remain for ever the same. His name shall be continued as long as the sun. While time is measured out by days, Jesus shall be glorious among men. And men shall be blessed in him. There shall be cause for all this honour, for he shall really and truly be a benefactor to the race. He himself shall be earth's greatest blessing; when men wish to bless others they shall bless in his name. All nations shall call him blessed. The grateful nations shall echo his benedictions, and wish him happy who has made them happy. Not only shall some glorify the Lord, but all; no land shall remain in heathenism; all nations shall delight to do him honour.

**Verses 18-19.** As Quesnel well observes, these verses explain themselves. They call rather for profound gratitude, and emotion of heart, than for an exercise of the understanding; they are rather to be used for adoration than for exposition. It is, and ever will be, the acme of our desires, and the climax of our prayers, to behold Jesus exalted King of kings and Lord of lords. He has done great

wonders such as none else can match, leaving all others so far behind, that he remains the sole and only wonder worker; but equal marvels yet remain, for which we look with joyful expectation. He is the Blessed God, and his name shall be blessed; his name is glorious, and that glory shall fill the whole earth. For so bright a consummation our heart yearns daily, and we cry *Amen, and Amen*.

**Verse 20.** *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.* What more could he ask? He has climbed the summit of the mount of God; he desires nothing more. With this upon his lip, he is content to die. He strips himself of his own royalty and becomes only the "son of Jesse," "thrice happy to subside into nothing before the crowned Messiah. Before his believing eye the reign of Jesus, like the sun, filled all around with light, and the holy soul of the man after God's own heart exulted in it, and sung his "Nunc dimittis:" "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" We, too, will cease from all petitioning if it be granted to us to see the day of the Lord. Our blissful spirits will then have nothing further to do but for ever to praise the Lord our God.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**TITLE.** *For Solomon.* I shall but mention a threefold analogy between Christ and Solomon.

1. In his *personal wisdom* (1Ki 4:29-30); so Christ (Col 2:3); "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

2. In the *glorious peace and prosperity of his kingdom*: the kingdom was peaceably settled in his hand. 1Ch 22:9 4:24-25. And so he fell to the work of building the temple, as Christ doth the church; so Christ (Isa 9:6); he is the Prince of Peace, the great Peacemaker. Eph 2:14.

3. In his *marriage with Pharaoh's daughter*. Some observe that the daughter of Pharaoh never seduced him: neither is there any mention made of the Egyptian idols. 1Ki 11:5,7. In his other outlandish marriages he did sin; but *this* is mentioned as by way of special exception (1Ki 11:1); for she was a *proselyte*, and so it was no sin to marry her: and the love between her and Solomon is made a type of the love between Christ and the church. So Christ hath taken us Gentiles to be spouse unto him. Psalm 45. *Samuel Mather (1626-1671), in "The Figures or Types of the Old Testament."*

**Whole Psalm.** The Seventy-second Psalm contains a description of an exalted king, and of the blessings of his reign. These blessings are of such a nature as to prove that the subject of the Psalm must be a divine person.

1. His kingdom is to be everlasting.

2. Universal.

3. It secures perfect peace with God and goodwill among men.

4. All men are to be brought to submit to him through love.

5. In him all the nations of the earth are to be blessed; *i.e.*, as we are distinctly taught in Ga 3:16, it is

in him that all the blessings of redemption are to come upon the world. *Charles Hodge, in "Systematic Theology."* 1871.

**Whole Psalm.** This Psalm was penned by a king, it is dedicated to a king, and is chiefly intended concerning him who is "King of kings." *Joseph Caryl, in a Sermon entitled "David's Prayer for Solomon."*

**Whole Psalm.** Two Psalms bear *Solomon's* name in their titles. One of these is the Hundred and Twenty-seventh, the other is the Seventy-second; and here the traces of his pen are unequivocal. A mistaken interpretation of the note appended to it, "The prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended," led most of the old commentators to attribute the Psalm to David, and to suppose that it is a prayer offered in his old age "for Solomon, "as the peaceful prince who was to succeed him on the throne. However, it has long been known that the note in question refers to the whole of the preceding portion of the Psalter, much of which was written by Asaph and the sons of Korah; and there can be no doubt that the title can only be translated, "of Solomon." So clear are the traces of Solomon's pen that Calvin, whose sagacity in this kind of criticism has never been excelled, although he thought himself obliged, by the note at the end of the Psalm, to attribute the substance of it to David, felt Solomon's touch so sensibly, that he threw out the conjecture that the prayer was the father's, but that it was afterward thrown into the lyrical form by the son. This is not the place for detailed exposition; I will, therefore, content myself with remarking that, properly speaking, the Psalm is not "for Solomon" at all. If it refers to him and his peaceful reign, it does so only in as far as they were types of the Person and Kingdom of the Prince of Peace. The Psalm, from beginning to end, is not only capable of being applied to Christ, but great part is incapable of being fairly applied to any other. *William Binnie.*

**Whole Psalm.** This is the forth of those Psalms which predict the two natures of Christ. This Psalm admonishes us that we believe in Christ as perfect God, and perfect Man and King. *Psalter of Peter Lombard(—1164).*

**Whole Psalm.** That under the type of Solomon (to whom it is inscribed) the Messiah is "The King" of whom this Psalm treats, we have the consent, not only of the most eminent divines of modern times, and of the Fathers of the early Christian church, but the ancient and most distinguished Jewish expositors; of which reference, indeed, it contains the most conclusive internal evidence. And, as under a new type, so is the kingdom here presented to us in a new aspect, in marked contradistinction to its character as foreshadowed by its other great type, the Davidic: for the character of David's reign was conquest. He was "a man of war" (1Ch 28:1-3); the appointed instrument for subjecting the enemies of God's people Israel, by whom they were put in undisturbed possession of the promised land. But the character of Solomon's reign was peace, the import of his name, succeeding to the throne after all enemies had been subdued, and governing the kingdom

which David's wars had established (1Ki 2:12), the two types, respectively, of Christ as he is yet to be manifested at his next appearing; first revealed as David, as seen in the vision of that event (Re 19:11): "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness *he doth judge and make war*, "etc., subduing the Antichristian confederacy (Re 19:19-21), as before predicted in the Second Psalm, of this same confederacy: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." And then, as Solomon, taking his throne, and extending the blessings of his kingdom of peace to the ends of the earth. David in the Second Psalm; Solomon in this. *William De Burgh*.

**Whole Psalm.** The reader is reminded of James Montgomery's hymn, beginning, "Hail to the Lord's Anointed; "it is a very beautiful versification of this Psalm, and will be found in "Our Own Hymn Book, " No. 353.

**Verse 1.** *Give the king thy judgments, O God.* Right and authority to execute judgment and justice. The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son. *John Fry*.

**Verse 1.** *The king... The king's son.* I do not apprehend, with the generality of interpreters, that by *The king*, and *The king's son*, David means himself and his son, but *Solomon* only, to whom both the titles agree, as he was David's son, and anointed by him *king* during his lifetime. *Samuel Chandler*.

**Verse 1.** *The king... The king's son.* We see that our Lord is here termed both *Klm*, and *Klm Nb*, being king himself, and also the son of a king; both as respects his human origin, having come forth from the stock of David, and also as to his divine origin; for the Father of the universe may, of course, be properly denominated King. Agreeably to this designation, we find on the Turkish coins the inscription: *Sultan, son of Sultan*. *George Phillips*.

**Verse 2.** *Thy judgments.* From whom does he seek these? O God, he says, give them. Therefore is it the gift of God that kings should judge righteously and observe justice. Moreover, he does not simply say, O God, give judgment to the king, and righteousness to the king's son; but *thy judgments* and *thy righteousness*. Grant them this grace, that what is just in thy sight they may judge. The world has its own judgments and its own righteousness, but deals in such a way that true righteousness is more oppressed than approved. Not such are the judgments and righteousness of God. *Musculus*.

**Verse 3.** *The mountains shall bring peace to the people*, etc. Those who apply this Psalm to Solomon expound the distich thus; "That the steep mountains on the frontier, strongly garrisoned, shall secure the land from hostile invasion; and the hills, cleared of the banditti, which in the rude ages were accustomed to inhabit them, under the government of the king, intended in this Psalm, should be the peaceful seats of a useful, civilised peasantry." This sense is not ill expressed in Mr. Merrick's translation:

"Peace, from the fort clad mountain's brow,  
Descending, bless the plain below;



And justice from each rocky cell,  
Shall violence and fraud expel."

But so little of the Psalm is at all applicable to Solomon, and the greater part of it so exclusively belongs to the Messiah, that I think these mountains and hills allude to the nature of the land of Judaea; and the general sense is, that, in the times of the great king, the inhabitants of that mountainous region shall live in a state of peace and tranquillity. The thing intended is the happy condition of the natural Israel, in the latter day restored to God's favour, and to the peaceful possession of their own land. It is a great confirmation of this sense, that *righteousness* is mentioned as the means of the peace which shall be enjoyed. *Samuel Horsley.*

**Verse 3.** *The mountains shall bring peace to the people.* It was, and still is, common in the East to announce good or bad news from the tops of mountains and other eminences. By this means acts of justice were speedily communicated to the remotest parts of the country. Thus, when Solomon decided the controversy between the two harlots, the decision was quickly known over all the land. See 1Ki 3:28. *Alexander Geddes.*

**Verse 3.** *The mountains shall bring peace.* The reference is to the fertility of the soil, which now is shown in an extraordinary way, when mountain summits, which are either oppressed with hopeless sterility or yield at a far inferior rate to the valleys, produce all things plentifully. And by this figure he signifies that this happiness of his kingdom shall not be the portion of a few only, but shall abound in all places and to all people, of every condition and of every age. No corner of the land, he affirms, shall be destitute of this fertility. *Mollerus.*

**Verse 3.** *The mountains shall bring peace.* You may be sure to have peace when your mountains shall bring forth peace; when those mountains, which heretofore were mountains of prey and hills of the robbers, shall be a quiet habitation; when peace shall not be walled up in cities, or fenced in by bulwarks, but the open fields and highways, the mountains and the hills shall yield it abundantly; under every hedge, and under every green tree, there shall you find it; when the cottagers and the mountaineers shall have their fill of it; when they shall eat and be satisfied, lie down and none shall make them afraid, then the blessing is universal: and this is the work of *righteousness.* *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 3.** *The mountains and hills* are not at all named as the most unfruitful places of the land, which they really were not, in Palestine, compare De 33:15 Ps 147:8, "Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains; " Ps 65:12,—nor even because what is on them can be seen everywhere, and from all sides. (*Tholuck*), compare against this, Joe 3:18, "The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, "Isa 55:12,—but, as being the most prominent points and ornaments of the country, and, therefore, as representing it, well fitted to express the thought that the country shall be *everywhere* filled with peace. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Verse 4.** *The children of the needy.* The phrase, *the children of the afflicted*, is put for *the afflicted*, an

idiom quite common in Hebrew; and a similar form of expression is sometimes used by the Greeks, as when they say *uiouv iatrwn*, the sons of physicians for physicians. *John Calvin*.

**Verse 5.—**

The lofty glory of the Flavian family shall remain,  
Enduring like the sun and stars. *Martial*.—Bk. 9. Epig. 7.

**Verse 6.** *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass*, etc. This is spoken and promised of Christ, and serves to teach us that Christ coming to his church and people, by the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit, is most useful and refreshing to their souls, like showers of rain to the dry ground, or a meadow newly cut to make it spring again. Christless souls are like the dry ground; without the moisture of saving grace their hearts are hard; neither rods, mercies, nor sermons, make impression upon them. Why? They are without Christ, the fountain of grace and spiritual influences. Before the fall man's soul was like a well watered garden, beautiful, green, and fragrant; but by his apostasy from God, in Adam our first head, the springs of grace and holiness are quite dried up in his soul; and there is no curing of this drought but by the soul's union with a new head; to wit, Christ our second Adam, who has the Spirit given him without measure for the use of all his members. Now, when we are united by faith to Christ, our Head of influences, the dry land is turned into water springs; Christ "comes down as the rain" by his Spirit of regeneration, and brings the springs of grace into the soul. He is the first and immediate receptacle of the Holy Spirit, and all regenerating and sanctifying influences, and out of his fulness we must by faith receive them. And when at any time the springs of grace are interrupted in the soul by sin or unbelief, so as the ground turns dry, the plants wither, and the things which remain are ready to die, the soul hath need to look up to Jesus Christ to come down with new showers upon the thirsty ground and decayed plants.

1. As the rain is the free gift of God to the dry ground, it comes free and cheap to poor and rich, small and great, and cost them nothing: so Christ with his blessings is God's free gift to a dry and perishing world; for which we should be continually thankful.

2. As nothing can stop the falling of the rain; so nothing can hinder Christ's gracious influences, when he designs to awake, convince, or soften a hard heart. When those showers do fall on sinners, the most obstinate will must yield, and cry, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

3. As the rain is most necessary and suitable to the dry ground, and to the various plants it produces, and also to the different parts of every plant or tree—such as the root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit; so Christ is absolutely necessary, and his influence most suitable to all his people's souls, and to every faculty of them—the understanding, will, memory, and affections; and to all their different graces, faith, love, repentance, etc.; to root and establish them, strengthen and confirm them, quicken and increase them, cherish and preserve them.

4. As the rain comes in diverse ways and manners to the earth, sometimes with cold winds and

tempests, thunders and lightnings, and at other times with calmness and warmth; so Christ comes to sinners, sometimes with sharp convictions and legal terrors, and sometimes with alluring invitations and promises.

5. O how pleasant are the effects of rain to languishing plants, to make them green and beautiful, lively and strong, fragrant and beautiful! So the effects of Christ's influences are most desirable to drooping souls, for enlightening and enlivening them, for confirming and strengthening them, for comforting and enlarging them, for appetizing and satisfying them, transforming and beautifying them. A shower from Christ would soon make the church, though withered, turn green and beautiful, and to send forth a smell as of a field that the Lord hath blessed; and likewise some drops of this shower, falling down upon the languishing graces of communicants, would soon make them vigorous and lively in showing forth their Saviour's death at his table. *John Willison.*

**Verse 6.** There cannot be a more lively image of a flourishing condition than what is conveyed to us in these words. The grass which is forced by the heat of the sun, before the ground is well prepared by rains, is weak and languid, and of a faint complexion; but when clear shining succeeds the gentle showers of spring, the field puts forth its best strength, and is more beautifully arrayed than ever Solomon in all his glory. *Thomas Sherlock. 1678.*

**Verse 6.** *He shall come down, dry* There is a fourfold descending of Christ which the Scripture mentions.

1. His incarnation, the manifestation of himself in the flesh.
2. The abasing himself in condition; he did not only assume human flesh, but all the natural infirmities of our flesh.
3. The subjecting of himself to death.
4. The distillations of his grace and spiritual blessings upon his church. *Ralph Robinson.*

**Verse 6.** (*first clause*). Some render this "like dew on the fleece." The mysterious fleece of Gideon, which on being exposed to the air, is first of all filled with the dew of heaven, while all the ground around it is quite dry, and which afterwards becomes dry while the earth is watered, pictures to us, according to the old divines, that the dew of Heaven's grace was poured out upon Judaea at the time when all the rest of the world remained in barrenness and ignorance of God; but that now, by a strange alteration, this same Judaea lies in dryness and forgetfulness of God, while on the contrary, all the other nations of the earth are inundated with the dew of heavenly grace. *Pasquier Quesnel.*

**Verse 6.** *Upon the mown grass.* The Hebrew word used here hath a double signification. It signifies a shorn fleece of wool, and it signifies a meadow newly mown. This hath occasioned divers readings. Some read it, He shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool: so the Septuagint. They that follow this reading make it an allusion unto the dew that fell upon Gideon's fleece (Jud 6:37-39), when all the land beside was dry, and, again, upon the rest of the land when the fleece was dry. Others

read it according to our translation: *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass*. This seems to me more agreeable to the meaning of the Holy Ghost; especially because of the clause following, which is added by way of explication: *As showers that water the earth*. As the showers, Mybybr Rain and showers differ only as less and more; rain signifies smaller showers, and showers signify greater rain. De 32:2. Rain falling in multitude of drops is called a shower. *That water the earth*. The word Pyzrz *zarziph*, which is here translated *water*, is only used in this place in all the Bible. It signifies to water by dispersion, to water by drops. The showers are dispersed in drops all over the face of the earth, in a very regular and artificial way. "God hath divided, "saith Job, "a watercourse for the overflowings of water." Job 38:25. The rain is from the cloud spouted out by drops after such a manner that every part hath its share. *Ralph Robinson*.

**Verse 6.** *The mown grass*; literally, *that which is shorn*, whether *fleece* or *meadow*. In the former sense it occurs Jud 6:37, and so the older translators all take it, (Aq epi kouran, LXX and others epi plokon, Jerome and Vulgate, *in vellus*, )probably with the idea that the reign of the monarch would be accompanied by signal tokens of the divine favour and blessing, like the dew upon Gideon's fleece; in the latter sense, the word is found Am 7:1; and this is indisputably its meaning here, as the parallel shows. The *mown* meadow is particularly mentioned, because the roots of the grass would be most exposed to the summer heat after the crop has been gathered in, and the effect would be most striking in the shooting of the young green blade after the shower. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

**Verse 7.** *Righteous. Peace*. Do you ask what he is individually? The answer is, "King of Righteousness:" a being loving righteousness, working righteousness, promoting righteousness, procuring righteousness, imparting righteousness to those whom he saves, perfectly sinless, and the enemy and abolisher of all sin. Do you ask what he is practically, and in relation to the effect of his reign? The answer is, "King of Peace:" a sovereign whose kingdom is a shelter for all who are miserable, a covert for all who are persecuted, a resting place for all who are weary, a home for the destitute, and a refuge for the lost. *Charles Stanford*.

**Verse 7.** *Abundance of peace*. Literally, *multitude of peace*; that is, the things which produce peace, or which indicate peace, will not be few, but numerous; they will abound everywhere. They will be found in towns and villages, and private dwellings; in the calm and just administration of the affairs of the State; in abundant harvests; in intelligence, in education, and in undisturbed industry; in the protection extended to the rights of all. *Albert Barnes*.

**Verse 7.** *So long as the moon endureth*. It does not necessarily follow from these words that the moon will ever cease to exist. The idea, commonly held, of the annihilation of the starry firmament is without foundation in Scripture. Such an idea has a pernicious influence on the human mind, inasmuch as it leads men to depreciate that which bears in such striking character the stamp and impress of the divine glory. *Frederic Fysh*.

**Verse 8.** *From the river.* There are many modern interpreters who, from the mention of the "river"—namely, the river Euphrates—in the other clause of the verse, think that the boundaries of the land of Palestine are here to be understood, that country being described as extending from the Red Sea to the Sea of Syria, otherwise called the Sea of the Philistines, and the Great Sea; and from the Euphrates to the Great Desert lying behind Palestine and Egypt. These are the limits of the Israelitish territory: the former, from the south to the west; the latter, from the north to the east. (Ge 15:18.) But, in this passage, there can scarcely be a doubt that by the *river*—to wit, the Euphrates—is indicated the extreme boundary of the earth towards the east. In a highly poetical, magnificent description, such as is given in this song, of a king exalted above all others, nothing can be conceived more inappropriate than saying that the dominions of such a king should be bounded by the limits of Palestine. *Ernest F. C. Rosenmueller (1768-1835), in "The Biblical Cabinet," vol. 32.*

**Verse 9.** *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, etc.* This is equivalent to saying, *the wild Arabs, that the greatest conquerors could never tame, shall bow before him, or become his vassals; nay, his enemies, and, consequently, these Arabs among the rest, shall lick the dust, or court him with the most abject submissions.* *T. Harmer's Observations.*

**Verse 9.** *His enemies shall lick the dust.* Bear in mind that it was a custom with many nations that, when individuals approached their kings, they kissed the earth, and prostrated their whole body before them. This was the custom especially throughout Asia. No one was allowed to address the Persian kings, unless he prostrated himself on the ground and kissed the footsteps of the king, as Xenophon records. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verses 9-10.** Wilderness, Tarshish, Sheba. The most *uncivilized*, the most *distant*, and the most *opulent* nations shall pay their homage to him. *Augustus F. Tholuck.*

**Verses 9-11.** They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; *and his enemies shall lick the dust.* They shall humble themselves under the mighty hand of Christ; they shall acknowledge and receive him as their Lord; they shall fear and reverence him as their King; they shall veil and bow to his sceptre: they shall put themselves, and all that is theirs, under Christ; they shall give themselves to the exaltation and setting up of Christ. *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.* They shall consecrate their abilities to Christ's service; they shall communicate of their substance to the maintenance of Christ's church, and minister to the preservation and increase of Christ's kingdom. *All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.* All shall adore and serve him as their king; all shall exalt and honour him, as loyal subjects, their heavenly sovereign; all persons, from the highest to the lowest, must serve the Lord Jesus, and study to make him glorious; grace works obedience in the hearts of princes, as well as in the hearts of beggars. The sun as well as the stars, did obeisance unto Christ, under his kingdom and gospel. *Alexander Grosse(-1654), in "Sweet and Soul Persuading Inducements leading unto*

*Christ.*" 1632.

**Verses 9-11.** They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; *and his enemies shall lick the dust.* See *Psalms on "Ps 72:9"* for further information.

**Verse 10.** *Tarshish* was an old, celebrated, opulent, cultivated, commercial city, which carried on trade in the Mediterranean, and with the seaports of Syria, especially Tyre and Joppa, and that it most probably lay on the extreme west of that sea. Was there, then, in ancient times, any city in these parts which corresponded with these clearly ascertained facts? There was. Such was Tartessus in Spain, said to have been a Phoenician colony; a fact which of itself would account for its intimate connection with Palestine and the Biblical narratives. As to the exact spot where Tartessus (so written originally) lay, authorities are not agreed, as the city had ceased to exist when geography began to receive attention; but it was not far from the Straits of Gibraltar, and near the mouth of the Guadalquivir, consequently at no great distance from the famous Granada of later days. The reader, however, must enlarge his notion beyond that of a mere city, which, how great soever, would scarcely correspond with the ideas of magnitude, affluence, and power, that the Scriptures suggest. The name, which is of Phoenician origin, seems to denote the district of south western Spain, comprising the several colonies which Tyre planted in that country, and so being equivalent to what we might designate Phoenician Spain. We are not, however, convinced that the opposite coast of Africa was not included, so that the word would denote to an inhabitant of Palestine the extreme western parts of the world. *J. R. Beard, in "A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature."* 1866.

**Verse 10.** *The isles.* Myya, only in the Psalter besides, Ps 97:1, where, and uniformly, so rendered. The word, however, denotes all habitable land as opposed to water (see Ge 10:5, where first it occurs, with Isa 42:15), and so "*maritime land*, whether the sea coast of continent or island" (Gesenius); especially the countries washed by the Mediterranean, and the remote coasts to the west of Palestine. So in the parallel prophecy, Isa 60:9 11:11 41:1-2 Isa 42:10-12 49:1, etc. Accordingly, "*The isles shall wait for his law*," (Isa 42:4) is expounded in Mt 12:22—"In Him shall *the Gentiles* trust." *William DeBurgh.*

**Verse 10.** *Sheba and Seba.* There appear to have been two nations living in the same region, viz., Southern Arabia. One of these was descended from Cush, the son of Ham, and the other from Joktan, a descendant of Shem. These two people were often antagonistic in interests, despite the similarity of their names, but their divisions would be healed, and unitedly they would offer tribute to the Great King. It is an Arab proverb, "divided as the Sabaeans," but Christ makes them one. "The Greek geographers usually couple Abyssinia with Yemen, in Arabia, and invariably represent the Abyssinian as an Arab or Sabaeon race. Modern travellers, also, unanimously agree in recognising the Arab type among those Abyssinian populations which do not belong to the African stock." That the Sabaeon nations were wealthy is clear from the Greek historian Agatharchides. "The Sabaeans,

"says he, "have in their houses an incredible number of vases and utensils of all sorts, of gold and silver, beds and tripods of silver, and all the furniture of astonishing richness. Their buildings have porticoes with columns sheathed with gold, or surmounted by capitals of silver. On the friezes, ornaments, and the framework of the doors, they place plates of gold encrusted with precious stones. They spend immense sums in adorning these edifices, employing gold, silver, ivory, and precious stones, and materials of the greatest value." They appear, also, to have acquired great wealth by trading, both with India and Africa, their peninsula lying between those two regions. Rich would be their gifts if Lenormant and Chevallier's description of their commerce be correct. "The principal importations from India were gold, tin, precious stones, ivory, sandalwood, spices, pepper, cinnamon, and cotton. Besides these articles, the storehouses of southern Arabia received the products of the opposite coast of Africa, procured by the Sabaeans in the active coasting trade they carried on with this not far distant land, where Mosyton (now Ras Abourgabeh) was the principal port. These were, besides the spices that gave name to that coast, ebony, ostrich feathers, and more gold and ivory. With the addition of the products of the soil of southern Arabia itself, incense, myrrh, laudanum, precious stones, such as onyx and agates, lastly, aloes from the island of Socotra, and pearls from the fisheries of the Gulf of Ormus, we shall have the list of the articles comprised in the trade of this country with Egypt, and with those Asiatic countries bordering on the Mediterranean; and at the same time, by considering this activity of such a traffic." "Poor as God's people usually are, the era will surely arrive when the richest of the rich will count it all joy to lay their treasures at Jesus' feet." C. H. S.

**Verses 9-11.** They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; *and his enemies shall lick the dust.* See *Psalms on "Ps 72:9"* for further information.

**Verse 12.** *He shall deliver the needy when he crieth.* There needeth no mediator between him and his subjects; *he heareth the needy when they cry.* The man that hath nothing within him or without him to commend him to Christ, to assist, help, relieve, or comfort him in heaven or earth, is not despised by Christ, but delivered from that which he feareth. *David Dickson.*

**Verse 13.** *He shall spare;* more correctly, *compassionate or comfort the poor and needy; and shall save their souls, or preserve the lives of the needy.* *William Henry Alexander, in "The Book of Praises: being the Book of Psalms... with Notes Original and Selected."* 1867.

**Verse 13.** *And shall save the souls of the needy.* Scipio used to say, that he would rather save a single citizen than slay a thousand enemies. Of this mind ought all princes to be towards their subjects; but this affection and love rose to the highest excellence and power in the breast of Christ. So ardent is his love for his own, that he suffers not one of them to perish, but leads them to full salvation, and, opposing himself to both devils and tyrants who seek to destroy their souls, he constrains their fury and confounds their rage. *Mollerus.*

**Verse 14.** *And precious shall their blood be in his sight.* The Angolani so despised their slaves that they would sometimes give as many as twenty-two for one hunting dog... But Christ prefers the soul of one of his servants to the whole world, since he died that it might be made more capable of entering into eternal felicity. For breaking one goblet the Roman cast his slave into the pond to be devoured by the muraenae. But the Son of God came down from heaven to earth to deliver mankind, his vile, ungrateful, faithless servants, from the pangs of the serpent, like the golden fleece, and save them as Jonah from the whale. Is not their blood precious in his sight? *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 15.** *And he shall live;* Hebrew, "So shall he live; "i.e., the poor man. *Charles Carter.*

**Verse 15.** *And he shall live.* There is a clear reference to the coronation of kings in the loud acclamations, *Long live the King!* and the bestowal of the customary gifts and presents, as is plain from 2Sa 16:16 1Ki 1:39 1Sa 10:27 2Ch 17:5. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 15.** *He shall live.* Alexander the Great acknowledged at death that he was a frail and feeble man. "Lo! I," said he, "am dying, whom you falsely called a god." But Christ proved that he was God when, by his own death, he overcame, and, as I may say, slew death. *Thomas Le Blanc.*

**Verse 15.** *He shall live.* It is a great consolation to soldiers imperilled amid many forms of death, that their king *shall live.* Whence one of the chief of these warriors, consoling himself, said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at the last day I shall rise from the earth." Great is the consolation of the dying, that he for whom, or in whom, they die, *shall live* for evermore. With whom, if we die, we shall also live again, and share his riches equally with himself; for rich indeed is our Solomon, in whom are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God. *Gerhohus.*

**Verse 15.** *Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.* It might have been rendered, "Prayer also shall be made *through* him continually, and daily shall he be blessed." The word is rendered "blessed," when speaking of an act of worship towards God; and the word translated "for" is sometimes used for "through," as Jos 2:15, "Through the window." If we hold the translation "for him," then it must be understood of the saints praying for the Father's accomplishment of his promises, made to the Son in the covenant of redemption, that his kingdom may come, his name be glorified, and that he may see his seed, and that the full reward may be given him for his sufferings, and so that he may receive the joy that was set before him. *Jonathan Edwards.*

**Verse 15.** *Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.* In all conquered countries, *two* things marked the subjection of the people:

1. Their money was stamped with the name of the conqueror.
2. They were obliged to pray for him in their acts of public worship. *Adam Clarke.*

**Verse 16.** *An handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains.* Not only would the soil be likely to lack depth of earth, but the seed itself would be apt to be blown away by the winds of heaven, or washed down by the teeming rain to the base beneath. *Peter Grant. 1867.*



**Verse 16.** *An handful of corn*, etc. Upon mature consideration, I am persuaded that the proper sense of the word Mk, or hmk, is "a patch" or "piece; "and that it is used here just as we use the same words in English, in such expressions as these,—"a patch of wheat, a patch of barley, a piece of corn."  
*Samuel Horsley.*

**Verse 16.** *An handful of corn.* Doubtless it has been familiar to you to see corn merchants carrying small bags with them, containing just a handful of corn, which they exhibit as specimens of the store which they have for sale. Now, let me beg of every one of you to carry a small bag with this precious corn of the gospel. When you write a letter, drop in a word for Christ; it may be a seed that will take root... Speak a word for Christ wherever you go; it may be a seed productive of a great deal of fruit. Drop a tract on the counter, or in a house; it may be a seed productive of a plenteous harvest. The most difficult place, the steepest mountain, the spot where there is the least hope of producing fruit, is to be the first place of attack; and the more labour there is required, the more is to be given, in the distribution of the seeds. *James Sherman.*

**Verse 16.** *Shall shake like Lebanon.* With a plentiful ear, shall yield so large and strong a stalk that, with the motion of the wind, it shall shake cedar like. *Joseph Hall.*

**Verse 16.** *Shall shake as Lebanon.* That is to say, shall wave backwards and forwards with the wind, like the tall cedars of Lebanon. This implies that the corn will be lofty and luxuriant. *French and Skinner.*

**Verse 16.** Neither *wave* nor *shake* conveys the full force of the Hebrew verb, ver which suggests the additional idea of a rushing noise, like that of the wind among the cedars of Lebanon. This comparison is certainly more natural and obvious than that which some interpreters assume with the grain crops or harvest fields of Lebanon itself. This would be merely likening one harvest to another, nor is any such allusion ever made elsewhere to the mountain, though its circumjacent plains and valleys were productive. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

**Verse 16.** *Like Lebanon.* By dint of skill and labour, they have compelled a rocky soil to become fertile. Sometimes, to avail themselves of the waters, they have made a channel for them, by means of a thousand windings on the declivities, or have arrested them in the valleys by embankments. At other times they have propped up the earth, that was ready to roll down, by means of terraces and walls. Almost all the mountains being thus husbanded, present the appearance of a staircase, or of an amphitheatre, each tier of which is a row of vines or mulberry trees. I have counted, upon one declivity, as many as a hundred, or a hundred and twenty, tiers from the bottom of the valley to the top of the hill. I forgot, for the moment, that I was in Turkey. *Volney.*

**Verse 16.** *Like Lebanon.* To understand the images taken from Mount Lebanon, it is necessary to remark that four enclosures of mountains are described, rising one upon another. The first and lowest of these is described as rich in grain and fruits. The second is barren, being covered only with thorns,

rocks, and flints. The third, though higher still, is blessed with a perpetual spring; the trees are always green. There are innumerable orchards laden with fruit, and it forms, altogether, a terrestrial paradise,

"Where fruits and blossoms blush,  
In social sweetness, on the self same bough."

The fourth, or highest ridge of all, is the region of perpetual snow. Now, the imagery in the 72nd Psalm is evidently taken from the first of these ridges of Lebanon, where (most probably following the ancient mode of cultivating) the monks of Lebanon, for they were the chief cultivators of the terraced soil, industriously husband every particle of productive earth. In the expressive words of Burckhardt, "*Every inch of ground* is cultivated, "so that no image could have been more singularly expressive of the universal cultivation under Messiah's reign, than to say that *His fruit shall shake like Lebanon*; or, understanding the psalmist to speak figuratively, what moral landscape could be painted more richly than he does, when he intimates that those barren mountains of our world, which at present yield no fruit unto God, shall be cultivated in that day so industriously and so fully, that the fruit shall wave like the terraced heights of Lebanon. *Robert Murray Macheyne*. 1813-1843.

**Verse 16.** *Shall flourish like grass.* The peculiar characters of the grass, which adapt it especially for the service of man, are its apparent *humility* and *cheerfulness*. Its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service,—appointed to be trodden on and fed upon. Its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth,—glowing with variegated flames of flowers,—waving in soft depth of fruitful strength. Winter comes, and, though it will not mock its fellow plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colourless and leafless as they. It is always green; and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar frost. *John Ruskin*.

**Verse 17.** *His name shall be continued.* *Yinnon*: The Kethiv, *yanin*, would be; "shall produce fresh progeny, "or "send forth new shoots." M. Renan was far from intending to supply a commentary on this verse, when he said of the Lord Jesus, "Son culte se *rajeunira sans cesse*." Yet it would not be easy to find a more forcible illustration of the meaning of *yannin*. *William Kay*.

**Verse 17.** (*second clause*). The version and sense which Gussetius gives seems best of all: *His name shall generate, or beget children before the sun*; that is, his name preached, as the gospel, which is his name (Ac 9:15), shall be the means of begetting many sons and daughters openly and publicly, in the face of the sun, and wherever that is. *John Gill*.

**Verse 17.** *All nations shall call him blessed.* It is sometimes inadvertently said that the Old Testament is narrow and exclusive, while the New Testament is broad and catholic in its spirit. This is a mistake. The Old and New Testaments are of one mind on this matter. Many are called, and few chosen. This

is the common doctrine of the New as well as of the Old. They are both equally catholic in proclaiming the gospel to all. The covenant with Adam and with Noah is still valid, and sure to all who return to God; and the call of Abram is expressly said to be a means of extending blessing to all the families of man. The New Testament does not aim at anything more than this: it merely hails the approaching accomplishment of the same gracious end. *James G. Murphy, in "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Genesis."* 1863.

**Verse 19.** *Amen, and Amen.* Rabbi Jehudah the Holy, said, "He that said *Amen* in this world is worthy to say it in the world to come. David, therefore, utters *Amen* twice in this Psalm, to show that one `Amen' belongs to this world, the other to that which is to come. He who saith `Amen' devoutly, is greater than he who uttereth the prayers, for the prayers are but the letter, and the Amen is the seal. The scribe writeth the letters, the prince alone seals them." *Neale and Littledale.*

**Verse 19.** *Amen, and Amen.* What is *Amen* in Mt 16:28 is *alhywv* or "verily" in Lu 9:27. Our Saviour hath this phrase peculiar to himself, "Amen, Amen, " to give confirmation to the doctrine, and to raise our attention and faith; or to show that not only truth is spoken, but by him who is truth itself... There is no need for a rubric by the men of the Great Synagogue, or a canon, to command a man to blush, when it only the natural passion that will command it; so, when the heart is warm in prayer with serious and earnest affections, a double Amen doth as naturally flow from us as milk from a mother's breast to her suckling. And *Amen* comes from Nma, *aman*, which signifies "to nurse; "as if it were, if not the mother, yet the faithful nurse, of lively devotion. Assent to repetitions is essential unto prayer, and it is not signified publicly but by one Amen. *Thomas Woodcock(— 1695) in "Morning Exercises."*

**Verse 19.** *Amen* is a short word, but marvellously pregnant, full of sense, full of spirit. It is a word that seals all the truths of God, that seals every particular promise of God. And it is never likely to arise in the soul, unless there be first an almighty power from heaven, to seize on the powers of the soul, to subdue them, and make it say, "Amen." There is such an inward rising of the heart, and an innate rebellion against the blessed truth of God, that unless God, by his strong arm, bring the heart down, it never will nor can say, "Amen." *Richard Sibbes.*

**Verse 20.** *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.* This announcement carries with it an intimation that other Psalms besides are to follow. It would have been superfluous, if the Psalms had not been to follow which bear on their front the name of David. To this, indeed, it must point, bearing the character of an enigma, that these additional Psalms stood in other relations than those given in the first two books. We shall attain perfect clearness and certainty by perceiving that all the Psalms of David in the last two books are inserted as component parts into the later cycles. The subscription at the end of the second book must have been designed to separate the free from the bound, the scattered and serial Psalms of David from each other. Analogous in some measure is the subscription, *at an end are the speeches of Job*, in Job 31:40, which is not contradicted by the fact

that Job appears again speaking in chapters 41 and 42; it should rather be regarded as serving to give us a right understanding of that formal conclusion. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Verse 20.** At the conclusion of this Psalm, the Hebrew copies have, *Here end the orisons of David, the son of Jesse.* But, as several other Psalms of David follow, we must understand the note to mean either, "Here ends this book of the orisons of David," or, "Here ends the collection of hymns made by David himself; "additions being afterwards made to it, containing other hymns of David, by Asaph and others, and, lastly, by Esdras. *Daniel Cresswell.*

**Verse 20.** *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.* So long as the fivefold division of the Psalter was neglected, this note gave nothing but perplexity to the commentators. Augustine, and his master, Ambrose of Milan, finding it standing in their Psalters, between the seventy-second and seventy-third Psalms, took it for part of the title of the latter, and tortured their ingenuity in divining its import. Calvin saw that the note is retrospective, but, not having observed its position at the end of a book, he thought it pertained exclusively to the Psalm immediately preceding, and took it to mean that the Psalm embalms the last prayers of the aged king. But he was at a loss to reconcile this with the two obvious facts, that the *title* of the Psalm ascribes it to Solomon, and that quite a different Psalm is elsewhere preserved as "the last words of David" (2Sa 23:1). And this perplexity of the great Reformer is shared by the older commentators generally. We get rid of it at once, by simply remarking the position of the note in question. It is set down after a doxology which marks the end of the Second Book. It has no special reference, therefore, to the seventy-second Psalm. It either refers to the Second Book, or, more probably, to both the First and Second. *William Binnie.*

**Verse 20.** *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.* (Compared with) Psalm 86, title, *A prayer of David.* How can the prayers of David be said to be ended, when more begin? Answer: The end David had in making the Psalms, prayers, and praises, is one thing; but to make a final end of praying is another. Many several opinions have been given to reconcile this. Some that here end the prayers he made for Solomon. Some that here end the prayers he made in the days of his affliction. Some that here end the praises that he made, not the prayers, turning the word *tepillahs* into *tehillahs*. Some that here end David's, the rest that follow are Asaph's. Some that this Psalm was the last, the rest *posthumes*, found after his death. Some think it is spoken as the phrase is in Job 31:40: "The words of Job are ended; "and yet he had some words after this, but not so many. But the soundest resolution is this:—Here ends the prayers of David the son of Jesse; that is, here they are perfected. If any ask hereafter what or where lies the end that all these Psalms were made for? tell them here it lies in this Psalm, and, therefore, placed in the midst of all; as the centre in midst of a circle, all the lines meet here, and all the Psalms determine here; for it is only a prophetic treatise of the kingdom of Christ drawn out to the life, and it is dedicated to Solomon, because here is wisdom; other men had other ends, it may be, but the son of Jesse had no other end in the world but to set out

Christ's kingdom in making of his Psalms. *William Streat, in "The Dividing of the Hoof."* 1654.

**Verse 20.** *The son of Jesse.* It is the note of true humility and sincere love to God to abase ourselves, and acknowledge our low condition, wherein God did find us when he did let forth his love to us, that thereby we may commend the riches of God's goodness and grace unto us, appeareth here in David.

*David Dickson.*

**Verse 20.** *Are ended.* The sense is, that David, the son of Jesse, had nothing to pray for, or to wish, beyond the great things described in this Psalm. Nothing can be more animated than this conclusion. Having described the blessings of Messiah's reign, he closes the whole with this magnificent doxology:

Blessed be Jehovah God,  
God of Israel, alone performing wonders;  
And blessed be his name of glory,  
And let his glory fill the whole of the earth.  
Amen, and Amen.

Finished are the prayers of David, the son of Jesse.

—*Samuel Horsley.*

---

## HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

### **Whole Psalm.**

1. He shall.
2. They shall. Ring the changes on these, as the Psalm does.

**Verse 1.** The prayer of the ancient church now fulfilled.

1. Our Lord's titles.
  - (a) King, by divine nature.
  - (b) King's Son, in both natures. Thus we see his power innate and derived.
2. Our Lord's authority: "Judgments."
  - (a) To rule his people.
  - (b) To rule the world for his people's benefit.
  - (c) To judge mankind.
  - (d) To judge devils.
3. Our Lord's character. He is righteous in rewarding and punishing, righteous towards God and man.
4. Our loyal prayer. This asks for his rule over ourselves and the universe.

**Verse 2.** The rule of Christ in his church.

1. The subjects.
  - (a) Thy people, the elect, called, etc.

(b) Thy poor, through conviction and consciousness of sin.

2. The ruler. He, only, truly, constantly, etc.

3. The rule.—Righteous, impartial, gentle, prudent, etc. Lesson. Desire this rule.

**Verse 3.** Mountains of divine decree, of immutable truth, of almighty power, of eternal grace, etc. These mountains of God are securities of peace.

**Verse 4.** The poor man's King, or the benefits derived by the poor from the reign of Jesus.

**Verse 5.** The perpetuity of the gospel, reasons for it, things which threaten it, and lessons derived from it.

**Verse 6.** The field, the shower, the result. This verse is easily enough handled in a variety of ways.

**Verse 7.**

1. The righteous flourish more at one season than another.

2. They flourish most when Jesus is with them: *in his days, etc.*

3. The fruit of their growth is proportionately abundant: *and abundance, etc. G. Rogers.*

**Verse 7.** *Abundance of peace.* Abundant overtures of peace, abundant redemption making peace, abundant pardon conferring peace, abundant influences of the Spirit sealing peace, abundant promises guaranteeing peace, abundant love spreading peace, etc.

**Verse 8.** The universal spread of the gospel. Other theories as to the future overturned, and their evil influence exposed; while the benefit and certainty of this truth is vindicated.

**Verse 9** (*last clause*). The ignoble end of Christ's enemies.

**Verse 10.** Christian finance; voluntary but abundant are the gifts presented to Jesus.

**Verse 12.** Christ's peculiar care of the poor.

**Verse 12.**

1. Pitiable characters.

2. Abject conditions: "cry; ""no helper."

3. Natural resort: "crieth."

4. Glorious interposition. *G. Rogers.*

**Verse 14.** The martyr's hope in life and comfort in death. *G. Rogers.*

**Verse 14** (*last clause*). The martyr's blood.

1. Seen of God when shed.

2. Remembered by him.

3. Honoured by being a benefit to the church.

4. Rewarded especially in heaven.

**Verse 15.** *Prayer shall be made for him.* We are to pray for Jesus Christ. Owing to the interest he has in certain objects, what is done for them is done for himself and so he esteems it. We, therefore, pray for him when we pray for his ministers, his ordinances, his gospel, his church—in a word, his *cause*.

But what should we pray for on his behalf?

1. The degree of its resources; that there be always a sufficiency of suitable and able instruments to carry on the work.
2. The freedom of its administration; that whatever opposes or hinders its progress may be removed.
3. The diffusion of its principles; that they may become general and universal.
4. The increase of its glory, as well as its extent. *W. Jay.*

**Verse 15.** Prayer for Jesus, a suggestive topic. Daily praise, a Christian duty.

**Verse 15.** A living Saviour, a giving people; the connection between the two. Or, Christ in the church fills the exchequer, fosters the prayer meeting, and sanctifies the service of song.

**Verse 16.**

1. A happy description of the gospel: it is *a handful of corn*.
2. The places where it is sown.
3. The blessed effects which this gospel, when thus sown, will produce in the world. *J. Sherman.*

**Verse 16.**

1. Commencement.
2. Publicity.
3. Growth.
4. Result.

**Verse 16.**

1. What? *Corn.*
2. How much? *A handful.*
3. Where? *In the earth upon the top of the mountains.*
4. Will it grow? *The fruits, etc.*
5. What then? *They of the city, etc.*

**Verse 17.**

1. Christ glorified in the Church: *men shall be blessed, etc.*
2. Glorified in the world: *all nations, etc.*
3. Glorified in worlds to come: *endure, be continued, etc.*
4. Glorified for ever. *G. Rogers.*

**Verses 17-19.** The Four Blesseds, their meaning and order.

**Verse 20.**

1. Prayer should be frequent: *The prayers.*
2. Should be individual: *Of David.*
3. Should be early commenced: *the son of Jesse.*
4. Should be continued till they are no more needed.

## HERE ENDETH THE SECOND BOOK OF THE PSALMS.

### WORK UPON THE SEVENTY-SECOND PSALM

In CHANDLER'S *Life of David*, Vol. 2, pp. 440-44, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

#### **Psalm 73**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

**TITLE.** *A Psalm of Asaph.* This is the second Psalm ascribed to Asaph, and the first of eleven consecutive Psalms bearing the name of this eminent singer. Some writers are not sure that Asaph wrote them, but incline to the belief that David was the author, and Asaph the person to whom they were dedicated, that he might sing them when in his turn he became the chief musician. But though our own heart turns in the same direction, facts must be heard; and we find in 2Ch 29:30, that Hezekiah commanded the Levites to sing "the words of David and of Asaph the seer; "and, moreover, in Ne 12:46, David and Asaph are mentioned together, as distinct from "the chief of the singers, "and as it would seem, as joint authors of psalmody. We may, therefore, admit Asaph to be the author of some, if not all, of the twelve Psalms ascribed to him. Often a great star which seems to be but one to the eyes of ordinary observers, turns out upon closer inspection to be of a binary character; so here the Psalms of David are those of Asaph too. The great sun of David has a satellite in the moon of Asaph. By reading our notes on Psalm Fifty, in Volume 2, the reader will glean a little more concerning this man of God.

**SUBJECT.** Curiously enough this Seventy-third Psalm corresponds in subject with the Thirty-seventh: it will help the memory of the young to notice the reversed figures. The theme is that ancient stumbling block of good men, which Job's friends could not get over; viz.—the present prosperity of wicked men and the sorrows of the godly. Heathen philosophers have puzzled themselves about this, while to believers it has too often been a temptation.

**DIVISION.** In Ps 73:1 the psalmist declares his confidence in God, and, as it were, plants his foot on a rock while he recounts his inward conflict. From Ps 73:2-14 he states his temptation; then, from Ps 73:15-17 he is embarrassed as how to act, but ultimately finds deliverance from his dilemma. He describes with awe the fate of the ungodly in Ps 73:18-20, condemns his own folly and adores the grace of God, Ps 73:21-24, and concludes by renewing his allegiance to his God, whom he takes afresh to be his portion and delight.



## EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Truly, or, more correctly, only, God is good to Israel.* He is only good, nothing else but good to his own covenanted ones. He cannot act unjustly, or unkindly to them; his goodness to them is beyond dispute, and without mixture. Even to such as are of a clean heart. These are the true Israel, not the ceremonially clean but the really so; those who are clean in the inward parts, pure in the vital mainspring of action. To such he is, and must be, goodness itself. The writer does not doubt this, but lays it down as his firm conviction. It is well to make sure of what we do know, for this will be good anchor hold for us when we are molested by those mysterious storms which arise from things which we do not understand. Whatever may or may not be the truth about mysterious and inscrutable things, there are certainties somewhere; experience has placed some tangible facts within our grasp; let us, then, cling to these, and they will prevent our being carried away by those hurricanes of infidelity which still come from the wilderness, and, like whirlwinds, smite the four corners of our house and threaten to overthrow it. O my God, however perplexed I may be, let me never think ill of thee. If I cannot understand thee, let me never cease to believe in thee. It must be so, it cannot be otherwise, thou art good to those whom thou hast made good; and where thou hast renewed the heart thou wilt not leave it to its enemies.

**Verse 2.** Here begins the narrative of a great soul battle, a spiritual Marathon, a hard and well fought field, in which the half defeated became in the end wholly victorious. But as for me. He contrasts himself with his God who is ever good; he owns his personal want of good, and then also compares himself with the clean in heart, and goes on to confess his defilement. The Lord is good to his saints, *but as for me*, am I one of them? Can I expect to share his grace? Yes, I do share it; but I have acted an unworthy part, very unlike one who is truly pure in heart. My feet were almost gone. Errors of heart and head soon affect the conduct. There is an intimate connection between the heart and the feet. Asaph could barely stand, his uprightness was going, his knees were bowing like a falling wall. When men doubt the righteousness of God, their own integrity begins to waver. My steps had well nigh slipped. Asaph could make no progress in the good road, his feet ran away from under him like those of a man on a sheet of ice. He was weakened for all practical action, and in great danger of actual sin, and so of a disgraceful fall. How ought we to watch the inner man, since it has so forcible an effect upon the outward character. The confession in this case is, as it should be, very plain and explicit.

**Verse 3.** *For I was envious at the foolish.* "The foolish" is the generic title of all the wicked: they are beyond all others fools, and he must be a fool who envies fools. Some read it, "the proud:" and, indeed, these, by their ostentation, invite envy, and many a mind which is out of gear spiritually, becomes infected with that wasting disease. It is a pitiful thing that an heir of heaven should have to

confess "I was envious, "but worse still that he should have to put it, "I was envious at the foolish." Yet this acknowledgment is, we fear, due from most of us. When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. His eye was fixed too much on one thing; he saw their present, and forgot their future, saw their outward display, and overlooked their soul's discomfort. Who envies the bullock his fat when he recollects the shambles? Yet some poor afflicted saint has been sorely tempted to grudge the ungodly sinner his temporary plenty. All things considered, Dives had more cause to envy Lazarus than Lazarus to be envious of Dives.

**Verse 4.** *For there are no bands in their death.* This is mentioned as the chief wonder, for we usually expect that in the solemn article of death, a difference will appear, and the wicked will become evidently in trouble. The notion is still prevalent that a quiet death means a happy hereafter. The psalmist had observed that the very reverse is true. Careless persons become case hardened, and continue presumptuously secure, even to the last. Some are startled at the approach of judgment, but many more have received a strong delusion to believe a lie. What with the surgeon's drugs and their own infidelity, or false peace, they glide into eternity without a struggle. We have seen godly men bound with doubts, and fettered with anxieties, which have arisen from their holy jealousy; but the godless know nothing of such bands: they care neither for God nor devil. Their strength is firm. What care they for death? Frequently they are brazen and insolent, and can vent defiant blasphemies even on their last couch. This may occasion sorrow and surprise among saints, but certainly should not suggest envy, for, in this case, the most terrible inward conflict is infinitely to be preferred to the profoundest calm which insolent presumption can create. Let the righteous die as they may, let my last end be like theirs.

**Verse 5.** *They are not in trouble as other men.* The prosperous wicked escape the killing toils which afflict the mass of mankind; their bread comes to them without care, their wine without stint. They have no need to enquire, "Whence shall we get bread for our children, or raiment for our little ones?" Ordinary domestic and personal troubles do not appear to molest them. Neither are they plagued like other men. Fierce trials do not arise to assail them: they smart not under the divine rod. While many saints are both poor and afflicted, the prosperous sinner is neither. He is worse than other men, and yet he is better off; he ploughs least, and yet has the most fodder. He deserves the hottest hell, and yet has the warmest nest. All this is clear to the eyes of faith, which unriddles the riddle; but to the bleared eye of sense it seems an enigma indeed. They are to have nothing hereafter, let them have what they can here; they, after all, only possess what is of secondary value, and their possessing it is meant to teach us to set little store by transient things. If earthly good were of much value, the Lord would not give so large a measure of it to those who have least of his love.

**Verse 6.** *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain.* They are as great in their own esteem as if they were aldermen of the New Jerusalem; they want no other ornament than their own

pomposity. No jeweller could sufficiently adorn them; they wear their own pride as a better ornament than a gold chain. Violence covereth them as a garment. In their boastful arrogance they array themselves; they wear the livery of the devil, and are fond of it. As soon as you see them, you perceive that room must be made for them, for, regardless of the feelings and rights of others, they intend to have their way, and achieve their own ends. They brag and bully, bluster and browbeat, as if they had taken out license to ride roughshod over all mankind.

**Verse 7.** *Their eyes stand out with fatness.* In cases of obesity the eyes usually appear to be enclosed in fat, but sometimes they protrude; in either case the countenance is changed, loses its human form, and is assimilated to that of fatted swine. The face is here the index of the man: the man has more than suffices him; he is glutted and surfeited with wealth, and yet is one of the wicked whom God abhorreth. They have more than heart could wish. Their wishes are gratified, and more; their very greediness is exceeded; they call for water, and the world gives them milk; they ask for hundreds, and thousands are lavished at their feet. The heart is beyond measure gluttonous, and yet in the case of certain ungodly millionaires, who have rivalled Sardanapalus both in lust and luxury, it has seemed as if their wishes were exceeded, and their meat surpassed their appetite.

**Verse 8.** *They are corrupt.* They rot above ground; their heart and life are depraved. And speak wickedly concerning oppression. The reek of the sepulchre rises through their mouths; the nature of the soul is revealed in the speech. They choose oppression as their subject, and they not only defend it, but advocate it, glory in it, and would fain make it the general rule among all nations. "Who are the poor? What are they made for? What, indeed, but to toil and slave that men of education and good family may enjoy themselves? Out on the knaves for prating about their rights! A set of wily demagogues are stirring them up, because they get a living by agitation. Work them like horses, and feed them like dogs; and if they dare complain, send them to the prison or let them die in the workhouse." There is still too much of this wicked talk abroad, and, although the working classes have their faults, and many of them very grave and serious ones too, yet there is a race of men who habitually speak of them as if they were an inferior order of animals. God forgive the wretches who thus talk. They speak loftily. Their high heads, like tall chimneys, vomit black smoke. Big talk streams from them, their language is colossal, their magniloquence ridiculous. They are Sir Oracle in every case, they speak as from the judges' bench, and expect all the world to stand in awe of them.

**Verse 9.** *They set their mouth against the heavens.* Against God himself they aim their blasphemies. One would think, to hear them, that they were demigods themselves, and held their heads above the clouds, for they speak down upon other men as from a sublime elevation peculiar to themselves. Yet they might let God alone, for their pride will make them enemies enough without their defying him. And their tongue walketh through the earth. Leisurely and habitually they traverse the whole world to find victims for their slander and abuse. Their tongue prowls in every corner far and near, and spares

none. They affect to be universal censors, and are in truth perpetual vagrants. Like the serpent, they go nowhere without leaving their slime behind them; if there were another Eden to be found, its innocence and beauty would not preserve it from their filthy trail. They themselves are, beyond measure, worthy of all honour, and all the rest of mankind, except a few of their parasites, are knaves, fools, hypocrites, or worse. When these men's tongues are out for a walk, they are unhappy who meet them, for they push all travellers into the kennel: it is impossible altogether to avoid them, for in both hemispheres they take their perambulations, both on land and sea they make their voyages. The city is not free from them, and the village swarms with them. They waylay men in the king's highway, but they are able to hunt across country, too. Their whip has a long lash, and reaches both high and low.

**Verse 10.** *Therefore his people return hither.* God's people are driven to fly to his throne for shelter; the doggish tongues fetch home the sheep to the Shepherd. The saints come again, and again, to their Lord, laden with complaints on account of the persecutions which they endure from these proud and graceless men. And waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. Though beloved of God, they have to drain the bitter cup; their sorrows are as full as the wicked man's prosperity. It grieves them greatly to see the enemies of God so high, and themselves so low, yet the Lord does not alter his dispensations, but continues still to chasten his children, and indulge his foes. The medicine cup is not for rebels, but for those whom Jehovah Rophi loves.

**Verse 11.** *And they say, How doth God know?* Thus dare the ungodly speak. They flatter themselves that their oppressions and persecutions are unobserved of heaven. If there be a God, is he not too much occupied with other matters to know what is going on upon this world? So they console themselves if judgments be threatened. Boasting of their own knowledge, they yet dare to ask, Is there knowledge in the Most High? Well were they called foolish. A God, and not know? This is a solecism in language, a madness of thought. Such, however, is the acted insanity of the graceless theists of this age; theists in name, because avowed infidelity is disreputable, but atheists in practice beyond all question. I could not bring my mind to accept the rendering of many expositors by which this verse is referred to tried and perplexed saints. I am unable to conceive that such language could flow from their lips, even under the most depressing perplexities.

**Verse 12.** *Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world.* Look! See! Consider! Here is the standing enigma! The crux of Providence! The stumblingblock of faith! Here are the unjust rewarded and indulged, and that not for a day or an hour, but in perpetuity. From their youth up these men, who deserve perdition, revel in prosperity. They deserve to be hung in chains, and chains are hung about their necks; they are worthy to be chased from the world, and yet the world becomes all their own. Poor purblind sense cries, Behold this! Wonder, and be amazed, and make this square with providential justice, if you can. They increase in riches; or, strength. Both wealth and health are their

dowry. No bad debts and bankruptcies weigh them down, but robbery and usury pile up their substance. Money runs to money, gold pieces fly in flocks; the rich grow richer, the proud grow prouder. Lord, how is this? Thy poor servants, who become yet poorer, and groan under their burdens, are made to wonder at thy mysterious ways.

**Verse 13.** *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain.* Poor Asaph! he questions the value of holiness when its wages are paid in the coin of affliction. With no effect has he been sincere; no advantage has come to him through his purity, for the filthy hearted are exalted and fed on the fat of the land. Thus foolishly will the wisest of men argue, when faith is napping. Asaph was a seer, but he could not see when reason left him in the dark; even seers must have the sunlight of revealed truth to see by, or they grope like the blind. In the presence of temporal circumstances, the pure in heart may seem to have cleansed themselves altogether in vain, but we must not judge after the sight of the eyes. And washed my hands in innocency. Asaph had been as careful of his hands as of his heart; he had guarded his outer as well as his inner life, and it was a bitter thought that all of this was useless, and left him in even a worse condition than foul handed, black hearted worldlings. Surely the horrible character of the conclusion must have helped to render it untenable; it could not be so while God was God. It smelt too strong of a lie to be tolerated long in the good man's soul; hence, in a verse or two, we see his mind turning in another direction.

**Verse 14.** *For all the day long have I been plagued.* He was smitten from the moment he woke to the time he went to bed. His griefs were not only continued, but renewed with every opening day. *And chastened every morning.* This was a vivid contrast to the lot of the ungodly. There were crowns for the reprobates and crosses for the elect. Strange that the saints should sigh and the sinners sing. Rest was given to the disturbers, and yet peace was denied to the peace makers. The downcast seer was in a muse and a maze. The affairs of mankind appeared to him to be in a fearful tangle; how could it be permitted by a just ruler that things should be so turned upside down, and the whole course of justice dislocated.

**Verse 15.** *If I say, I will speak thus.* It is not always wise to speak one's thoughts; if they remain within, they will only injure ourselves; but once uttered, their mischief may be great. From such a man as the psalmist, the utterance which his discontent suggested would have been a heavy blow and deep discouragement to the whole brotherhood. He dared not, therefore, come to such a resolution, but paused, and would not decide to declare his feelings. It was well, for in his case second thoughts were by far the best. I should offend against the generation of thy children. I should scandalise them, grieve them, and perhaps cause them to offend also. We ought to look at the consequences of our speech to all others, and especially to the church of God. Woe unto the man by whom offence cometh! Rash, undigested, ill considered speech, is responsible for much of the heart burning and trouble in the churches. Would to God that, like Asaph, men would bridle their tongues. Where we

have any suspicion of being wrong, it is better to be silent; it can do no harm to be quiet, and it may do serious damage to spread abroad our hastily formed opinions. To grieve the children of God by appearing to act perfidiously and betray the truth, is a sin so heinous, that if the consciences of heresy mongers were not seared as with a hot iron, they would not be so glib as they are to publish abroad their novelties. Expressions which convey the impression that the Lord acts unjustly or unkindly, especially if they fall from the lips of men of known character and experience, are as dangerous as firebrands among stubble; they are used for blasphemous purposes by the ill disposed; and the timid and trembling are sure to be cast down thereby, and to find reason for yet deeper distress of soul.

**Verse 16.** *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.* The thought of scandalising the family of God he could not bear, and yet his inward thoughts seethed and fermented, and caused an intolerable anguish within. To speak might have relieved one sorrow, but, as it would have created another, he forbore so dangerous a remedy; yet this did not remove the first pangs, which grew even worse and worse, and threatened utterly to overwhelm him. A smothered grief is hard to endure. The triumph of conscience which compels us to keep the wolf hidden beneath our own garments, does not forbid its gnawing at our vitals. Suppressed fire in the bones rages more fiercely than if it could gain a vent at the mouth. Those who know Asaph's dilemma will pity him as none others can.

**Verse 17.** *Until I went into the sanctuary of God.* His mind entered the eternity where God dwells as in a holy place, he left the things of sense for the things invisible, his heart gazed within the veil, he stood where the thrice holy God stands. Thus he shifted his point of view, and apparent disorder resolved itself into harmony. The motions of the planets appear most discordant from this world which is itself a planet; they appear as "progressive, retrograde, and standing still; "but could we fix our observatory in the sun, which is the centre of the system, we should perceive all the planets moving in perfect circle around the head of the great solar family. Then understood I their end. He had seen too little to be able to judge; a wider view changed his judgment; he saw with his mind's enlightened eye the future of the wicked, and his soul was in debate no longer as to the happiness of their condition. No envy gnaws now at his heart, but a holy horror both of their impending doom, and of their present guilt, fills his soul. He recoils from being dealt with in the same manner as the proud sinners, whom just now he regarded with admiration.

**Verse 18.** The Psalmist's sorrow had culminated, not in the fact that the ungodly prospered, but that God had arranged it so: had it happened by mere chance, he would have wondered, but could not have complained; but how the arranger of all things could so dispense his temporal favours, was the vexatious question. Here, to meet the case, he sees that the divine hand purposely placed these men in prosperous and eminent circumstances, not with the intent to bless them but the very reverse. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places. Their position was dangerous, and, therefore, God did

not set his friends there but his foes alone. He chose, in infinite love, a rougher but safer standing for his own beloved. Thou castedst them down into destruction. The same hand which led them up to their Tarpeian rock, hurled them down from it. They were but elevated by judicial arrangement for the fuller execution of their doom. Eternal punishment will be all the more terrible in contrast with the former prosperity of those who are ripening for it. Taken as a whole, the case of the ungodly is horrible throughout; and their worldly joy instead of diminishing the horror, actually renders the effect the more awful, even as the vivid lightning amid the storm does not brighten but intensify the thick darkness which lowers around. The ascent to the fatal gallows of Haman was an essential ingredient in the terror of the sentence—"hang him thereon." If the wicked had not been raised so high they could not have fallen so low.

**Verse 19.** *How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment!* This is an exclamation of godly wonder at the suddenness and completeness of the sinners' overthrow. Headlong is their fall; without warning, without escape, without hope of future restoration! Despite their golden chains, and goodly apparel, death stays not for manners but hurries them away; and stern justice unbribed by their wealth hurls them into destruction. They are utterly consumed with terrors. They have neither root nor branch left. They cease to exist among the sons of men, and, in the other world, there is nothing left of their former glory. Like blasted trees, consumed by the lightning, they are monuments of vengeance; like the ruins of Babylon they reveal, in the greatness of their desolation, the judgments of the Lord against all those who unduly exalt themselves. The momentary glory of the graceless is in a moment effaced, their loftiness is in an instant consumed.

**Verse 20.** *As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.* They owe their existence and prosperity to the forbearance of God, which the psalmist compares to a sleep; but as a dream vanishes so soon as a man awakes, so the instant the Lord begins to exercise his justice and call men before him, the pomp and prosperity of proud transgressors shall melt away. When God awakes to judgment, they who despise him shall be despised; they are already "such stuff as dreams are made of," but then the baseless fabric shall not leave a wreck behind. Let them flaunt the little hour, poor unsubstantial sons of dreams; they will soon be gone; when the day breaketh, and the Lord awake as a mighty man out of his sleep, they will vanish away. Who cares for the wealth of dreamland? Who indeed but fools? Lord, leave us not to the madness which covets unsubstantial wealth, and ever teach us thine own true wisdom.

**Verse 21.** The holy poet here reviews his inward struggle and awards himself censure for his folly. His pain had been intense; he says, Thus my heart was grieved. It was a deep seated sorrow, and one which penetrated his inmost being. Alexander reads it, "My heart is soured." His spirit had become embittered; he had judged in a harsh, crabbed, surly manner. He had become atrabilious, full of black bile, melancholy, and choleric; he had poisoned his own life at the fountain head, and

made all its streams to be bitter as gall. And I was pricked in my reins. He was as full of pain as a man afflicted with renal disease; he had pierced himself through with many sorrows; his hard thoughts were like so many calculi in his kidneys; he was utterly wretched and woebegone, and all through his own reflections. O miserable philosophy, which stretches the mind on the rack, and breaks it on the wheel! O blessed faith, which drives away the inquisitors, and sets the captives free!

**Verse 22.** *So foolish was I.* He, though a saint of God, had acted as if he had been one of the fools whom God abhorreth. Had he not even envied them?—and what is that but to aspire to be like them? The wisest of men have enough folly in them to ruin them unless grace prevents. And ignorant. He had acted as if he knew nothing, had babbled like an idiot, had uttered the very drivel of a witless loon. He did not know how sufficiently to express his sense of his own fatuity. I was as a beast before thee. Even in God's presence he had been brutish, and worse than a beast. As the grass eating ox has but this present life, and can only estimate things thereby, and by the sensual pleasure which they afford, even so had the psalmist judged happiness by this mortal life, by outward appearances, and by fleshly enjoyments. Thus he had, for the time, renounced the dignity of an immortal spirit, and, like a mere animal, judged after the sight of the eyes. We should be very loath to call an inspired man a beast, and yet, penitence made him call himself so; nay, he uses the plural, by way of emphasis, and as if he were worse than any one beast. It was but an evidence of his true wisdom that he was so deeply conscious of his own folly. We see how bitterly good men bewail mental wanderings; they make no excuses for themselves, but set their sins in the pillory, and cast the vilest reproaches upon them. O for grace to detest the very appearance of evil!

**Verse 23.** *Nevertheless I am continually with thee.* He does not give up his faith, though he confesses his folly. Sin may distress us, and yet we may be in communion with God. It is sin beloved and delighted in which separates us from the Lord, but when we bewail it heartily, the Lord will not withdraw from us. What a contrast is here in this and the former verse! He is as a beast, and yet continually with God. Our double nature, as it always causes conflict, so is it a continuous paradox: the flesh allies us with the brutes, and the spirit affiliates us to God. Thou hast holden me by my right hand. With love dost thou embrace me, with honour ennoble me, with power uphold me. He had almost fallen, and yet was always upheld. He was a riddle to himself, as he had been a wonder unto many. This verse contains the two precious mercies of communion and upholding, and as they were both given to one who confessed himself a fool, we also may hope to enjoy them.

**Verse 24.** *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.* I have done with choosing my own way, and trying to pick a path amid the jungle of reason. He yielded not only the point in debate, but all intentions of debating, and he puts his hand into that of the great Father, asking to be led, and agreeing to follow. Our former mistakes are a blessing, when they drive us to this. The end of our own wisdom is the beginning of our being wise. With Him is counsel, and when we come to him, we are sure to be led



aright. And afterward. "Afterward!" Blessed word. We can cheerfully put up with the present, when we foresee the future. What is around us just now is of small consequence, compared with afterward. Receive me to glory. Take me up into thy splendour of joy. Thy guidance shall conduct me to this matchless terminus. Glory shall I have, and thou thyself wilt admit me into it. As Enoch was not, for God took him, so all the saints are taken up—*received up* into glory.

**Verse 25.** *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Thus, then, he turns away from the glitter which fascinated him to the true gold which was his real treasure. He felt that his God was better to him than all the wealth, health, honour, and peace, which he had so much envied in the worldling; yea, He was not only better than all on earth, but more excellent than all in heaven. He bade all things else go, that he might be filled with his God. And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. No longer should his wishes ramble, no other object should tempt them to stray; henceforth, the Ever living One should be his all in all.

**Verse 26.** *My flesh and my heart faileth.* They had failed him already, and he had almost fallen; they would fail him in the hour of death, and, if he relied upon them, they would fail him at once. But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. His God would not fail him, either as protection or a joy. His heart would be kept up by divine love, and filled eternally with divine glory. After having been driven far out to sea, Asaph casts anchor in the old port. We shall do well to follow his example. There is nothing desirable save God; let us, then, desire only him. All other things must pass away; let our hearts abide in him, who alone abideth for ever.

**Verse 27.** *For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish.* We must be near God to live; to be far off by wicked works is death. Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. If we pretend to be the Lord's servants, we must remember that he is a jealous God, and requires spiritual chastity from all his people. Offences against conjugal vows are very offensive, and all sins against God have the same element in them, and they are visited with the direst punishments. Mere heathens, who are far from God, perish in due season; but those who, being his professed people, act unfaithfully to their profession, shall come under active condemnation, and be crushed beneath his wrath. We read examples of this in Israel's history; may we never create fresh instances in our own persons.

**Verse 28.** *But it is good for me to draw near to God.* Had he done so at first he would not have been immersed in such affliction; when he did so he escaped from his dilemma, and if he continued to do so he would not fall into the same evil again. The greater our nearness to God, the less we are affected by the attractions and distractions of earth. Access into the most holy place is a great privilege, and a cure for a multitude of ills. It is good for all saints, it is good for me in particular; it is always good, and always will be good for me to approach the greatest good, the source of all good, even God himself. I have put my trust in the Lord God. He dwells upon the glorious name of the Lord Jehovah, and avows it as the basis of his faith. Faith is wisdom; it is the key of enigmas, the clue of

mazes, and the pole star of pathless seas. Trust and you will know. That I may declare all thy works. He who believes shall understand, and so be able to teach. Asaph hesitated to utter his evil surmisings, but he has no diffidence in publishing abroad a good matter. God's ways are the more admired the more they are known. He who is ready to believe the goodness of God shall always see fresh goodness to believe in, and he who is willing to declare the works of God shall never be silent for lack of wonders to declare.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Whole Psalm.** The Seventy-third Psalm is a very striking record of the mental struggle which an eminently pious Jew underwent, when he contemplated the respective conditions of the righteous and the wicked. Fresh from the conflict, he somewhat abruptly opens the Psalm with the confident enunciation of the truth of which victory over doubt had now made him more and more intelligently sure than ever, that *God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart*. And then he relates the most fatal shock which his faith has received, when he contrasted the prosperity of the wicked, who, though they proudly contemned God and man, prospered in the world and increased in riches, with his own lot, who, though he had cleansed his heart and washed his hands in innocency, had been *plagued all the day long and chastened every morning*. The place where his doubts were removed and his tottering faith reestablished, was *the sanctuary of God*. God himself was the teacher. What, then, did he teach? By what divinely imparted considerations was the psalmist reassured? Whatever is the proper rendering of Ps 73:4; whether, *There are no sorrows (tending) to their death*, or, *There are no sorrows until their death*, —their whole life to the very last is one unchequered course of happiness—that verse conveys to us the psalmist's *mistaken* estimate of the prosperity of the wicked, before he went unto the sanctuary of God. The true estimate, at which he afterwards arrived, is found in Ps 73:18-20. Now, admitting (what, by the way, is somewhat difficult of belief, inasmuch as the sudden and fearful temporal destruction of *all* or even the *most* prosperous, cannot be made out) that the end of these men means only and always their end *in this world*, we come to the conclusion that, in the case of the wicked, this Psalm does not plainly and undeniably teach that punishment awaits them after death; but only that, in estimating their condition, it is necessary, in order to vindicate the justice of God, to take in their whole career, and set over against their great prosperity the sudden and fearful reverses and destruction which they frequently encounter. But, in turning to the other side of the comparison, the case of the righteous, we are *not* met by the thought, that as the prosperity of the wicked is but the preparation for their ruin, the raising higher the tower that the fall may be the greater, so the adversity of the godly is but an introduction to worldly wealth and honour. That though is not foreign to the Old Testament writers. "Evildoers shall be cut off; "writes one of them, "but those who wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet

a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Ps 37:9-11. *But it is not so much as hinted at here.* The daily chastening may continue, flesh and heart may fail, but God is good to Israel notwithstanding: he is their portion, their guide, their help while they live, and he will take them to his glorious presence when they die. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.* The New Testament has nothing higher or more spiritual than this. The reference of the last clause to happiness after death is, I believe, generally acknowledged by Jewish commentators. They left it to the candour of Christian expositors to doubt or deny it. *Thomas Thompson Perowne, in "The Essential Coherence of the Old and New Testaments." 1858.*

**Whole Psalm.** In Psalm Seventy-three the soul looks *out*, and reasons on what it sees there; namely, successful wickedness and suffering righteousness. What is the conclusion? "I have cleansed my heart in vain." So much for looking about. In Psalm Seventy-seven the soul looks *in*, and reasons on what it finds there. What is the conclusion? "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" So much for looking in. Where, then, should we look? Look *up*, straight up, and *believe* what you see there. What will be the conclusion? You will understand the "*end*" of man, and trace the "*way*" of God. *From "Things New and Old, a Monthly Magazine." 1858.*

**Whole Psalm.** In this Psalm, the psalmist (Asaph) relates the great difficulty which existed in his own mind, from the consideration of the wicked. He observes (Ps 73:2-3), *As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.* In the fourth and following verses he informs us what, in the wicked, was his temptation. In the first place, he observed, that they were *prosperous*, and all things went well with them. He then observed their *behaviour* in their prosperity, and the use which they made of it; and that God, notwithstanding such abuse, *continued* their prosperity. Then he tells us by what means he was helped out of this difficulty, viz., by going into the *sanctuary* (Ps 73:16-17), and proceeds to inform us what considerations they were which helped him, viz.,—

1. The consideration of the *miserable end* of wicked men. However they prosper for the present, yet they come to a woeful end at last (Ps 73:18-20).
2. The consideration of the *blessed end* of the saints. Although the saints, while they live, may be afflicted, yet they come to a happy end at last (Ps 73:21-24).
3. The consideration that the godly have a much *better portion* than the wicked, even though they have no other portion but God; as in Ps 73:25-26.

Though the wicked are in prosperity, and are not in trouble as other men; yet the godly, though in affliction, are in a state infinitely better, because they have God for their portion. They need desire nothing else: he that hath God hath all. Thus the psalmist professes the sense and apprehension

which he had of things: *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.* In the twenty-fourth verse the psalmist takes notice how the saints are happy in God, both when they are in this world and also when they are taken to another. They are blessed in God in this world, in that *he guides them by his counsel;* and when he takes them out of it they are still happy, in that *he receives them to glory.* This probably led him to declare that he desired *no other portion,* either in this world or in that to come, either in heaven or upon earth. *Jonathan Edwards.*

**Verse 1.** *Truly:* it's but a particle; but the smallest filings of gold are gathered up. Little pearls are of great price. And this small particle is not of small use, being rightly applied and improved. First, take it (as our translators gave it us) as *a note of asseveration. Truly.* It's a word of faith, opposite to the psalmist's sense and Satan's injections. Whatsoever sense sees or feels, whatsoever Satan insinuates and says; yet precious faith with confidence asserts, *Truly, verily God is good.* He is not only good in word, but in deed also. Not only seemingly good, but certainly good. Secondly, consider it as *an adversative particle, Yet,* so our old translation. Ainsworth renders it, *yet surely;* taking in the former and this together. And then the sense runs thus: How ill soever things go in the world, how ill soever it fares with God's church and people amongst men, *yet God is good* to Israel. Thirdly, some conceive that the word carries *admiration.* Oh, how good is God to Israel. Where expressions and apprehensions fail, there the psalmist takes up God's providence with admiration. Oh, how wonderfully, how transcendently good is God to Israel! This *yet* (as I conceive) hath a threefold reference to the body of the Psalm. For as interpreters observe, though these words are set in the beginning, yet they suggest the conclusion of the psalmist's conflict. And the psalmist seems to begin somewhat abruptly. *Yet God is good.* But having filled his thoughts with his former follies and fears, and now seeing himself in a safe condition both for the present and the future, he is full of confidence and comfort; and that which was the strongest and chiefest in his heart now breaks our first: *Yet God is good.*

1. This *yet* relates unto his sufferings, Ps 73:14: *All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.* Notwithstanding the variety and frequency of the saint's sufferings, *yet God is good.* Though sorrow salutes them every morning at their first awaking, and trouble attends them to bed at night, *yet God is good.* Though temptations many and terrible make batteries and breeches upon their spirits, *yet God is good to Israel.*

2. This *yet* reflects upon his sinning, the fretting and wrangling of his distempered heart (Ps 73:2-3,21). Though sinful motions do mutiny in the soul against God's wise administration, though there be foolish, proud quarrelling with divine providence, and inexcusable distrust of his faithful promises; though fretfulness at others prosperity and discontent at their own adversity, *yet God is good.* Israel's sinful distempers cause not the Almighty to change the course of his accustomed goodness. While corruptions are kept from breaking out into scandal, while the soul contends against

them, and is humbled for them (as the psalmist was), this conclusion must be maintained: *yet God is good.*

3. This *yet* looks back upon his misgivings. There had been distrustful despondency upon the good man's heart. For from both the premises (viz., his sufferings and sinning) he had inferred this conclusion, Ps 73:13, *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.* As if he had said, "I have kept fasts, observed Sabbaths, heard sermons, made prayers, received sacraments, given alms, avoided sins, resisted temptations, withstood lusts, appeared for Christ and his cause and servants in vain": yea, his heart had added an asseveration (*verily*) to this faithless opinion, but now he is of another mind: *Yet God is good.* The administrations of God are not according to the sad surmises of his people's misgiving hearts. For, though they through diffidence are apt to give up their holy labours as lost, and all their conscientious care and carriage as utterly cast away; *yet God is good to Israel.* Simeon Ash, in a Sermon entitled "*God's Incomparable Goodness unto Israel.*" 1647.

**Verse 1.** David opens the Psalm abruptly, and from this we learn what is worthy of particular notice, that, before he broke forth into this language, his mind had been agitated with many doubts and conflicting suggestions. As a brave and valiant champion, he had been exercised in very painful struggles and temptations; but, after long and arduous exertion, he at length succeeded in shaking off all perverse imaginations, and came to the conclusion that *yet* God is gracious to his servants, and the faithful guardian of their welfare. Thus these words contain a tacit contrast between the unhallowed imaginations suggested to him by Satan, and the testimony in favour of true religion with which he now strengthens himself, denouncing, as it were, the judgment of the flesh, in giving place to misgiving thoughts with respect to the providence of God. We see, then, how emphatic is this exclamation of the psalmist. He does not ascend into the chair to dispute after the manner of the philosophers, and to deliver his discourse in a style of studied oratory; but as if he had escaped from hell, he proclaims with a loud voice, and with impassioned feeling, that he had obtained the victory.  
*John Calvin.*

**Verse 1.** (*first clause*).

Yet sure the gods are good: I would think so,

If they would give me leave!

But virtue in distress, and vice in triumph,

Make atheists of mankind. *Dryden.*

**Verse 1.** *God is good.* There is a beauty in the name appropriated by the Saxon nations to the Deity, unequalled except by his most reverential Hebrew appellation. They called him "GOD, "which is literally "THE GOOD." The same word thus signifying the Deity, and his most endearing quality.

*Turner.*

**Verse 1. *God is good.*** Let the devil and his instruments say what they will to the contrary, I will never believe them; I have said it before, and I see no reason to reverse my sentence: *Truly God is good.* Though sometimes he may hide his face for awhile, yet he doth that in faithfulness and love; there is kindness in his very scourges, and love bound up in his rods; he is good to Israel: do but mark it first or last: "The true Israelite, in whom there is no guile, shall be refreshed by his Saviour." The Israelite that wrestles with tears with God, and values his love above the whole world, that will not be put off without his Father's blessing, shall have it with a witness: "He shall reap in joy though he may at present sow in tears. Even to such as are of a clean heart." The false hearted hypocrite, indeed, that gives God only his tongue and lip, cap and knee, but reserves his heart and love for sin and the world, that hath much of compliment, but nothing of affection and reality, why let such a one never expect, while in such a state, to taste those reviving comforts that I have been treating of; while he drives such a trade, he must not expect God's company. *James Janeway.* 1636-1674.

**Verse 1. *Even to such as are of a clean heart.*** Purity of heart is the characteristic note of God's people. Heart purity denominates us the Israel of God; it makes us of Israel indeed; "but all are not Israel which are of Israel." Ro 9:6. Purity of heart is the jewel which is hung only upon the elect. As chastity distinguishes a virtuous woman from an harlot, so the true saint is distinguished from the hypocrite by his heart purity. This is like the nobleman's star or garter, which is a peculiar ensign of honour, differing him from the vulgar; when the bright star of purity shineth in a Christian's heart it doth distinguish him from the formal professor. . . . *God is good* to the pure in heart. We all desire that God should be good to us; it is the sick man's prayer: "The Lord be good to me." But how is God good to them? Two ways.

1. To them that are pure all things are sanctified, Tit 1:15: "To the pure all things are pure; " estate is sanctified, relations are sanctified; as the temple did sanctify the gold and the altar did sanctify the offering. To the unclean nothing is clean; their table is a snare, their temple devotion a sin. There is a curse entailed upon a wicked man (De 28:16), but holiness removeth the curse, and cuts off the entail: "to the pure all things are pure."

2. The clean hearted have all things work for their good. Ro 8:28. Mercies and afflictions shall turn to their good; the most poisonous drugs shall be medicinal; the most cross providence shall carry on the design of their salvation. Who, then, would not be clean on heart? *Thomas Watson.*

**Verse 2. *But as for me.*** Literally, it is, *And I*, which ought to be read with emphasis; for David means that those temptations which cast an affront upon the honour of God, and overwhelm faith, not only assail the common class of men, or those who are endued only with some small measure of the fear of God, but that he himself, who ought to have profited above all others in the school of God, had experienced his own share of them. By thus setting himself forth as an example, he designed the more effectually to arouse and incite us to take great heed to ourselves. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 2.** Let such also as fear God and begin to look aside on the things of this world, know it will be hard even for them to hold out in faith and in the fear of God in time of trial. Remember the example of David, he was a man that had spent much time in travelling towards heaven; yet, looking but a little aside upon the glittering show of this world, had very near lost his way, his feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipped. *Edward Elton. 1620.*

**Verse 2.** He tells us that his *feet were almost gone*. The word signifies *to bow, or bend under one*. *My steps had well nigh slipped, or poured out, kept not within their true bounds;* but like water *poured out* and not confined, runs aside. Though these expressions be metaphorical, and seemingly dark and cloudy, yet they clearly represent unto us this truth, that his *understanding was misguided*, his *judgment was corrupt*, his *affections disordered*, turbulent, and guilty of too great a passion; and this, the consequence (Ps 73:22 in which he acknowledges himself *ignorant, foolish, and brutish*) do sufficiently evidence. Our *understanding and judgment* may well bear the comparison for *feet*, for as the one, in our motion, *supports the body*, so the other, in human actions and all employments, *underprops the soul*. The *affections*, also, are as *paths and steps*; as these of the *feet*, so these are the *prints* and expressions of the judgment and mind. *Edward Parry, in "David Restored." 1660.*

**Verse 2.** *Almost gone*. There is to be noted that the prophet said he was *almost gone*, and not altogether. Here is the presence, providence, strength, safeguard, and keeping of man by Almighty God, marvellously set forth. That although we are tempted and brought even to the very point to perpetrate and do all mischief, yet he stays us and keeps us, that the temptation shall not overcome us. *John Hooper. 1495-1555.*

**Verse 2-14.** But the prosperity of wicked and unjust men, both in public and in private life, who, though not leading a happy life in reality, are yet thought to do so in common opinion, being praised improperly in the works of poets, and all kinds of books, may lead you—and I am not surprised at your mistake—to a belief that the gods care nothing for the affairs of men. These matters disturb you. Being led astray by foolish thoughts, and yet not able to think ill of the gods, you have arrived at your present state of mind, so as to think that the gods to indeed exist, but that they despise and neglect human affairs. *Plato.*

**Verse 8.** *They are corrupt*. Prosperity, in an irreligious heart, breeds *corruption*, which from thence is emitted by the breath in conversation, to infect and taint the minds of others. *George Horne.*

**Verse 8.** *They speak wickedly concerning oppression*. Indeed, we see that wicked men, after having for some time got everything to prosper according to their desires, cast off all shame, and are at no pains to conceal themselves, when about to commit iniquity, but loudly proclaim their own turpitude. "What!" they will say, "is it not in my power to deprive you of all that you possess, and even to cut your throat?" Robbers, it is true, can do the same thing; but then they hide themselves for fear. These giants, or rather inhuman monsters, of whom David speaks, on the contrary not only imagine that

they are exempted from subjection to any law, but, unmindful of their own weakness, foam furiously, as if there were no distinction between good and evil, between right and wrong. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 15.** *I should offend, etc.* That is, I do God's church a great deal of injury, which hath always been under afflictions, if I think or say, that all her piety hath been without hope, or her hope without effect. Others understand it to mean, I deceive the generation, viz., I propound a false doctrine unto them, which is apt to seduce them. Others, "behold the generation, "etc.; that is to say, notwithstanding all afflictions, it is certain that thou art a Father to the Church only; which is sufficient to make me judge well of these afflictions; I have done ill, and confess I have erred in this my rash judgment. *John Diodati.*

**Verse 17.** By the *sanctuaries of God* some, even among the Hebrews, understand the celestial mansions in which the spirits of the just and angels dwell; as if David had said, This was a painful thing in my sight, until I came to acknowledge in good earnest that men are not created to flourish for a short time in this world, and to luxuriate in pleasures while in it, but that their condition here is that of pilgrims, whose aspirations, during their earthly pilgrimage, should be towards heaven. I readily admit that no man can form a right judgment of the providence of God but he who elevates his mind above the earth; but it is more simple and natural to understand the word *sanctuary* as denoting celestial doctrine. As the book of the law was laid up in the sanctuary, from which the oracles of heaven were to be obtained, that is to say, the declaration of the will of God; and as this was the true way of acquiring profitable instruction, David very properly puts *entering into the sanctuaries* for *coming to the school of God*, as if his meaning were this: Until God become my schoolmaster, and until I learn by his word what otherwise my mind, when I come to consider the government of the world, cannot comprehend, I stop short all at once, and understand nothing about the subject. When, therefore, we are here told that men are unfit for contemplating the arrangements of divine providence, until they obtain wisdom elsewhere than from themselves, how can we attain to wisdom but by submissively receiving what God teaches us, both by his word and by his Holy Spirit? David by the word *sanctuary* alludes to the external manner of teaching, which God had appointed among his ancient people; but along with the word he comprehends the secret illumination of the Holy Spirit. *John Calvin.*

**Verse 17.** The joy of a wicked man is imperfect in itself, because it is not so as it seems to be, or it is not sincerely so. It is not pure gold, but alloyed and adulterated with sorrow. It may look well to one that is blear eyed, but it will not pass for good to one that looks well to it. Let any one consider and weigh it well in the balance of *the sanctuary*, whither David went to fetch the scales for the same purpose, and he will find it too light by many grains. It is not so inside as it is without; no more than a mud wall that is plastered with white, or a stinking grave covered with a glorious monument. It is upouloz, looking fair and smooth, like true joy; as a wounded member that is healed too soon (and you know how God by the prophet complains of the hurt of his people that was slightly healed, Jer



6:14), and it looks as well as any other part of the body; but, underneath, there is still a sore, which festers so much more, and is the worse, for that the outside is so well. Where pretences, and cloaks, and disguises are the fairest; there the knavery, and the poison, and the evil concealed are usually foulest. *Zachary Bogan (1625-1659), in "Meditations of the Mirth of a Christian Life."*

**Verse 17.** *Then understood I.* There is a famous story of providence in Bradwardine to this purpose. A certain hermit that was much tempted, and was utterly unsatisfied concerning the providence of God, resolved to journey from place to place till he met with some who could satisfy him. An angel in the shape of a man joined himself with him as he was journeying, telling him that he was sent from God to satisfy him in his doubts of providence. The first night they lodged at the house of a very holy man, and they spent their time in discourses of heaven, and praises of God, and were entertained with a great deal of freedom and joy. In the morning, when they departed, the angel took with him a great cup of gold. The next night they came to the house of another holy man, who made them very welcome, and exceedingly rejoiced in their society and discourse; the angel, notwithstanding, at his departure killed an infant in the cradle, which was his only son, he having been for many years before childless, and, therefore, was a very fond father of this child. The third night they came to another house, where they had like free entertainment as before. The master of the family had a steward whom he highly prized, and told them how happy he accounted himself in having such a faithful servant. Next morning he sent his steward with them part of their way, to direct them therein. As they were going over the bridge the angel flung the steward into the river and drowned him. The last night they came to a very wicked man's house, where they had very untoward entertainment, yet the angel, next morning, gave him the cup of gold. All this being done, the angel asked the hermit whether he understood those things? He answered, his doubts of providence were increased, not resolved, for he could not understand why he should deal so hardly with those holy men, who received them with so much love and joy, and yet give such a gift to that wicked man who used them so unworthily. The angel said, I will now expound these things unto you. The first house where we came the master of it was a holy man; yet, drinking in that cup every morning, it being too large, it did somewhat unfit him for holy duties, though not so much that others or himself did perceive it; so I took it away, since it is better for him to lose the cup of gold than his temperance. The master of the family where we lay the second night was a man given much to prayer and meditation, and spent much time in holy duties, and was very liberal to the poor all the time he was childless; but as soon as he had a son he grew so fond of it, and spent so much time in playing with it, that he exceedingly neglected his former holy exercise, and gave but little to the poor, thinking he could never lay up enough for his child; therefore I have taken the infant to heaven, and left him to serve God better upon earth. The steward whom I did drown had plotted to kill his master the night following; and as to that wicked man to whom I gave the cup of gold, he was to have nothing in the other world, I therefore gave him

something in this, which, notwithstanding, will prove a snare to him, for he will be more intemperate; and "let him that is filthy be filthy still." The truth of this story I affirm not, but the moral is very good, for it shows that God is an indulgent Father to the saints when he most afflicts them; and that when he sets the wicked on high he sets them also in slippery places, and their prosperity is their ruin. Pr 1:32. *Thomas White, in "A Treatise of the Power of Godliness."* 1658.

**Verse 17.** *Their end.* Providence is often mysterious and a source of perplexity to us. Walking in Hyde Park one day, I saw a piece of paper on the grass. I picked it up; it was a part of a letter; the beginning was wanting, the end was not there; I could make nothing of it. Such is providence. You cannot see beginning or end, only a part. When you can see the whole, then the mystery will be unveiled. *Thomas Jones.* 1871.

**Verse 18.** *Slippery places.* The word in the original signifies *slick*, or *smooth*, as ice or polished marble, and is from thence by a metaphor used for flattery. Hence, Abenezra renders it, *In locis adulationis posuisti eos*: thou hast set them in places of flattery. *Edward Parry.*

**Verse 18.** They are but exalted, as the shellfish by the eagle, according to the naturalist, to be thrown down on some rock and devoured. Their most glorious prosperity is but like a rainbow, which showeth itself for a little time in all its gaudy colours, and then vanisheth. The Turks, considering the unhappy end of their viziers, use this proverb, "He that is in the greatest office is but a statue of glass." Wicked men walk on glass or ice, *thou hast set them in slippery places*; on a sudden their feet slip—they fall, and break their necks. *George Swinnock.*

**Verses 18, 20.** Their banqueting house is very *slippery*, and the feast itself a mere *dream*. *Thomas Adams.*

**Verse 19.** *They are utterly consumed with terrors.* Their destruction is not only sudden, but entire; it is like the breaking in pieces of a potter's vessel, a sherd of which cannot be gathered up and used; or like the casting of a millstone into the sea, which will never rise more; and this is done *with terrors*, either by terrible judgments inflicted on them from without, or with terrors inwardly seizing upon their minds and consciences, as at the time of temporal calamities, or at death, and certainly at the judgment, when the awful sentence will be pronounced upon them. See Job 27:20. *John Gill.*

**Verse 19.** If thou shouldest live the longest measure of time that any man hath done, and spend all that time in nothing but pleasures (which no man ever did but met with some crosses, afflictions, or sicknesses), but at the evening of this life, must take up thy lodging in the "everlasting burnings" and "devouring fire" (Isa 30:14); were those pleasures answerable to these everlasting burnings? An English merchant that lived at Dantzic, now with God, told us this story, and it was true. A friend of his (a merchant also), upon what grounds I know not, went to a convent, and dined with some friars. His entertainment was very noble. After he had dined and seen all, the merchant fell to commending their pleasant lives: "Yea," said one of the friars to him, "we live gallantly indeed, had we anybody to go to

hell for us when we die." *Giles Firmin (1617-1617), in "The Real Christian, or, A Treatise of Effectual Calling."*

**Verse 20.** *As a dream when one awaketh.* The conception is rather subtle, but seems to have been shrewdly penetrated by Shakespeare, who makes the Plantagenet prince (affecting, perhaps, the airs of a ruler in God's stead) say to his discarded favourite—

"I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,  
So surfeit swelled, so old and so profane,  
But being awake I do not despise my dream."

—*Henry IV.*

For as it is the inertness of the sleeper's will and intellect that gives reality to the shapes and figments, the very sentiments and purposes that throng his mind; so it seems, as it were, to be the negligence and oversight of the Moral Ruler that makes to prosper the wicked or inane life and influence. So Paul says, in reference to the polytheism of the ancient world: "and the times of this ignorance God winked at." Ac 17:30. *C. B. Cayley, in "The Psalms in Metre."* 1860.

**Verse 21.** *Thus my heart was grieved,* etc. Two similitudes are used, by which his grief and indignation or zeal are described. First, he says his heart boiled over like yeast. The passion which was stirred up in his thoughts he compares to the yeast which inflates the whole mass, and causes it to swell or boil over... The other simile is taken from the internal pains which *calculi* produce; *I was pricked in my reins.* They who have felt them are aware of the torture, and there is no need for a long description. It signifies that his great pain was mingled with indignation, and that this came fresh upon him as often as he looked upon the prosperity of the ungodly. *Mollerus.*

**Verse 21.** *Reins.* Before all the other intestines there are the kidneys (twylb, nefroi), placed on both sides of the lumbar vertebrae on the hinder wall of the abdomen, of which the Scripture makes such frequent mention, and in the most psychically significant manner. It brings the most tender and the most inward experience of a manifold kind into association with them. When man is suffering most deeply within, *he is pricked in his kidneys ("reins").* When fretting affliction overcomes him, his kidneys are cloven asunder (Job 16:13; compare La 3:13); when he rejoices profoundly, they exult (Pr 23:16); when he feels himself very penetratingly warned, they chasten him (Ps 16:7); when he very earnestly longs, they are consumed away with his body (Job 19:27). As the omniscient and all penetrating knower of the most secret hidden things of man, God is frequently called (from Ps 7:10 to the Apocalypse) the Trier of the hearts and reins; and of the ungodly it is said, that God is far from their reins (Jer 12:2), that is, that he, being withdrawn back into himself, allows not himself to be perceived by them. *Franz Delitzsch.*

**Verse 22.** *So foolish was I, and ignorant,* etc. Is not a cavilling spirit at the Lord's dispensations bad, both in its roots and fruits? What are the roots of it but (1) ignorance; (2) pride, this lifteth up (Heb

2:4); (3) impatience, or want of waiting on God to see the issues of matters; so in Jon 4:8-11; (4) forgetfulness who the Lord is, and who man is that grumbles at his Maker, La 3:39, Ro 9:20. And as for the fruits, they are none of the best, but bad enough. Men are ready to flag in duty, yea, to throw it off, Ro 9:13, and Mal 3:14; yea, in the way to blaspheme God; see Job 2:9 Mal 3:13 Re 16:9. *Thomas Crane, in "A Prospect of Divine Providence." 1672.*

**Verse 22.** *I was as a beast before thee.* I permitted my mind to be wholly occupied with *sensible things*, like the beasts that perish, and did not look into a future state, nor did I consider nor submit to the wise designs of an unerring providence. *Adam Clarke.*

**Verse 22.** *I was as a beast before thee.* The original has in it no word of comparison; it ought to be rather translated, *I was a very beast before thee*, and we are told that the Hebrew word being in the plural number, gives it a peculiar emphasis, indicating some monstrous or astonishing beast. It is the word used by Job which is interpreted "behemoth, "—"I was a very monster before thee, "not only a beast, but one of the most brutish of all beasts, one of the most stubborn and intractable of all beasts. I think no man can go much lower than this in humble confession. This is a description of human nature, and of the old man in the renewed saint which is not to be excelled. *C.H.S.*

**Verse 22.** Among the many arguments to prove the penman of the Scripture inspired by the Spirit of God, this is not the last and least—that the penmen of holy writ do record their own faults and the faults of their dearest and nearest relatives. For instance hereof, how coarsely doth David speak of himself: *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.* And do you think that the face of St. Paul did look the more foul by being drawn with his own pencil, when he says, "I was a murderer, a persecutor, the greatest of sinners, "etc? This is not usual in the writings of human authors, who praise themselves to the utmost of what they could, and rather than lose a drop of applause they will lick it up with their own tongues. Tully writes very copiously in setting forth the good service which he did the Roman state, but not a word of his covetousness, of his affecting popular applause, of his pride and vain glory, of his mean extraction and the like. Whereas, clean contrary, Moses sets down the sin and punishment of his own sister, the idolatry and superstition of Aaron his brother, and his own fault in his preposterous striking the rock, for which he was excluded the land of Canaan. *Thomas Fuller.*

**Verse 23.** *I am continually with thee*, as a child the tender care of a parent; and as a parent, during my danger of falling in a slippery path, *"thou hast holden me, thy child, by my right hand."* *George Horne.*

**Verse 23.** *I am continually with thee.* He does not say that the Lord is continually with "his people, "and holds, and guides, and receives them; he says, "He is continually with *me*; He holds *me*; He will guide *me*; He will receive *me*." The man saw, and felt, and rejoiced in his own personal interest in God's care and love. And he did this (mark), in the very midst of affliction, with "flesh and heart failing;

"and in spite too of many wrong, and opposite, and sinful feelings, that had just passed away; under a conviction of his own sinfulness, and folly, and, as he calls it, even "brutishness." Oh! it is a blessed thing, brethren, to have a faith like this. *Charles Bradley*. 1838.

**Verse 23.** *I am still with thee.* The word translated *still* properly means *always*, and denotes that there had been no change or interruption in the previous relation of the parties. There is a perfectly analogous usage of the French *toujours*. *Joseph Addison Alexander*.

**Verse 24.** *Thou shalt guide me.* How are we to work our way in strange lands, if left entirely to our own resources? Hence it is, that so much is said in the Bible about guides, and that the Lord is called the guide of his people. They are in a foreign land, a land of pits and snares; and, without a good guide, they will be sure to fall into the one, or be caught in the other. "This God is our God, for ever and ever," saith the psalmist; and not only so, but he *condescends* to "be our guide, and will be, even unto death" (Ps 48:14). Can we have a *better* guide? When a guide has been well recommended to us by those who have tried him, it is our wisdom to place ourselves unreservedly in his hands; and if he say our way lies to the right, it would show our folly to say we were determined to go to the left. *John Gadsby*.

**Verse 24.** *Guide... receive.* After conversion, God still works with us: he doth not only give grace, but actual help in the work of obedience: "He worketh all our works in us," Isa 26:12. His actual help is necessary to direct, quicken, strengthen, protect and defend us. In our way to heaven, we need not only a rule and path, but a guide. The rule is the *law* of God; but the guide is the *Spirit* of God. *Thomas Manton*.

**Verse 24.** *Afterward.* After all our toil in labour and duty, after all our crosses and afflictions, after all our doubts and fears that we should never receive it; after all the hiding of his face, and clouds and darkness that have passed over us; and after all our battles and fightings for it, oh, then how seasonably will the reception of this reward come in: *Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.* O blessed *afterwards*; when all your work is done, when all your doubts and fears are over, and when all your battles are fought; then, O then, ye shall receive the reward. *John Spalding*.

**Verse 24.** *Receive me to glory.* Mendelssohn in his *Beor*, has perceived the probable allusion in this clause to the translation of Enoch. Of Enoch it is said, Ge 5:24, *Myhla wta xql*, "God *took* him." Here (Ps 73:24), the psalmist writes, *ygzqt Kwbk*. "Thou shalt *take* me to glory, or gloriously." In another (Ps 49:16) we read, *ygzqy yk*. "For he (God) shall *take* me." I can hardly think that the two latter expressions were written and read in their context by Jews without reference to the former. *Thomas Thompson Perowne*.

**Verse 26.** *My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* In which words we may take notice of five things.

1. The order inverted. When he mentions his malady he begins with the failing of the flesh, and then of the heart; but when he reports the relief he begins with that of the heart. From hence observe *that when* God works a cure in man (out of love) he begins with the heart—he cures that first. And there may be these reasons for it.

1. Because the sin of the heart is often the procuring cause of the malady of body and soul.

2. The body ever fares the better for the soul, but not the soul for the body.

3. The cure of the soul is the principal cure.

2. The suitableness of the remedy to the malady. Strength of heart for failing of heart, and a blessed portion for the failing of the flesh. Observe, *that there is a proportionate remedy and relief in God for all maladies and afflictions whatsoever, both within and without. If your hearts fail you, God is strength; if your flesh fails you, or comforts fail you, God is a portion.*

3. The prophet's interest; he calls God his portion. Observe, *that true Israelites have an undoubted interest in God:—He is theirs.*

4. The prophet's experience in the worst time. He finds this to be true, that when communicated strength fails, there is a never failing strength in God. Observe, *that Christians' experiences of God's all sufficiency are then fullest and highest when created comforts fail them.*

5. There is the prophet's improvement of his experience for support and comfort against future trials and temptations. Observe, *that a saint's consideration of his experience of God's all sufficiency in times of exigency, is enough to bear up and to fortify his spirit against all trials and temptations for the time to come.*

Thus you may improve the text by way of observation; but there are two principal doctrines to be insisted on. First, that God is the rock of a saint's heart, his strength, and his portion for ever. Secondly, that divine influence and relief passeth from God to his people when they stand in most need thereof.

First. God is the rock of a saint's heart, strength, and portion for ever. Here are two members or branches in this doctrine.

1. That God is the rock of a saint's heart, strength.

2. That God is the portion of a saint. Branch 1. God is the rock of a saint's heart, strength. He is not only strength, and the strength of their hearts, but the rock of their strength; so Isa 17:10. Ps 62:7, *rwu*, the same word that is used in the text, from hence comes our English word "*sure*." Explication. God is the rock of our strength, both in respect of our naturals and also of our spirituals: he is the strength of nature and of grace (Ps 27:1); the strength of my life natural and spiritual. God is the strength of thy natural faculties—of reason and understanding, of wisdom and prudence, of will and affections. He is the strength of all thy graces, faith, patience, meekness, temperance, hope, and charity; both as to their being and exercise. He is the strength of all thy comfort and courage, peace

and happiness, salvation and glory. Ps 140:7. "O God, the rock of my salvation." In three respects. First. He is the author and giver of all strength. Ps 18:32: "It is God that girdeth me with strength." Ps 24:11: "He will give strength to his people." Ps 138:3 68:35. Secondly. He is the increaser and perfecter of a saint's strength; it is God that makes a saint strong and mighty both to do and suffer, to bear and forbear, to believe and to hope to the end; so Heb 11:34: "*Out of weakness they were made strong*;" so 1Jo 2:14. And therefore is that prayer of Peter, 1Pe 5:10. Thirdly. He is the preserver of your strength; your life is laid up in God. Col 3:3. Your strength is kept by the strength of God; so Ps 91:1. God doth overshadow the strength of saints, that no breach can be made upon it. Ps 63:7. "*In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*" Samuel Blackerby. 1673.

**Verse 26.** Oh, strange logic! Grace hath learned to deduce strong conclusions out of weak premises, and happy out of sad. If the *major* be, *My flesh and my heart faileth*; and the *minor*, "There is no blossom in the fig tree, nor fruit in the vine, "etc.; yet his *conclusion* is firm and undeniable: *The Lord is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*; or, *Yet will I rejoice in the God of my salvation*. And if there be more in the *conclusion* than in the *premises*, it is the better; God comes even in the conclusion. John Sheffield, in "*The Rising Sun*." 1654.

**Verse 26.** *My flesh and my heart faileth*. They who take the expression in a bad sense, take it to be a confession of his former sin, and to have relation to the combat mentioned in the beginning of the Psalm, between the flesh and the spirit; as if he had said, I was so surfeited with self conceitedness that I presumed to arraign divine actions at the bar of human reason, and to judge the stick under water crooked by the eye of my sense, when, indeed, it was straight: but now I see that flesh is no fit judge in matters of faith; that neither my flesh nor heart can determine rightly of God's dispensations, nor hold out uprightly under Satan's temptations; for if God had not supported me my flesh had utterly supplanted me: *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart*. Flesh is sometimes taken for corrupt nature. Ga 5:13. First, because it is propagated by the flesh (Joh 3:6); secondly, because it is executed by the flesh (Ro 7:25); thirdly, because corruption is nourished, strengthened, and increased by the flesh. 1Jo 2:16. They who take the words in a good sense, do not make them look back so far as the beginning of the Psalm, but only to the neighbour verse. George Swinnock.

**Verse 26.** *God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*. The Hebrew carrieth it, but God is the *rock of my heart*, i.e., a sure, strong, and immovable foundation to build upon. Though the winds may blow, and the waves beat, when the storm of death cometh, yet I need not fear that the house of my heart will fall, for it is built on a sure foundation: God is the rock of my heart. The strongest child that God hath is not able to stand alone; like the hop or ivy, he must have somewhat to support him, or he is presently on the ground. Of all seasons, the Christian hath most need of succour at his dying hour; then he must take his leave of all his comforts on earth, and then he shall be sure of the

sharpest conflicts from hell, and therefore, it is impossible he should hold out without extraordinary help from heaven. But the psalmist had armour of proof ready, wherewith to encounter his last enemy. As weak and fearful a child as he was, he durst venture a walk in the dark entry of death, having his Father by the hand: *"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,"* Psalm 23. Though at the troubles of my life, and my trial at death, my heart is ready to fail me, yet I have a strong cordial which will cheer me in my saddest condition: *God is the strength of my heart.*

And my portion. It is a metaphor taken from the ancient custom among the Jews, of dividing inheritances, whereby every one had his allotted portion; as if he had said, God is not only my rock to defend me from those tempests which assault me, and, thereby, my freedom from evil; but he is also my portion, to supply my necessities, and to give me the fruition of all good. Others, indeed, have their parts on this side the land of promise, but the author of all portions is the matter of my portion. My portion doth not lie in the rubbish and lumber, as theirs doth whose portion is in this life, be they never so large; but my portion containeth him whom the heavens, and heaven of heavens, can never contain. God is the strength of my heart, and my portion *for ever*; not for a year, or an age, or a million of ages, but for eternity. Though others' portions, like roses, the fuller they blow, the sooner they shed; they are worsted often by their pride, and wasted through their prodigality, so that at last they come to want—and surely death always rends their persons and portions asunder; yet my portion will be ever full, without diminution. Without alteration, this God will be my God for ever and ever, my guide and aid unto death; nay, death, which dissolves so many bonds, and unties such close knots, shall never part me and my portion, but give me a perfect and everlasting possession of it. *George Swinnock.*

**Verse 28.** *It is good for me to draw near to God.* When he saith, *it is good*, his meaning is *it is best*. This positive is superlative. It is more than good for us to draw nigh to God at all times, it is best for us to do so, and it is at our utmost peril not to do so; *For, lo*, saith the psalmist (Ps 73:27), *they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.* It is dangerous to be far from God, but it is more dangerous to go far from him. Every man is far off by nature, and wicked men go further off: the former *shall perish*, the latter *shall be destroyed*. He that fares best in his withdrawing from God, fares bad enough; therefore, it is best for us to draw nigh unto God. He is the best friend at all times, and the only friend at sometimes. And may we not say that God suffers and orders evil times, and the withdrawing of the creature, for that very end, that we might draw nearer unto him? Doth he not give up the world to a spirit of reviling and mocking that he may stir up in his people a spirit of prayer? *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 28.** *It is good*; that is, it puts in us a blessed quality and disposition. It makes a man to be like God himself; and, secondly, *it is good*, that is, it is comfortable; for it is the happiness of the creature



to be near the Creator; it is beneficial and helpful. *To draw near.* How can a man but be near to God, seeing he filleth heaven and earth: "Whither shall I go from thy presence?" Ps 139:7. He is present always in power and providence in all places, but graciously present with some by his Spirit, supporting, comforting, strengthening the heart of a good man. As the soul is said to be *tota in toto*, in several parts by several faculties, so God, is present to all, but in a diverse manner. Now we are said to be near to God in diverse degrees: *first*, when our *understanding is enlightened; intellectus est veritatis sponsa*; and so the young man speaking discreetly in things concerning God, is said not to be far from the kingdom of God, Mr 12:34. *Secondly, in minding*: when God is present to our minds, so that the soul is said to be present to that which it minds; contrarily it is said of the wicked, that "God is not in all their thoughts," Ps 10:4. *Thirdly*, when *the will upon the discovery of the understanding comes to choose the better part, and is drawn from that choice to cleave to him*, as it was said of Jonathan's heart, "it was knit to David," 1Sa 18:1. *Fourthly*, when *our whole affections are carried to God*, loving him as the chief good. Love is the firstborn affection. That breeds desire of communion with God. Thence comes joy in him, so that the soul pants after God, "as the hart after the water springs," Ps 41:1. *Fifthly*, and especially, *when the soul is touched with the Spirit of God working faith*, stirring up dependence, confidence, and trust on God. Hence ariseth sweet communion. The soul is never at rest till it rests on him. Then it is afraid to break with him or to displease him; but it groweth zealous and resolute, and hot in love, stiff in good cases; resolute against his enemies. And yet this is not all, for God will have also the outward man, so as the whole man must present itself before God in word, in sacraments; speak of him and to him with reverence, and yet with strength of affection mounting up in prayer, as in a fiery chariot; hear him speak to us; consulting with his oracles; fetching comforts against distresses, directions against maladies. *Sixthly*, and especially, we draw near to him *when we praise him*; for this is the work of the souls departed, and of the angels in heaven, that are continually near unto him. The prophet here saith, *It is good for me*. How came he to know this? Why, he had found it by experience, and by it he was thoroughly convinced. *Richard Sibbes.*

**Verse 28.** *To draw near to God.* It is not one isolated act. It is nor merely turning to God, and saying, "I have come to him." The expression is *draw*. It is not a single act; it is the drawing, the coming, the habitual walk, going on, and on, and on, so long as we are on earth. It is, therefore, an habitual religion which must be pressed and enforced upon us. *Montagu Villiers. 1855.*

**Verse 28.** *To draw near to God.* To draw near to God,

1. A man should make his peace with God, in and through the Mediator Jesus Christ; for, until once that be done, a man must be said to be far from God, and there is a partition wall standing betwixt God and him. It is the same with that advice given by Eliphaz to Job: "*Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee,*" Job 22:21. Be friends with God, and all shall

be well with you.

2. It is to seek more after communion and fellowship with God, and to pursue after intimacy and familiarity with him; and to have more of his blessed company with us in our ordinary walk and conversation; according to that word, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance," Ps 89:15.

3. As it stands here in the text, it is the expression of one who hath made up his peace already, and is on good terms with God; and doth differ a little from what the words absolutely imply; and so we may take it thus,

(a) It implies the confirming or making sure our interest in God, and so it supposes the man's peace to be made with God; for, whoever be the author of this Psalm, it supposes he has made his peace; and, therefore, in the following words it is subjoined, *I have put my trust in the Lord*, etc.; that is, I have trusted my soul unto God, and made my peace with him through a mediator. It is *good*, whatever comes, it is always *good* to be *near to God*, that way, and to be made sure in him.

(b) It implies to be more conformed unto the image of God, and, therefore, this nearness to him is opposed to that of being far from God. It is good, says he to draw near to God in our duty; when so many are far from him.

(c) It implies, to lay by all things in the world, and to seek fellowship and communion with God, and to be more set apart for his blessed company, and to walk with him in a dependence upon him as the great burden bearer, as he who is to be all in all unto us.

In a word, to draw near unto God, is to make our peace with him, and to secure and confirm that peace with him, and to study a conformity unto him, and to be near unto him in our walk and conversation; in our fellowship, and whole carriage, and deportment, to be always near unto him.

*William Guthrie.*

**Verse 28.** The Epicurean, says Augustine, is wont to say, *It is good for me to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh*: the Stoic is wont to say, *For me it is good to enjoy the pleasures of the mind*: The Apostle used to say (not in words but in sense), *It is good for me to cleave to God*. *Lorinus.*

**Verse 28.** *The Lord God.* The names *The Lord Jehovah* are a combination expressive of God's sovereignty, self existence, and covenant relation to his people. *Joseph Addison Alexander.*

---

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Whole Psalm.** It containeth the godly man's *trial*, in the former part of it, and his *triumph*, in the latter part of it. We have,

1. The grievous conflict between the flesh and the spirit, to the 15th verse.

2. The glorious conquest of the spirit over the flesh, to the end. *G. Swinnock.*

**Whole Psalm.**

1. The cause of his distemper.
2. The cure of it.
3. The psalmist's carriage after it.

—*G. Swinnoek.*

**Verse 1.** The true Israel, the great blessing, and the sureness of it: or, the proposition of the text expounded, enforced, and applied.

**Verse 1.** (*first clause*). Israel's receipts from God are,

1. For quantity, the greatest;
2. For variety, the choicest;
3. For quality, the sweetest;
4. For security, the surest;
5. For duration, the most lasting.

—*Simeon Ash.*

**Verse 2.**

1. How far a believer may fall.
2. How far he shall not fall.
3. What fears are and what are not allowable.

**Verse 2.** A retrospect of our slips; prospect of future danger; present preparation for it.

**Verse 4.** Quiet death; the cases of the godly and ungodly distinguished by the causes of the quiet, and the unreliability of mere feelings shown.

**Verse 5.** The bastard's portion contrasted with that of the true son.

**Verse 7.** The dangers of opulence and luxury.

**Verse 8.** Connection between a corrupt heart and a proud tongue.

**Verse 10.**

1. The believer's cup is bitter.
2. It is full.
3. Its contents are varied *waters*.
4. It is but a *cup*, measured and limited.
5. It is the cup of *his people*, and, consequently, works good in the highest degree.

**Verse 11.** The atheists open question; the oppressor's practical question; the careless man's secret question; and the fearful saint's fainting question. The reasons why it is ever asked, and the conclusive reasons which put the matter beyond question.

**Verse 12.** This verse suggests solemn enquiries for persons who are growing rich.

**Verse 14.** The frequent and even constant chastisement of the righteous; the necessity and design thereof; and the consolations connected therewith.

**Verse 15.** How we may bring injury on the saints; why we should avoid so doing, and how.

**Verse 17.**

1. Entrance into the place of fellowship with God, its privileges, and the way thereto.
2. Lessons learned in that hallowed place; the text mentions one.
3. Practical influence of the fellowship, and the instruction.

**Verses 17-18.** The sinner's end; See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 486.

**Verse 18.** *Thou didst set them in slippery places.*

1. It implies that they were always exposed to *sudden, unexpected destruction*. As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once without warning.
2. They are liable to fall *of themselves*, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.
3. There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell but the mere pleasure of God. *Jonathan Edwards.*

**Verses 18-20.** The end of the wicked is,

1. Near: *Thou hast set*, etc. It may happen at any time.
2. Judicial: *Thou bringest*, etc.
3. Sudden: *How are they*, etc.
4. Tormenting: *They are utterly consumed*, etc.
5. Eternal: Left to themselves; gone from the mind of God; and disregarded as a dream when one awaketh. No after act respecting them, either for deliverance or annihilation.

**Verse 19.** The first sight and sense of hell by a proud and wealthy sinner, who has just died in peace.

**Verse 20.** The contemptible object:—a self righteous, or boastful, or persecuting, or cavilling, or wealthy sinner when his soul is called before God.

**Verse 22.** Our folly, ignorance, and brutishness. When displayed. What effect the fact should have upon us; and how greatly it illustrates divine grace.

**Verse 22-25.**

1. The psalmist's confession concerning the flesh.
2. The faithful expressions of the spirit.
3. The conclusion of the whole matter. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 467.

**Verse 25.** God the best portion of the Christian. *Jonathan Edwards' Works, Vol. 2, pp. 104-7.*

**Verse 25.** Heaven and earth ransacked to find a joy equal to the Lord himself. Let the preacher take up various joys and show the inferiority.

**Verse 26.**

1. The psalmist's complaint: *My flesh and my heart faileth.*

2. His comfort: *But God*, etc. Or, we may take notice, (a) Of the frailty of his flesh; (b) Of the flourishing of his faith.

Doctrine 1. That man's flesh will fail him. The highest, the holiest man's heart will not always hold out. The prophet was great and gracious, yet his flesh failed him.

Doctrine 2. That it is the comfort of a Christian, in his saddest condition, that God is his portion. G. Swinnock.

**Verse 26.** "The Fading of the Flesh," *Swinnock's Treatise. (Nichol's Puritan Series.)*

**Verse 26.** Where we fail and where we cannot fail.

**Verse 27.**

1. The sad conditions.
2. The terrible punishments.
3. The implied consolations.

**Verse 28.** To draw near to God is our wisdom, our honour, our safety, our peace, our riches. *Thomas Watson's Sermon, "The Happiness of Drawing near to God."* 1669. See also, *"The Saint's Happiness, "R. Sibbes's Sermons.*

**Verse 28.** David's conclusion; or, the saint's resolution. *R. Sibbes.*

**Verse 28.**

1. The language of prayer: *It is good*, etc.
2. Of faith: *I have put*, etc.
3. Of praise: *That I may declare.* G. R.

**Verse 28.** See "Spurgeon's Sermons," Nos. 287-8, "Let us pray." No. 879, "An assuredly good thing."

#### WORKS UPON THE SEVENTY-THIRD PSALM

Certain Comfortable Expositions of the Constant Martyr of Christ JOHN HOOPER, Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester, 1555, written in the time of his Tribulation and Imprisonment, upon the Twenty-third, Sixty-second, Seventy-third, and Seventy-seventh Psalm of the prophet David. (In Parker Society's publications, and also in the "British Reformers" series of the Religious Tract Society.)

David Restored; or, And Antidote against the Prosperity of the *Wicked and the Afflictions of the Just, shewing the different ends of both.* In a most seasonable discourse upon the Seventy-third Psalm. By the Right Reverend Father in God EDWARD PARRY. Late Lord Bishop of Killaloe. 1660.

#### **Psalm 74**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

## Hints to the Village Preacher

**TITLE.** *Maschil of Asaph.* An instructive Psalm by Asaph. The history of the suffering church is always edifying; when we see how the faithful trusted and wrestled with their God in times of dire distress, we are thereby taught how to behave ourselves under similar circumstances; we learn moreover, that when fiery trial befalls us, no strange thing happened unto us, we are following the trail of the host of God.

**DIVISION.** From Ps 74:1-11 the poet pleads the sorrows of the nation, and the despite done to the assemblies of the Lord; then he urges former displays of divine power as a reason for present deliverance (Ps 74:12-23). Whether it is a prophetic Psalm, intended for use in troubles foreseen, or whether it was written by a later Asaph, after the invasion by Sennacherib or during the Maccabean wars, it would be very hard to determine, but we see no difficulty in the first supposition.

### EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?* To cast us off at all were hard, but when thou dost for so long a time desert thy people it is an evil beyond all endurance—the very chief of woes and abyss of misery. It is our wisdom when under chastisement to enquire, "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me?" and if the affliction be a protracted one, we should more eagerly enquire the purport of it. Sin is usually at the bottom of all the hiding of the Lord's face; let us ask the Lord to reveal the special form of it to us, that we may repent of it, overcome it, and henceforth forsake it. When a church is in a forsaken condition it must not sit still in apathy, but turn to the hand which smiteth it, and humbly enquire the reason why. At the same time, the enquiry of the text is a faulty one, for it implies two mistakes. There are two questions, which only admit of negative replies. "Hath God cast away his people?" (Ro 11:1); and the other, "Will the Lord cast off for ever?" (Ps 77:7). God is never weary of his people so as to abhor them, and even when his anger is turned against them, it is but for a small moment, and with a view to their eternal good. Grief in its distraction asks strange questions and surmises impossible terrors. It is a wonder of grace that the Lord has not long ago put us away as men lay aside cast off garments, but he hateth putting away, and will still be patient with his chosen. Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? They are thine, they are the objects of thy care, they are poor, silly, and defenceless things: pity them, forgive them, and come to their rescue. They are but sheep, do not continue to be wroth with them. It is a terrible thing when the anger of God smokes, but it is an infinite mercy that it does not break into a devouring flame. It is meet to pray the Lord to remove every sign of his wrath, for it is to those who are truly the Lord's sheep a most painful thing to be the objects of his displeasure. To vex the Holy Spirit is no mean sin, and yet how frequently are we guilty of it; hence it is no marvel that we are often under a cloud.

**Verse 2.** *Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old.* What a mighty plea is redemption. O God, canst thou see the blood mark on thine own sheep, and yet allow grievous wolves to devour them? The church is no new purchase of the Lord; from before the world's foundation the chosen were regarded as redeemed by the Lamb slain; shall ancient love die out, and the eternal purpose become frustrate? The Lord would have his people remember the paschal Lamb, the bloodstained lintel, and the overthrow of Egypt; and will he forget all this himself? Let us put him in remembrance, let us plead together. Can he desert his blood bought and forsake his redeemed? Can election fail and eternal love cease to glow? Impossible. The woes of Calvary, and the covenant of which they are the seal, are the security of the saints.

The rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed. So sweet a plea deserved to be repeated and enlarged upon. The Lord's portion is his people—will he lose his inheritance? His church is his kingdom, over which he stretches the rod of sovereignty; will he allow his possessions to be torn from him? God's property in us is a fact full of comfort: his value of us, his dominion over us, his connection with us are all so many lights to cheer our darkness. No man will willingly lose his inheritance, and no prince will relinquish his dominions; therefore we believe that the King of kings will hold his own, and maintain his rights against all comers.

This mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt. The Lord's having made Zion the especial centre of his worship, and place of his manifestation, is yet another plea for the preservation of Jerusalem. Shall the sacred temple of Jehovah be desecrated by heathen, and the throne of the Great King be defiled by his enemies? Has the Spirit of God dwelt in our hearts, and will he leave them to become a haunt for the devil? Has he sanctified us by his indwelling, and will he, after all, vacate the throne? God forbid. It may be well to note that this Psalm was evidently written with a view to the temple upon Zion, and not to the tabernacle which was there in David's time, and was a mere tent; but the destructions here bewailed were exercised upon the carved work of a substantial structure. Those who had seen the glory of God in Solomon's peerless temple might well mourn in bitterness, when the Lord allowed his enemies to make an utter ruin of that matchless edifice.

**Verse 3.** *Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations.* The ruin made had already long been an eyesore to the suppliant, and there seemed no hope of restoration. Havoc lorded it not only for a day or a year, but with perpetual power. This is another argument with God. Would Jehovah sit still and see his own land made a wilderness, his own palace a desolation? Until he should arise, and draw near, the desolation would remain; only his presence could cure the evil, therefore is he entreated to hasten with uplifted feet for the deliverance of his people. Even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary. Every stone in the ruined temple appealed to the Lord; on all sides were the marks of impious spoilers, the holiest places bore evidence of their malicious wickedness; would the Lord for ever permit this? Would he not hasten to overthrow the foe who defied him to his face, and

profaned the throne of his glory? Faith finds pleas in the worst circumstances, she uses even the fallen stones of her desolate palaces, and assails with them the gates of heaven, casting them forth with the great engine of prayer.

**Verse 4.** *Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations.* Where thy people sang like angels, these barbarians roar like beasts. When thy saints come together for worship, these cruel men attack them with all the fury of lions. They have no respect for the most solemn gatherings, but intrude themselves and their blasphemies into our most hallowed meetings. How often in times of persecution or prevalent heresy has the church learned the meaning of such language. May the Lord spare us such misery. When hypocrites abound in the church, and pollute her worship, the case is parallel to that before us; Lord save us from so severe a trial. They set up their ensigns for signs. Idolatrous emblems used in war were set up over God's altar, as an insulting token of victory, and of contempt for the vanquished and their God. Papists, Arians, and the modern school of Neologians, have, in their day, set up their ensigns for signs. Superstition, unbelief, and carnal wisdom have endeavoured to usurp the place of Christ crucified, to the grief of the church of God. The enemies without do us small damage, but those within the church cause her serious harm; by supplanting the truth and placing error in its stead, they deceive the people, and lead multitudes to destruction. As a Jew felt a holy horror when he saw an idolatrous emblem set up in the holy place, even so do we when in a Protestant church we see the fooleries of Rome, and when from pulpits, once occupied by men of God, we hear philosophy and vain deceit.

**Verse 5.** *A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.* Once men were renowned for felling the cedars and preparing them for building the temple, but now the axe finds other work, and men are as proud of destroying as their fathers were of erecting. Thus in the olden times our sires dealt sturdy blows against the forests of error, and laboured hard to lay the axe at the root of the trees; but, alas! their sons appear to be quite as diligent to destroy the truth and to overthrow all that their fathers built up. O for the good old times again! O for an hour of Luther's hatchet, or Calvin's mighty axe!

**Verse 6.** *But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.* The invaders were as industrious to destroy as the ancient builders had been to construct. Such fair carving it was barbarous to hew in pieces, but the Vandals had no mercy and broke down all, with any weapon which came to hand. In these days men are using axes and sledgehammers against the gospel and the church. Glorious truths, far more exquisite than the goodliest carving, are cavilled over and smashed by the blows of modern criticism. Truths which have upheld the afflicted and cheered the dying are smitten by pretentious Goths, who would be accounted learned, but know not the first principals of the truth. With sharp ridicule, and heavy blows of sophistry, they break the faith of some: and would, if it were possible, destroy the confidence of the elect themselves. Assyrians,



Babylonians, and Romans are but types of spiritual foes who labour to crush the truth and the people of God.

**Verse 7.** *They have cast fire into thy sanctuary.* Axes and hammers were not sufficient for the purpose of the destroyers, they must needs try fire. Malice knows no bounds. Those who hate God are never sparing of the most cruel weapons. To this day the enmity of the human heart is quite as great as ever; and, if providence did not restrain, the saints would still be as fuel for the flames. They have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to *the ground*. They made a heap of the temple, and left not one stone upon another. When the Lord left Mount Zion, and the Roman gained entrance, the military fury led the soldiers to burn out and root up the memorial of the famous House of the Lord. Could the powers of darkness have their way, a like fate would befall the church of Christ. "Rase it, "say they, "rase it even to the foundation thereof." Defilement to the church is destruction; her foes would defile her till nothing of her purity, and consequently of her real self, remained. Yet, even if they could wreak their will upon the cause of Christ, they are not able to destroy it, it would survive their blows and fires; the Lord would hold them still like dogs on a leash, and in the end frustrate all their designs.

**Verse 8.** *They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together.* It was no idle wish, their cruelty was sincere, deep seated, a matter of their inmost heart. Extirpation was the desire of Haman, and the aim of many another tyrant; not a remnant of the people of God would have been left if oppressors could have had their way. Pharaoh's policy to stamp out the nation has been a precedent for others, yet the Jews survive, and will: the bush though burning has not been consumed. Even thus the church of Christ has gone through baptism of blood and fire, but it is all the brighter for them. They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land. Here is no allusion to places called synagogues, but to assemblies; and as no assemblies for worship here held in but one place, the ruin of the temple was the destruction of all the holy gatherings, and so in effect all the meeting places were destroyed. One object of persecutors has always been to put an end to all conventicles, as they have called them. Keep them from meeting and you will scatter them, so have the enemy said; but, glory be to God, saints are independent of walls, and have met on the hill side, by the moss, or in the catacombs, or in a boat at sea. Yet has the attempt been almost successful, and the hunt so hot, that the faithful have wandered in solitude, and their solemn congregations have been, under such circumstances, few and far between. What sighs and cries have in such times gone up to the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. How happy are we that we can meet for worship in any place we choose, and none dare molest us.

**Verse 9.** *We see not our signs.* Alas, poor Israel! No Urim and Thummim blazed on the High Priest's bosom, and no Shechaniah shone from between the cherubim. The smoke of sacrifice and cloud of incense no more arose from the holy hill; solemn feasts were suspended, and even circumcision, the

covenant sign, was forbidden by the tyrant. We, too, as believers, know what it is to lose our evidences and grope in darkness; and too often do our churches also miss the tokens of the Redeemer's presence, and their lamps remain untrimmed. Sad complaint of a people under a cloud! There is no more any prophet. Prophecy was suspended. No inspiring psalm or consoling promise fell from bard or seer. It is ill with the people of God when the voice of the preacher of the gospel fails, and a famine of the word of life falls on the people. God sent ministers are as needful to the saints as their daily bread, and it is a great sorrow when a congregation is destitute of a faithful pastor. It is to be feared, that with all the ministers now existing, there is yet a dearth of men whose hearts and tongues are touched with the celestial fire. Neither is there any among us that knoweth how long. If someone could foretell an end, the evil might be borne with a degree of patience, but when none can see a termination, or foretell an escape, the misery has a hopeless appearance, and is overwhelming. Blessed be God, he has not left his church in these days to be so deplorably destitute of cheering words; let us pray that he never may. Contempt of the word is very common, and may well provoke the Lord to withdraw it from us; may his long suffering endure the strain, and his mercy afford us still the word of life.

**Verse 10.** *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach?* Though we know not how long yet thou dost. The times and seasons are with thee. When God is reproached, there is hope for us, for it may be he will hearken and avenge his dishonoured name. Wickedness has great license allowed it, and justice lingers on the road; God has his reasons for delay, and his seasons for action, and in the end it shall be seen that he is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness. Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever? He will do so for ever, unless thou dost give him his quietus. Wilt thou never defend thyself, and stop slanderous tongues? Wilt thou always endure the jeers of the profane? Is there to be no end to all this sacrilege and cursing? Yes, it shall all be ended, but not by and by. There is a time for the sinner to rage, and a time in which patience bears with him; yet it is but a time, and then, ah, then!

**Verse 11.** *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand?* Wherefore this inaction, this indifference for thine own honour and thy people's safety? How bold is the suppliant! Does he err? Nay, verily, we who are so chill, and distant, and listless in prayer are the erring ones. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and he who learns the art shall surely prevail with God by its means. It is fit that we should enquire why the work of grace goes on so slowly, and the enemy has so much power over men: the inquiry may suggest practical reflections of unbounded value.

"Why dost thou from the conflict stay?

Why do thy chariot wheels delay?

Lift up thyself, hell's kingdom shake,

Arm of the Lord, awake, awake."

Pluck it out of thy bosom. A bold simile, but dying men must venture for their lives. When God seems to fold his arms we must not fold ours, but rather renew our entreaties that he would again put his hand to the work. O for more agony in prayer among professing Christians, then should we see miracles of grace. We have here before us a model of pleading, a very rapture of prayer. It is humble, but very bold, eager, fervent, and effectual. The heart of God is always moved by such entreaties. When we bring forth out strong reasons, then will he bring forth his choice mercies.

**Verses 12-23.** Having spread the sad case before the Lord, the pleader now urges another series of arguments for divine help. He reasons from the Lord's former wonders of grace, and his deeds of power, imploring a repetition of the same divine works.

**Verse 12.** *For God is my King of old.* How consoling is this avowal! Israel in holy loyalty acknowledges her King, and claims to have been his possession from of old, and thence she derives a plea for defence and deliverance. If the Lord be indeed the sole monarch of our bosoms, he will in his love put forth his strength on our behalf; if from eternity he has claimed us as his own, he will preserve us from the insulting foe. Working salvation in the midst of the earth. From the most remote period of Israel's history the Lord had worked out for her many salvations; especially at the Red Sea, the very heart of the world was astonished by his wonders of deliverance. Now, every believer may plead at this day the ancient deeds of the Lord, the work of Calvary, the overthrow of sin, death, and hell. He who wrought out our salvation of old will not, cannot desert us now. Each past miracle of grace assures us that he who has begun to deliver will continue to redeem us from all evil. His deeds of old were public and wrought in the teeth of his foes, they were no delusions or make believes; and, therefore, in all our perils we look for true and manifest assistance, and we shall surely receive it.

**Verse 21.** *O let not the oppressed return ashamed.* Though broken and crushed they come to thee with confidence; suffer them not to be disappointed, for then they will be ashamed of their hope. Let the poor and needy praise thy name. By thy speedy answer to their cries make their hearts glad, and they will render to thee their gladdest songs. It is not the way of the Lord to allow any of those who trust in him to be put to shame; for his word is, "He shall call upon me, and I will deliver him, and he shall glorify me."

**Verse 22.** *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause.* Answer thou the taunts of the profane by arguments which shall annihilate both the blasphemy and the blasphemer. God's judgments are awful replies to the defiance of his foes. When he makes empires crumble, and smites persecutors to the heart, his cause is pleaded by himself as none other could have advocated it. O that the Lord himself would come into the battle field. Long has the fight been trembling in the balance; one glance of his eyes, one word from his lip, and the banners of victory shall be borne on the breeze. Remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. The Lord is begged to remember that he is himself reproached, and that by a mere man—that man a fool, and he is also reminded that these foul reproaches are

incessant and repeated with every revolving day. It is bravely done when faith can pluck pleas out of the dragon's mouth and out of the blasphemies of fools find arguments with God.

**Verse 23.** *Forget not the voice of thine enemies.* Great warrior let the enemy's taunt provoke thee to the fray. They challenge thee; accept thou the gage of battle, and smite them with thy terrible hand. If the cries of thy children are too feeble to be heard, be pleased to note the loud voices of thy foes and silence their profanities for ever. The tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth *continually*. The ungodly clamour against thee and thy people, their blasphemies are loud and incessant, they defy thee, even thee, and because thou repliest not they laugh thee to scorn. They go from bad to worse, from worse to worst; their fury swells like the thunders of an advancing tempest. What will it come too? What infamy will next be hurled at thee and thine? O God, wilt thou for ever bear this? Hast thou no regard for thine honour, no respect for thy glory? Much of this Psalm has passed over our mind while beholding the idolatries of Rome, (the author visited Rome in November and December, 1871, while this portion of the Treasury of David was in progress) and remembering her bloody persecution of the saints. O Lord, how long shall it be ere thou wilt ease thyself of those profane wretches, the priests, and cast the harlot of Babylon into the ditch of corruption? May the church never cease to plead with thee till judgment shall be executed, and the Lord avenged upon Antichrist.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Whole Psalm.** There is one singularity in this Psalm which reminds one strongly of Psalm 44: there is not one mention of national or personal sin throughout, no allusion to the Lord's righteous dealing in their punishment, no supplication for pardon and forgiveness; and yet one can hardly doubt that the writer of the Psalm, be he who he may, must have felt as keenly as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, or any other prophet of the captivity, the sins and iniquities which had brought all this sore evil upon them. But still, though there be expostulations, there is no complaint; though there be mourning, there is no murmuring; there is far more the cry of a smitten child, wondering why, and grieving that his father's face is so turned away from him in displeasure, and a father's hand so heavy on the child of his love. Or, as we might almost say, it is like the cry of one of those martyred ones beneath the altar, wondering at the marauder and oppressor, and exclaiming, "How long, O Lord, how long?" And yet it is the appeal of one who was still a sufferer, still groaning under the pressure of his calamities, "Why has thou cast us off for ever? *We see not our signs, there is no more any prophet among us.*" *Barton Bouchier.*

**Whole Psalm.** The peculiarity of this Psalm is marred by the very frequent use of the xeg, *for ever*: Ps 74:1,3,10. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Verse 1.** This Psalm, and particularly these words, do contain the church's sad lamentation over her

deep affliction, together with her earnest expostulations with God about the cause. Two things there are that the church in these words doth plead with God. First, *The greatness of her affliction*; secondly, *the nearness of her relation*.

1. *The greatness of her affliction*. And there were three things in her affliction that did make it lie very heavy upon her. First, the *root* of this affliction; and that was God's *anger*: *Why doth thine anger smoke*, etc. Secondly, the *height* of this affliction; God was not only angry, but he did *smoke* in his anger. Thirdly, the *length* of this affliction: it was so long that God did seem to cast them off *for ever*.

2. *The nearness of her relation*: *Against the sheep of thy pasture*; as if they should have said, Lord, if thou hadst done this against thine enemies, it had been no wonder; if thou hadst poured out thy wrath against the vessels of wrath, it had not been so much. But what! wilt thou draw out thy sword against *the sheep of thy pasture*? It were no wonder that thou shouldst take the fat and the strong, and pour out thy judgments upon them; but wilt thou do it to *thy sheep*?

There be several doctrines that I may raise from these words; as,

First doctrine: That God's people are his sheep.

Second doctrine: That God may be sorely angry with his own people, with his own sheep.

Third doctrine: That when God is angry with his people, it becomes them carefully to enquire into the cause.

Fourth doctrine: That when God's people are under afflictions, they ought to take notice of, and be much affected with, his anger, from which they do proceed.

Fifth doctrine: That God's people under affliction are, or should be, more affected with his anger than with their smart. This is that which the church doth complain of, not that the church did so smart, but that God was displeased and angry; that did most affect them.

Sixth doctrine: That God's people are apt to have misgiving thoughts of God when they are in sore afflictions. God was angry with his people, and their hearts did misgive them, as if God did cast off his people.

Seventh doctrine: That God may be angry with his people, so sore, and so long, that in the judgment of sense it may seem that they are for ever cast off. Eighth doctrine: That though the people of God may not murmur against his proceedings, yet they may humbly expostulate with him about the cause.

*Joseph Alleine*. 1633-1668.

**Verse 1.** *Why doth thine anger smoke*, etc. Anger is a fire; and in men, and other creatures enraged, a smoke seemeth to go out of their nostrils. Xenophon saith of the Thebans, when they are angry they breathe fire. This then is spoken of God, after the manner of men. *John Trapp*.

**Verse 1.** *The sheep of thy pasture*. There is nothing more imbecile than a sheep: simple, frugal, gentle, tame, patient, prolific, timid, domesticated, stupid, useful. Therefore, while the name of *sheep* is here used, it is suggested how pressing the necessity is for divine assistance, and how well

befitting the Most High it would be to make their cause his own. *Lorinus*.

**Verse 2.** *Remember thy congregation.* It is not without reason that they do not say, Remember *us*, but *Remember thy congregation*, not ours, but thine; nor *that* because it has now begun to be thine, but *which thou hast purchased of old, the rod of thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed*: likewise, this Mount Zion; not wherein we, but wherein *thou hast dwelt*. They had nothing which they could bring before an angry God with greater confidence, than the ancient lovingkindness shown to their fathers in former days. *Musculus*.

**Verse 2.** *The rod of thine inheritance.* hlvg jbv, *the inheritance rod* is the staff with which the inheritance is measured; jkv hdmh hgq, the land surveyor's rod (Eze 40:3); and this is used as lrwg, *the lot*, is for *the portion*, for the *inheritance itself*. *E. W. Hengstenberg*.

**Verse 2.** *Thine inheritance.* It signifies a nation, which through all successions God had a peculiar right and title to. *Henry Hammond*.

**Verse 2.** *Thou hast redeemed, i.e.,* the purchased people, by restoring them when they had been alienated, and had fallen into the hands of others: like a *goel*, or near kinsman, who ransoms a brother hurried into captivity, and regains an *inheritance* that has been sold. *Hermann Venema*.

**Verse 3.** *Lift up thy feet.* Or, *thy hammers*, that is, "thy strokes, "to "stamp" or "beat down" the enemy "unto perpetual desolations." Thus the "feet" are used to "tread down with, " Isa 26:6; and so the Greek taketh it here, changing the metaphor, and translating it, "Thy hands, "which are also instruments to strike down with. Or, *lift up thy feet*, that is, come quickly to see *the perpetual desolations*, which the enemy hath made. *Henry Ainsworth*.

**Verse 3.** *Lift up thy feet.* Abu Walid renders it, *Tread hard upon thine enemies*. The Jewish Arab, *Shew forth thy punishment*, adding in a note that the *lifting up the feet* implies punishment, the bringing under by force being usually expressed by *treading under the feet*. *Henry Hammond*.

**Verse 3.** *Lift up thy feet, etc.* To these *desolations* they seek that God would *lift up his footsteps*, that is, that he would approach. In Ge 29:1, there occurs the phrase, *to lift the feet*; here the expression is much more marked—to *lift up the footsteps*—and must be taken to mean a swift, impetuous, majestic, and powerful approach; like a hero, who strikes the ground with heavy tread, and advances rapidly with far sounding footsteps. *Hermann Venema*.

**Verse 3.** *In the sanctuary.* Their cities had been laid waste, their provinces, their farms, their vineyards, their oliveyards. They themselves had been everywhere cut down without striking a blow in defence, and their means of life had been snatched away without resistance. Yet they speak not of these things; not because things of this sort ought not to cause grief, nor yet because the saints are not touched with a sense of their loss; but because those things which threatened the extinction of religion and the worship of God, overtopped the feeling of all these other misfortunes with an intolerable sorrow. *Musculus*.

**Verse 4.** *Thine enemies roar*, etc. The word *gav* is used especially of the roar of the lion... In this place we may justly extend the application of the verb to those noisy words, whether mirthful or boastful, blasphemous against God and calamitous to his people (Ps 74:10), breathing terror and threatenings through edicts; or rude and senseless, as in their idolatrous worship; or in their prayers and thoughtless songs. As in Isa 52:5, its meaning is *to howl*. *Hermann Venema*.

**Verse 4.** *They set up their ensigns for signs*. The meaning is, that the enemy, having abolished the signs of the true God, of his people and religion, such as circumcision, the feasts, sacrifices, the other ordinances of religion, and other marks of liberty, substituted his own idolatrous signs, as the signs of his authority and religion. *Hermann Venema*.

**Verses 4-7.** (The persecution under *Antiochus*. B.C. 168.) Athenaeus proceeded to Jerusalem, where, with the assistance of the garrison, he prohibited and suppressed every observance of the Jewish religion, forced the people to profane the Sabbath, to eat swine's flesh, and other unclean food, and expressly forbade the national rite of circumcision. The Temple was dedicated to Jupiter Olympus: the statue of that deity was erected on part of the altar of burnt offerings, and sacrifice duly performed... As a last insult, the feasts of the Bacchanalia, the license of which, as they were celebrated in the later ages of Greece, shocked the severe virtue of the older Romans, were substituted for the national festival of Tabernacles. The reluctant Jews were forced to join in these riotous orgies, and to carry the ivy, the insignia of the god. So near was the Jewish nation, and the worship of Jehovah, to total extermination. *Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868)*, in "*A History of the Jews*."

(*Under Titus*.) And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings lying round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus emperor, with the greatest acclamation of joy. *Josephus*.

**Verse 8.** *The synagogues of God*. It is the opinion of Spencer, Vitringa, and of the learned in general, that the institution of synagogues for worship originated in the reading of the law publicly after the collection of its volumes by Ezra, and that, consequently, there were no such places of solemn assembly previous to the Babylonish captivity. Some of the Jews themselves have expressed a conviction that this is the fact, and the Scriptures give no intimation of their existence antecedently to that time. We are aware, however, that one of the first Hebraists of the present day, the Rev. Dr. Ma caul, inclines to the opinion of an earlier origin than that generally adopted. We quote his words: "The existence of such places before the Babylonish captivity has been much disputed"; and most writers, arguing from the silence of the Old Testament, incline to the opinion that they originated in Babylon, and that after the restoration similar oratories were opened in the land of Israel; and hence some infer that the Seventy-fourth Psalm, which says in the eighth verse, *They have burned up all*

*the synagogues in the land*, was written in the post Babylonian times. The argument from silence is, however, far from conclusive. The translation of *yewm* as *synagogues*, in the verse just cited, might fairly lead to a similar translation in some other passages which were confessedly written before the captivity; and the circumstances, character, and necessities of the Israelites, the great body of whom were far removed from the temple, prove indisputably that in their towns and villages they must have had some locality where they assembled on their sabbaths, new moons, and other solemn days, for the purpose of receiving instruction in the law, and for public prayer. That locality, however different from subsequent arrangements, was the origin of the *synagogue*. How such assemblies were conducted before the captivity it is now impossible to say. *F. A. Cox.*

**Verse 8. Synagogues.** Dr. Prideaux affirms that they had no synagogues before the Babylonish captivity; for the main service of the synagogue, says he, being the reading of the law unto the people, where there was no book of the law to be read, there certainly could be no synagogues. But how rare the book of the law was through all Judaea, before the Babylonish captivity, many texts of Scripture tell us. When Jehoshaphat sent teachers through all Judaea, to instruct the people in the law of God, they carried a book of the law with them (2Ch 17:9), which they needed not have done if there had been any copies of the law in those cities to which they went; which certainly there would have been had there been any synagogues in them. And when Hilkiah found the law in the temple (2Ki 22:8), neither he nor king Josiah needed to have been so surprised at it, had books of the law been common on those times. Their behaviour on that occasion sufficiently proves they had never seen it before, which could not be the case had there then been any other copies of it to be found among the people; and if there were no copies of the law at that time among them, there could then be most certainly no *synagogues* for them to resort to for the hearing of it read unto them. From whence he concludes there could be no *synagogues* among the Jews, till after the Babylonish captivity. *Cruden's Concordance.*

**Verse 8. Synagogues.** The assertion of those who are in favour of the Maccabean origin of the Psalm, that these words describe the destruction of the *synagogues*, is met by the remark, that in all the copious accounts which we have of the transactions of these times, there is nothing said of any such work of destruction. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

**Verse 8. Synagogues.** In the Old Testament we find no traces of meetings for worship in synagogues. Temporary altars, groves, and high places were used alike by the Jewish saints and sinners for the worship of God and idols. The only pre-exile instance which seems to indicate that the devout in Israel were in the habit of resorting to pious leaders for blessings and instruction on stated occasions, is to be found in 2Ki 4:23, where the Shunammite's husband asks, "Wherefore wilt thou go to him (Elisha) today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath." Yet 2Ki 22:8, etc.; 2Ch 34:14, etc., testify undoubtedly against the existence of places of worship under the monarchy. It is during the



exile, whilst the temple worship was in abeyance, that we find indubitable proof of the systematic meetings on fasts for devotion and instruction (Zec 7:3-5 8:19). Religious meetings were also held on Sabbaths and fasts, to instruct the exiles in the divine law, and to admonish them to obey the divine precepts, (Ezr 10:1-9 Ne 8:1-3 9:1-3 13:1-3). These meetings, held near the temple and in other localities, were the origin of the *synagogue*, and the place in which the people assembled was denominated *the house of assembly*. Hence, also, the synagogue in the temple itself... These synagogues soon became very popular, so that the psalmist in depicting worship in the time of the Maccabees declares that the many meeting places of God—or *the Synagogues of God* as the A.V. rightly renders it—have been laid waste. *Christian D. Ginsburg, in Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature.*

**Verse 8.** (*second clause*). The sense seems to be, *they* (the Chaldaean invaders) *have abolished all the solemnities in the land*. They have taken away the daily sacrifice; they have put an end to the festivals and feasts of our holy ritual. Compare La 2:6: "He hath violently taken away his tabernacle; he hath destroyed his places of the assembly, "(or rather, his assembly, his *moed*). "The Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion." *Christopher Wordsworth.*

**Verse 9.** *We see not our signs*. As if they had said, heretofore God was wont to give us signs and tokens, he would even work miracles for us, or he would send a prophet to instruct and advise us what to do; we had those who could tell us *how long*, that is, how long our troubles should last, and when we should have our expected end of them; but now we are in trouble, and no man can tell us how long, now we are left to the wide world, to shift for ourselves as well as we can; the Lord will not advise us what to do, nor give us his mind what's best to be done, or how to proceed; thus deplorable was their condition upon the hiding of God's face from them. *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 9.** *We see not our signs*. These signs, which he mourned that he did not see, were certain outward marks of God's special favour, certain testimonies of his presence, certain memorials that he was with them to bless them. And it is said that there were five things in Solomon's temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, which were not in the second temple, which was erected after the Babylonish captivity. Five memorials or tokens of God's special presence were then wanting. One was the ark of the covenant; another, the fire from heaven upon the brazen altar; the third, the Shechaniah, or cloud that rested upon the mercyseat; the fourth, the Urim and Thummim which were in the breastplate of the high priest; and the fifth, the spirit of prophecy. For though there were the prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, at the time of, and shortly after, the restoration; yet the spirit of prophecy ceased with Malachi, and did not reappear until John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus... The lamentation of the church here, then, was, that she saw not her signs. So now, the church of the living God, the regenerate family of Zion, have often reason to pour out the same melancholy complaint. Signs of God's favour, marks and testimonies of his work of grace upon their souls, are often so out of sight, so buried in obscurity, so enveloped in clouds of darkness, that the living family

are compelled, from soul feeling, to take up the language of lamentation here expressed, and say, *We see not our signs.* J. C. Philpot. 1802-1869.

**Verse 9.** *Our signs.* The ordinary *signs* of Israel being God's peculiar people are the passover (Ex 12:13), the Sabbath (Ex 21:13), the temple, the altar, the sacrifices; the extraordinary ones are God's miracles wrought in his people's behalf (Ps 78:43). A. R. Fausset.

**Verse 9.** *There is no more any prophet.* By us it ought to be observed what they do not say: It is not,—here is no more any giant or warlike leader who may deliver us from the adversary: but, there is no more any prophet. And yet when the prophets were with them, they were contemptible in the eyes of all, maltreated by the wicked and put to death. *Musculus.*

**Verse 10.** *Shall the enemy blaspheme the name for ever?* The sinner never leaves his sin till sin first leaves him: did not death put a stop to his sin, he would never cease from sin. This may be illustrated by a similitude thus: A company of gamesters resolve to play all night, and accordingly they sit down to chess tables, or some other game; their candle, accidentally or unexpectedly, goes out, or is put out, or burnt out; their candle being out, they are forced to give over their game, and go to bed in the dark; but had the candle lasted all night, they would have played all night. This is every sinner's case in regard of sin: did not death put out the candle of life, the sinner would sin still. Should the sinner live for ever, he would sin for ever; and, therefore, it is a righteous thing with God to punish him for ever in hellish torments. Every impenitent sinner would sin to the days of eternity, if he might live to the days of eternity. *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?* For ever, and evermore; or for ever and yet—for so the Hebrew loves to exaggerate: as if the sinner, the blasphemer, would set a term of duration longer than eternity to sin in. The psalmist implicitly saith, Lord, if thou dost but let them alone for ever, they will certainly blaspheme thy name for ever and ever. I have read of the crocodile, that he knows no *maximum quod sic*, he is always growing bigger and bigger, and never comes to a certain pitch of monstrosity so long as he lives. *Quamdiu vivit crescit.* Every habituated sinner would, if he were let alone, be such a monster, perpetually growing worse and worse. *Thomas Brooks.*

**Verse 12.** *God is my King of old,* etc. Let us learn from this verse how to think of our God. First, that he is our King, and therefore we ought to be encouraged to pray for his help against the ungodly, and to place ourselves in entire submission to his will and government. Secondly, that he is not a new God, but the Ancient of Days, and that whatever salvation has been wrought not only in the midst of his own people, but in the midst of the whole earth, even among those by whom he is not acknowledged, has been wrought by him. Let this meaning strike at the root of all trust in other gods, or in any creature. *Musculus.*

**Verse 13.** *Thou didst divide the sea.* Thou, O Lord, didst make firm the flowing sea, that there might be a way for our fathers to pass over, and in those very waters through which thou didst lead thy

ransomed, thou didst utterly overthrow the hosts of Egypt, who were like dragons for ferocity, as they sought to devour thy people. *Jansenius*.

**Verse 14.** *Thou brakest the heads of leviathan*, etc. It is spoken of Pharaoh's army which God destroyed in the Red Sea; that is, the destruction of the Egyptians was a pledge of the accomplishment of God's promise to cast the Canaanite out of the promised land, and to give them possession of it. Many hardships they were to pass through in the wilderness, but God gave them this mercy as food, not to their bodies, but food to their faith, while they were in the wilderness: therefore, those former great and glorious promises were accomplished. So that former mercies are food that God gives unto the faith of his people to feed upon, till he hath perfectly accomplished whatever he hath promised unto his church. *William Strong*.

**Verse 14.** *Leviathan*. The Arabic Lexicographers (quoted by Bochart) affirm that *Pharao*, in the Egyptian language, signified a crocodile. Parkhurst remarks that in Schencher's *Physica Sacra* may be seen a medal with Julius Caesar's head on one side, and on the reverse a crocodile with this inscription: AGYPTO CAPTA, *Egypt taken*. M. Mariette has discovered at Karnak a monumental stele of Thothmes on which the king says of himself,

"Fierce as the huge crocodile, I made them see the glory of my God;  
Terrible Lord of the waters, none dare even approach him."

**Verse 14.** *Leviathan* is a name given not only to the crocodile, but to the whale and other large fishes. The *Zum*, or people inhabiting the wilderness, are supposed, by many sensible writers, to be the Ichthyophagy, or fish eaters, who occupied, according to ancient authors, a part of the coast of the Red Sea. The psalmist is here speaking of Israel's passage through its waters; and it is a singular fact that Diodorus, who lived about two thousand years ago, mentions a tradition, prevalent amongst these very persons, to the effect that in the time of their remote forefathers an extraordinary reflux took place, the channel of the gulf becoming dry, and the green bottom appearing, whilst the whole body of waters rolled away in an opposite direction. There can be little doubt that this strange people would have used for food, and various purposes, such great fish as might have been cast ashore on the termination of the miracle. Most writers give this text a figurative meaning, but that is no reason why it may not be also literally understood; for such a mode of speaking is common in the Bible. But whether we understand it one way or the other, we have the testimony of heathens to its propriety and force. If, by the term *Leviathan*, we believe Egypt to be intended, and by its *heads* those petty states into which that country was divided, the traditions of India, and the East, inform us that such designations were well understood, and therefore beautifully applicable. *Anon., in "Biblical and Theological Gleanings"; by William O'Neill. 1854.*

**Verse 14.** *Meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness*. May not the exact meaning be that even as the sea monsters washed upon the shore furnished food for the inhabitants of the Red Sea, even so

the symbolic dragon power of Egypt when destroyed at the Red Sea, became food for Israel's faith, and even furnished provision for their wilderness journey by the spoil which was cast up by the tide.

C. H. S.

**Verse 15. Flood.** God in dividing Jordan did not only divide the water that ordinarily belonged to the river, or the water which came from its fountains, but also the extraordinary additional waters by the great rains a little before harvest. So God *cleaved* both *the fountain, i.e., the fountain water, and the flood.* Jonathan Edwards.

**Verse 16. The day is thine, the night also is thine.**

Ah! do not be sorrowful, darling,  
And do not be sorrowful, pray—  
Taking the year together, my dear,  
There is not more night than day.  
And God is God, my darling,  
Of night as well as day;  
And we feel and know that we can go,  
Wherever he leads the way.  
A God of the night, my darling,  
Of the night of death so grim,  
The gate that leads out of life, good wife,  
Is the gate that leads to Him.

*From "In the Sere and Yellow Leaf, "in "The Circling Year."*

**Verse 16. Day. Night.** These changes are *according to a fixed law.* Day and night are the ordinances of heaven upon earth for the growth of earth's life, and, if we could trace the sunshine and the dark in every follower of God, we should see them arranged with equal wisdom. It is a more complex work, but, be sure of this, there is order in it all, and the hand that rules the world in its orbit, and that makes it fulfil its course through light and shade, is governing our lives for a higher than earthly end. One feature of the law is presented so far for our guidance. *It is a law of alternation.* It is day and night, and, let us thank God, it is also in due time night and day. Each has its time and use. *John Ker. 1869.*

**Verse 16. Thou hast prepared the light.** It is but recently that we have been able to form any conception of the power of light as an agent in the economy of the globe; the discoveries of Actinism are among the most interesting and marvellous of natural science. The discovery that "no substance can be exposed to the sun's rays without undergoing a chemical change, "has been described as scarcely less important in its effects than the discovery of the law of gravitation. A sunbeam is one of the most powerful of all the agencies of nature; magical as it is, it breaks up the strongest chemical affinities; it is the author of colour, and it is the creator of a myriad combinations, which all tend to the

harmony of the world. Nor ought we to forget the moral influence of light. We are all aware of the sensible difference produced in our moral natures by a fine day or a dark day. Light gives zest and tone to the spirits; light gives buoyancy and joy to the soul; light crowds the chambers of the mind with ideas; Light is *Life*: the merest insect could not live without light; and even blind natures receive, in those organs which are not the property of vision, the assurance of its benignant operations. Light is *Order*: and at its wand and command the separation takes place, and dark and light pair off into their separate ranks. Light is *Beauty*: whether in the refulgence of the moon; the chill sparkle of the stars; the unrivalled play of colours in the attenuated film of the soap bubble, at once the toy of childhood and the tool of the sage; the rich play of tints in the mother of pearl, or the rich gorgeous rays in the plumes of birds. Light is *Purity*: forms that rankle out of the glance of its clear, steady beam, contract around themselves loathness and disgust, and become the seats of foulness and shame. Light is *Growth*: where it is, we know that nature pursues her work in life and in vigour; light gives vitality to the sap; light removes obstructions from the pathway of the growing agencies, while, in its absence, forms become stunted, gnarled, and impaired. Light is *Health*: as it darts its clear and brilliant points to and fro, it brings in its train those blessings of elasticity and energy, which give the fulness of being—which is perfect health to the expanding forms. There is a fine consistency, when Scripture makes light to contain, as it were, the seeds of all things, and when the prelude of all creation is made to be those words, "God said, Let there be light." This, then, is the part light is made to play in the history of the world; it is used by moral power to become the creator of moral influence. What a long series of creations elapsed before moral causes seemed to operate in the affairs of the globe! But he, whose nature and whose names are Light, had given to light its distinct being and work; and that creative word, "*Let there be light*," spoke right forwards to the moral energies which were to be superinduced by its creation. Thus light, it is true, went before all things, and became the cause of moral consequences; but then, this arose from the divine hand, whence darted its benevolent beams. *It was God* who gave it its divine commission, to divine between light and darkness; *it was God* who made it the fountain of knowledge and of day; *it was God* who gave to it the faculty to become, in turn, a creator, and to warm into life and beauty a myriad seeds and shape of loveliness. *E. Paxton Hood.*

**Verse 16.** *The light and the sun.* I was considerably affected in my younger days by the long standing objection, that Moses made *light* to exist before the creation of the sun; as books then usually taught, what some still fancy, that there could not have been light without this luminary. But not choosing, on such important point, to attach my faith to any general assertion, I sought to find out if any investigator of the nature of light had perceived any distinction in its qualities or operation, which made it a fluid or matter independent of the sun. It was not easy, before the year 1791, to meet with the works of any student of nature on such a subject, as it had been little attended to; but I at length

saw the fact asserted by Henckel, a German of the old school, of some value in his day, and soon afterwards some experiments were announced in England which confirmed the supposition. It has been a favourite point of attention with me ever since; and no truth in philosophy seems to be now more clearly ascertained than that light has a distinct existence, separate and independent of the sun. This is a striking confirmation of the Mosaic record; for that expressly distinguishes the existence and operation of light from the solar action upon it, and from that radiation of it which is connected with his beams and presence. By Moses, an interval of three days is placed between the luminous creation, and the appearance and position of the sun and moon. Light was, therefore, operating by its own laws and agencies, without the sun, and independently of his peculiar agency, from the first day to the fourth of our terrestrial fabrication. But from the time that the sun was placed in his central position, and his rays were appointed to act on our earth, they have been always performing most beneficial operations, essential to the general course of things. *Sharon Turner (1768-1847), in "The Sacred History of the World."*

**Verse 17.** *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth.* The actual distribution of sea and land over the surface of the globe is likewise of the highest importance to the present condition of organic life. If the ocean were considerably smaller, or if Asia and America were concentrated within the tropics, the tides, the oceanic currents, and the meteorological phenomenon on which the existence of the vegetable and animal kingdoms depend, would be so profoundly modified, that it is extremely doubtful whether man could have existed, and absolutely certain that he could never have risen to a high degree of civilisation. The dependence of human progress upon the existing configuration of the globe necessarily leads us to the conclusion that both must be the harmonious work of the same Almighty Power, and that a divine and immutable plan has from all eternity presided over the destinies of our planet. It is almost superfluous to point out how largely the irregular windings and undulations of the coasts, the numerous islands scattered over the face of the waters, the promontories stretching far away into the domains of the sea, and the gulfs plunging deeply into the bosom of the land, have contributed to the civilisation of the human race by multiplying its points of contact with the ocean, the great highway of nations. *G. Hartwig, in "The Harmonies of Nature."* 1866.

**Verse 17.** *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth.* Consider the form of the earth. It is known to be globular, and in shape nearly like an orange. And why has God chosen that form? With a view that it might be inhabited by living creatures on its whole surface. In order to this, every part of the globe must have sufficient light and heat, the wind must have a free circulation, and the water must be diffused over all its parts. The rotundity of the earth is best calculated to promote these conveniences: for this round form admits light and heat, without which there could be no life all over the globe. The revolutions of day and night, the changes in the temperature of the air, heat, cold,

dryness or moisture, could not have taken place without this form. Had the earth been square, had it been conic, had it been an hexagon, or any other angular form, what must the consequence have been? The greatest part of our earth would have been drowned, whilst the rest, would have languished with drought. Some countries must have been torn in pieces by storms, while others would have been deprived of the wholesome circulation of wind. I have new reason to admire the supreme wisdom, when I reflect on the enormous mass which composes our world. Were the earth softer, or more spongy than it is, men and animals would sink into it; were it harder and less penetrable, it would resist the toil of the labourer, and lose its capacity for producing and nourishing the multitude of plants, herbs, roots, and flowers, which now spring out of its bosom. There are regular and distinct strata found in the earth; some of stone, others of metal and minerals. There are numerous and evident advantages which result from these in favour of mankind. Do not the strata of gravel, sunk deep in the earth, purify and in a manner filter the water and render it sweet and fit for use? On the surface of the earth there is a varied prospect; there is an admirable mixture of plains and valleys, of small hills and mountains. The man must be blind indeed that does not see the wise purpose of the Great Author of nature, in thus diversifying the surface of the earth. Were the earth an even plain, how much beauty would it lose? Besides, this variety of valley and mountain is very favourable to the health of living creatures, and were there no hills, the earth would be less peopled with men and animals. There would be fewer plants, fewer simples and trees. We should be deprived of metals and minerals: the vapours would not be condensed, nor should we have either springs or rivers. Must we not then acknowledge that the whole plan of the earth, its form, its inward and outward construction, are all regulated according to the wise laws, which all combine towards the pleasure and happiness of mankind? O thou supreme Author of nature, thou hast done all things well! Whichever way I turn my eyes, whether I penetrate into the interior structure of the globe thou hast appointed me to inhabit, or whether I examine its surface, I everywhere discover marks of profound wisdom and infinite goodness. *Christopher Christian Sturm.*

**Verse 17.** *Thou hast made summer and winter. Plasmasti ea.* Now thou hast done all this and more for mankind in general, wilt thou be wanting to thy church? *John Trapp.*

**Verse 17.** *Winter.* As if fatigued with so many cares, nature now rests; this, however, is only to collect new force, again to be employed for the good of the world. But even this rest, which nature enjoys in winter, is a secret activity. A new creation is preparing in silence. The necessary dispositions are already making, that the desolate earth may again recover the children she has lost. The corn which is to serve us for food, already shoots. The fibres of plants, which are to adorn our fields and gardens, begin insensibly to open. O my beneficent Creator! Here I find fresh cause to adore thy wisdom and power. The repose which nature takes it as worthy to enter into the plan of thy wise providence, as the activity she shows in spring and summer. Thou hast wisely combined the several revolutions of

the earth, thou hast equally divided its rest and labour. It is thy will that each day should vary the scenes of nature, in that way which is most proper for the perfection of the whole. Pardon, O God, my temerity, If I have been so stupid as to blame anything in the government of the world. I am more than ever convinced that all the plans of thy providence, though they may appear extraordinary to my weak reason, are replete with wisdom and goodness. *Christopher Christian Sturm. 1750-1786.*

**Verse 19.** *O deliver not,* etc. How weak soever the church be, and how many and strong soever the enemy be, yet cannot they all devour the church, except the Lord should deliver his church over into their hands, against which evil the church hath ground of confidence to pray, *O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked;* for he hath given his church wings, and a hiding place too, as the comparison imports, if he please to give her the use thereof also. *David Dickson.*

**Verse 19.** The people of God are taught in this form of supplication how to edge and keen their prayers, and make them vigorous; to wit, by disclaiming any ability or sufficiency in themselves; by styling themselves a congregation of poor, silly, weak doves, no way able to encounter an army of bestial, cunning, crafty, bloody, boisterous enemies. This plea the people of God make use of: "With thee the fatherless findeth mercy," Ho 14:3. *John Langley.*

**Verse 19.** *The soul of thy turtledove.* They compare themselves to a turtledove, whose nature leads it, in whatever way it may be afflicted, not to indulge in noisy impatience, but to mourn in secret; so the afflicted people of Israel were unable to do anything but breathe their sighs and groans to God. *Musculus.*

**Verse 19.** *Thy turtledove.* God's people are an harmless, innocent people, altogether unable and insufficient to help themselves against their enemies, who are numerous, cruel, and barbarous. Hence they are resembled to sheep, doves; called in the Word, fatherless, orphans, little ones, babes, poor, simple, needy. They are men bound to their good behaviour, may not harbour so much as a bad thought against any; are called to suffer, not to do wrong. Julian did jeer at them for this; he would strike them on the one cheek, and tell them that their Master taught them to turn the other; his soldiers would take away their cloaks, and mind them that they must part with their coats also. Out of their own dispositions they judge of others, therefore may easily be deceived and entrapped. Thus Gedaliah, that sweet man, would not believe the relation of Johanan touching the conspiracy of the crocodile Ishmael against him; nay, was even angry with him for his faithful dealing that way, and it cost him his life. Jer 40:16,41. That famous admiral of France, Jasper Coligny, though he had information and intelligence from sundry parts beyond the seas, that the court did intend to mischief him, and that there was no security in their promises and agreements, though backed with oaths, thrust himself, notwithstanding, upon the lion, and was smoothed with one paw and torn with the other: being such, they lie open to the rage of many adversaries... One would think these turtles should rather win the love of all that come near them than incur the hatred of any, for they are quiet



and peaceable persons. In the mount of the Lord there is no hurt done (Isa 11:9), yet, notwithstanding, they are maligned by a world of people. Because they are not like them (1Pe 4:4); because they are not of their number (Joh 15:19); because their persons and their sacrifices are more acceptable with God than the others' (Ge 4:4); because they reprove them for their evil ways (Joh 3:20); because they are for the most part poor and mean, have no great forecast in worldly affairs, are no deep politicians, they are such as those *pauperes Lugdunensis*, those poor men of Lyons in France, therefore are exposed to beasts and lions (Mt 1:25); because they mourn for sin in themselves and others: they quarrel with the dove even because of her mournful note. They will jeer at sighing sisters, and men that hang the head like a bulrush; yet, seeing this bulrush cannot grow without mire and mud, why should it not hang the head? *John Langley*.

**Verse 19.** *Thy turtledove.* This expression may, perhaps, be further illustrated from the custom, ancient and modern, of keeping doves as favourite birds (see *Theocritus* v. 96, and *Virgil* Eclog. 3. v. 68, 69), and from the care taken to secure them from such animals as are dangerous to them. *James Merrick*.

**Verse 19.** *Turtle Doves*, of whatever species they be, whether travellers or domesticated, are equally preserved by the inhabitants of Egypt: they do not kill, and never eat them. Wishing to know the motive of this abstinence among people who possess so little in the greater part of their action, I learnt that it was for the honour of humanity. It is a consequence of the respect due to hospitality, which the Arabs hold in such high estimation, and of which they have communicated some shades to the people who dwell among them. They would regard it as a violation of this hospitality not to spare those birds, which come with a perfect confidence to live amongst them, and there to become skilful but useless receptors of love and tenderness. The very farmer, who sees his harvest a prey for the flights of turtle doves which alight on his fields, neither destroys nor harasses them, but suffers them to multiply in tranquillity. *C. N.S. de M. Sonnini*. 1775-1811.

**Verse 19.** *Forget not the congregation of thy poor.* *Thy poor*, by way of discrimination. There may be a greater distance between poor and poor, than there is between poor and rich. There are many "ragged regiments, "congregations of poor, "whom the Lord will forget for ever; but *his* poor shall be saved. And these poor are of two sorts; either poor in regard of wealth and outward substance, or poor in regard of friends or outward assistance. A rich man, especially a godly rich man, may be in a poor case, destitute and forsaken, wanting patronage and protection. God saveth the poor in both notions, both those that have no friends, and those that have no estates. *Joseph Caryl*.

**Verse 20.** *Have respect.* The word, in the original signification of it, imports a fastening of the eyes upon some object, that a man desires to look into. Hence, by a metaphor, it is transferred to the eyes of the mind, and signifies a serious weighing and consideration of a thing. God is said to "wink at the times of ignorance, "or not to regard it, Ac 17:30. God's people here look at God, as if he did wink at

his covenant, and neither look at it, nor them in their miseries. The psalmist desires him that he would be mindful of it for his people's deliverance. *Francis Taylor, in "A Sermon preached before the House of Commons, " entitled "God's Covenant the Churches Plea." 1645.*

**Verse 20.** *Have respect unto the covenant.* This presseth the Lord more than the former; this is the close grappling, as it were, with him in the words of Jacob: "I will not let thee go till thou hast blessed me." This is the throwing out of the greatest sheet anchor in the tempest, for it lays hold on God's faithfulness, and truth, and fatherly goodness. If they be not in covenant with God, it may be charged upon them.—"You have violated my holy law, you have incensed my wrath against you by your perverse ways, therefore I will not help you, but give you up; "but now the souls that be in covenant with God will not be put off so (be it spoken with holy reverence), but will cry out, O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, yet *have respect unto thy covenant.* Yet be sure you walk uprightly before the Lord...With what face can any one say, *Lord, have respect unto thy covenant,* when he casts his own covenant behind his back, and cannot say with the prophet David, "I have a respect to all thy commandments"? How canst thou say, "Deliver me not up to the many beasts without, "when thou art not afraid to be delivered up to thy vile, bestial lusts and affections that are within? Thou hypocrite, first labour the subduing of the monsters that are within thee, then a fair way will be open to have thine enemies subdued round about thee. *John Langley.*

**Verse 20.** *Have respect unto the covenant.* Those persons and preachers who decline to think and speak of gospel mercies and free salvation as secured by *covenant*, deprive themselves and others of much of the blessed comforts of God's word. Such was not the manner of the inspired psalmist. *William S. Plumer.*

**Verse 20.** God seems to his people to neglect his covenant, when they are oppressed by ungodly men. So Asaph complains. After an acknowledgment that God was the Shepherd of Israel, and so in covenant with his people, and accordingly had wonderfully brought them out of Egypt, and made them flourish marvellously in the land of Canaan, he attributes their misery to God's neglect. Many reasons may be given of this unkind carriage of God's people to him. As, first, because their misery blinds them; and blind men when they are smitten suspect every man that comes near them. Secondly, self love makes us suspect any rather than ourselves, yea, even God himself. The people should have reflected upon themselves that were innocent, but in their sorrows they reflect upon God that was innocent. We are all Adam and Eve's children. When Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, she tacitly lays the fault upon God: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Ge 3:13. Hadst thou not made a subtil serpent I had not broken thy commandment. Adam lays it openly upon God: "The woman who thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Ge 3:12. Hadst thou not given me such a companion to betray me, I had been innocent. So we their posterity, when trouble is upon us, suspect God's breaking covenant, rather than our own. Thus our nurses beat the

stone when children stumble through their own neglect. Thirdly, in time of need we most commonly suspect such as are best able to help us. The sick man, if he be in danger of death, suspects not his ignorant neighbours, but his skilful physician. He that is oppressed in his estate, when the sentence goes against him, suspects none more than the advocate, or the judge. We know God is best able to help us; our corruption, therefore, makes us to suspect him most, if our troubles continue. Fourthly, we most suspect those who, as we think, have most reason to help us in our miseries, and do it not. If the servant wants meal or apparel, he complains not of his fellow servants but of his master, who is tied by covenant to provide for him; if the child be wronged by the servants, he lays not the fault upon his brethren but upon his father, who by bands of nature is obliged to take care of him. So we, being in covenant with God, wonder not much if others fail us, but complain heavily if God seems to neglect us. *Francis Taylor.*

**Verse 20.** The psalmist moves God in prayer to look to his covenant by this argument: *For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty;* that is, of cruel men, or of men so full of cruelty, that they deserve rather to be called *cruelty* than cruel: this sort of men inhabit and fill up all those places where the light of holy truth doth not shine. Now, if they who want the light, or have no true knowledge of God among them, are hereby prepared for the acting of all manner of wickedness, how much more are they prepared for the acting of wickedness who have thrust the light from them, and are in dark places of their own making? The prophet Hosea shows (Ho 4:1), that where there is no knowledge of God in a land, for want of means, there is no truth nor mercy (that is, there is none exercised) in that land, but oppression, deceit, and falsehood bear down all: how much more must it be so when there is no knowledge of God in a land, because of the contempt of means, and rebellion against the light? What wickedness will not they do in the dark, who put out the candle that they may not see what they do? *Joseph Caryl.*

**Verse 20.** (*second clause*). This might have some literal meaning. *The dark places of the earth*, some have thought, may here describe in the first instance, the caves, the dens, and the woods of the land; for there are many such (as travellers testify) in the land of Judaea, and in unsettled times they have often been the abode of robbers and murderers, who have thence sallied forth to molest and cut off the travellers, to ravish peaceful villages, to waylay and plunder the merchant, to commit all sorts of crimes, and then to return in impunity to these dark retreats, where they laugh at all law, human or divine; they quaff, with horrid pleasure, the recollection of the widow's tears, and listen with inhuman joy to the echoing remembrances of the orphan's moan and the dying father's shriek. But what a land thus infested would be, is but a faint image of the heathen world. Wherever heathenism spreads itself, there are *the dark places of the earth*. The Scripture often tells us that. *John Hambleton. 1839.*

**Verse 20.** *The dark places.* An allusion, as sometimes interpreters conceive, to the dens of wild beasts, wherein they hide themselves to seize upon their prey, Ps 104:21-22. To these cruel men are

compared. Ps 10:8-9. "He sitteth 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." Such places oppressors and robbers choose. Others take it for an allusion to prisons and dark dungeons void of light. As the prophet, Isa 42:7, describes a prison: "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." So trouble in Scripture is compared to darkness, and prosperity to light; because darkness is irksome, and light comfortable: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; "and then the sorry hiding places whither God's people went to hide themselves are here meant. Yet, could they not there be quiet, but were pursued, found out, and spoiled by their adversaries. Others take *dark places* for obscure and mean places, as *dark men*, in the original, are called *mean men* in our translation, Pr 22:29. And then it may either signify that the meanest men did oppress God's people, or that the poorest and meanest of God's people were not spared. Such usage have we found in our time, when the poor cottages of our foes have sent out pillagers, and no cottagers of ours have escaped spoiling in diverse places. *Francis Taylor.*

**Verse 20.** *Cruelty.* Heathenism is cruel. It is not changed in character since the days when parents made their children to pass through fire to Moloch. At this very day, for instance, infanticide prevails in China; and the "law, "says a book of authority—"the law, otherwise so rigorous, does not take the slightest cognisance of that crime, nor ever subject those guilty of it to punishment. Every morning before it is light, waggons traverse the different quarters of the city of Pekin to receive the dead infants." Well may they go "before it is light; ""the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." "The missionaries of that city obtained details, which justify belief that the number of infants (chiefly females) destroyed there is upwards of three thousand annually." Think of this same proportion, extended throughout that densely peopled empire. Among the same people suicide is also of frequent occurrence. What a contrast with the religion which stays the rash hand, and calls out, "Do thyself no harm!" We might pass to India; and there the flames of the funeral piles, on which so many widows were annually burnt, had hardly expired, when we were shocked, only a few years since, with other proofs of the cruelty of heathenism. What painful details were those, which our government brought to light respecting the secret murderers of India! What think you of a vast fraternity of murderers, consisting of many thousands of persons, which has existed from generation to generation, which has been ramified over the whole country from Cape Comorin to the Himalayan mountains, which has flourished alike under Hindu, Mahometan, and British rulers, and which has every year destroyed multitudes of victims—and all this under the sanction of religion? The murderous system, they say, has been enjoined them by the goddess Kalee, who is represented as having made a grant of half the human race to her votaries, (to be murdered, that is) according to certain prescribed forms. *John Hambleton.*

**Verse 23.** If we are compelled to close our most solemn and urgent devotions, and our most earnest supplications, without seeing one ray of light beaming upon our path, it may comfort us to remember that so the pious psalmist closed this complaint. To hope against hope is the most blessed kind of hope. *William S. Plumer.*

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

##### **Verse 1.**

1. The divine displeasure a fact.
2. It is but in measure, and we are very liable to exaggerate it.
3. Even while it lasts our relation to him is unaffected: *Sheep of thy pasture.*
4. Our business is to enquire the reason of it, and act accordingly.

**Verse 1. (second clause).** The Lord's anger with his people compared to smoke.

1. It is not a consuming fire.
2. It suggests fear of the fire.
3. It darkens the light of joy.
4. It blinds the eyes of faith.
5. It checks the breath of life.
6. It blackens the beauty of our worldly comforts.

##### **Verse 2.**

1. The Lord's relation to his people.
  - (a) Election.
  - (b) Redemption.
  - (c) Indwelling.
2. The prayer arising from it: *Remember.*

**Verse 3.** Church mischief.

1. The church has enemies.
2. Wickedness in the church is their great weapon.
3. This causes much desolation to weak saints, to enquirers, to peace, to prayer, to usefulness.
4. The cure for it is God's interposition.

**Verses 3-4.** The power of prayer.

1. On one side were,
  - (a) Desolation: *perpetual, etc.*
  - (b) Desecration.
  - (c) Declamation: *enemies roar.*
  - (d) Demonstration: *they set up.*

2. On the other side is,

(a) Supplication.

(b) This brings God to the rescue effectually and quickly.

**Verse 4.** *Ensigns for signs.* The craft of Satan is supplanting truth with deceptive counterfeits.

**Verse 5.** True fame. To build for God with labour, daring, diligence, skill, etc.

**Verse 6.** Vandal work against the truth of God.

**Verses 6-7.** Things feared by a church.

1. Injury to her doctrines or ordinances: *carved work*.

2. The fire of strife, division, etc.

3. The defilement of sin. Either of these three will throw a church down; let her guard and pray against them.

**Verse 8.** The destruction of rural churches, the aim of our enemies: the injury they would so do, and our duty to prevent it: the means the destroyers use: bribery, oppression, etc. Our proper method for sustaining such churches.

**Verse 9.** (*first clause*).

1. There are such things as *signs*, that is, tokens and marks of God's special favour to the soul.

2. There is also a *seeing* those signs when God, the Holy Ghost, is pleased to shine upon them.

3. There is a third state, where there is *not seeing* the signs, those signs being enveloped in darkness, dimness, and obscurity. *J. C. Philpot*.

**Verse 10.** A prayer for revival.

1. How God is reproached.

2. What are the ill effects of it.

3. When we may expect him to arise.

**Verse 11.**

1. The patience of God with man: He 'withdraws his hand, even,' etc., he hesitates to strike.

2. The impatience of man with God: "pluck it, "etc. *G. R.*

**Verse 12.**

1. The sovereignty of God.

2. Its antiquity.

3. Our loyalty to it.

4. The practical character of his reign: *working*.

5. The graciousness of it: *working salvation*.

6. The place of its operation: *in the midst of the earth*.

**Verse 14.** God's defeat of our enemies, and the benefit accruing to ourselves.

**Verse 15.** The wonderful nature of gracious supplies, illustrated by the smitten rock.

**Verse 16.** God present alike in all dispensations of providence.

**Verses 16-17.**

1. The God of grace is the God of nature: *The day in thine*, etc.
2. The God of nature is the God of grace: the wisdom, the power, the faithfulness the same. See Psalm 19. *G. R.*

**Verse 19.** The soul of the believer compared to a turtledove.

**Verse 20.**

1. The title given to heathen nations: *dark places of the earth*. Not without the light of nature, or of reason, or of natural conscience, or of philosophy, as of Greece and Rome; but without the light of revelation.
2. Their condition: *full of*, etc.: cruelty in their public, social, and private relationships. See Romans 1: "without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."
3. Their part in the covenant. This is known from their part in its promises, and in prophecies: *I will give thee the heathen*, etc.
4. The prayer of others on their behalf: *Have respect*, etc.; *Oh send forth thy light*, etc.

The conversion of the world will be in answer to the prayers of the church.

**Verse 22.** God pleading his own cause in providential visitations of nations and individuals, as also in remarkable conversions and awakenings.

**Verse 22.**

1. The glory of our cause: it is the Lord's own.
2. The hope of our cause: he will plead it himself.
3. The hope thus derivable from the violence of man: it will move the Lord to arise.

**Psalm 75**

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

---

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician*. Here is noble work for him, for the cry of the last Psalm is about to be heard, and the challenge of the foes of Israel taken up by God himself. Here the virgin daughter of Zion despises her foe, and laughs him to scorn. The destruction of Sennacherib's army is a notable illustration of this sacred song. *Al-taschith*. Here is another of the "destroy not" Psalms, and the title may be intended as a check upon the natural fierceness of the oppressed, or a taunt for the savage foe, who is here bitterly bidden to destroy not, because the nation is well aware that he cannot. Here, in holy faith, the sucking child plays at the hole of the asp, and the weaned child puts his hand on the

cockatrice den. *A Psalm or Song of Asaph.* For reading or singing. A hymn to God and a song for his saints. Happy were the people who having found a Milton in David had an almost equal songster in Asaph: happiest of all, because these poets were not inspired by earth's Castalian fount, but drank of "the fount of every blessing."

**DIVISION.** The people's song of gratitude and adoration begins the hymn in Ps 75:1. In the next four Ps 75:2-5, the Lord reveals himself as ruling the world in righteousness. Then follows a warning voice from the church to her enemies, Ps 75:6-8, and a closing song anticipatory of the glory due to God and the utter defeat of the foe.

#### EXPOSITION

**Verse 1.** *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks.* Not to ourselves, for we were helpless, but to Elohim who heard our cry, and replied to the taunt of our foes. Never let us neglect thanksgiving, or we may fear that another time our prayers will remain unanswered. As the smiling flowers gratefully reflect in their lovely colours the various constituents of the solar ray, so should gratitude spring up in our hearts after the smiles of God's providence. Unto thee do we give thanks. We should praise God again and again. Stinted gratitude is ingratitude. For infinite goodness there should be measureless thanks. Faith promises redoubled praise for greatly needed and signal deliverances. For that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare. God is at hand to answer and do wonders—adore we then the present Deity. We sing not of a hidden God, who sleeps and leaves the church to her fate, but of one who ever in our darkest days is most near, a very present help in trouble. "Near is his name." Baal is on a journey, but Jehovah dwells in his church. Glory be unto the Lord, whose perpetual deeds of grace and majesty are the sure tokens of his being with us always, even unto the ends of the world.

**Verse 2.** *When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.* This is generally believed to be the voice of God, who will, when he accepts his people, mount his judgment seat and avenge their cause in righteousness. It is rendered by some, "I will take a set time;" and by others, "I will seize the moment."

"God never is before his time,  
He is never too late."

He determines the period of interposition, and when that arrives swift are his blows and sure are his deliverances. God sends no delegated judge, but sits himself upon the throne. O Lord, let thy set time come for grace. Tarry no longer, but for the truth and the throne of Jesus be thou speedily at work. Let the appointed assize come, O Jesus, and sit thou on thy throne to judge the world in equity.

**Verse 3.** *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved.* When anarchy is abroad, and tyrants are in power, everything is unloosed, dissolution threatens all things, the solid mountains of



government melt as wax; but even then the Lord upholds and sustains the right. I bear up the pillars of it. Hence, there is no real cause for fear. While the pillars stand, and stand they must for God upholds them, the house will brave out the storm. In the day of the Lord's appearing a general melting will take place, but in that day our covenant God will be the sure support of our confidence.

"How can I sink with such a prop

As my eternal God,

Who bears the earth's huge pillars up,

And spreads the heavens abroad."

Selah. Here may the music pause while the sublime vision passes before our view; a world dissolved and an immutable God uplifting all his people above the terrible commotion.

**Verse 4.** *I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly.* The Lord bids the boasters boast not, and commands the mad oppressors to stay their folly. How calm is he, how quiet are his words, yet how divine the rebuke. If the wicked were not insane, they would even now hear in their consciences the still small voice bidding them cease from evil, and forbear their pride. And to the wicked, Lift not up the horn. He bids the ungodly stay their haughtiness. The horn was the emblem of boastful power; only the foolish, like wild and savage beasts, will lift it high; but they assail heaven itself with it, as if they would gore the Almighty himself. In dignified majesty he rebukes the inane glories of the wicked, who beyond measure exalt themselves in the day of their fancied power.

**Verse 5.** *Lift not up your horn on high.* For their abounding pride there is a double rebuke. A word from God soon abases the lofty. Would to God that all proud men would obey the word here given them; for, if they do not, he will take effectual means to secure obedience, and then woe will come upon them, such as shall break their horns and roll their glory in the mire for ever. Speak not with a stiff neck. Impudence before God is madness. The outstretched neck of insolent pride is sure to provoke his axe. Those who carry their heads high shall find that they will be lifted yet higher, as Haman was upon the gallows which he had prepared for the righteous man. Silence, thou silly boaster! Silence! or God will answer thee. Who art thou, thou worm, that thou shouldst arrogantly object against thy Maker's laws and cavil at his truth? Be hushed, thou vainglorious prater, or vengeance shall silence thee to thine eternal confusion.

**Verse 6.** *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.* There is a God, and a providence, and things happen not by chance. Though deliverance be hopeless from all points of the compass, yet God can work it for his people; and though judgment come neither from the rising or the setting of the sun, nor from the wilderness of mountains, yet come it will, for the Lord reigneth. Men forget that all things are ordained in heaven; they see but the human force, and the carnal passion, but the unseen Lord is more real far than these. He is at work behind and within the cloud. The foolish dream that he is not, but he is near even now, and on the way to bring in his hand

that cup of spiced wine of vengeance, one draught of which shall stagger all his foes.

**Verse 7.** *But God is the judge.* Even now he is actually judging. His seat is not vacant; his authority is not abdicated; the Lord reigneth evermore. He putteth down one, and setteth up another. Empires rise and fall at his bidding. A dungeon here, and there a throne, his will assigns. Assyria yields to Babylon, and Babylon to the Medes. Kings are but puppets in his hand; they serve his purpose when they rise and when they fall. A certain author has issued a work called "Historic Ninepins," (Timbs), a fit name of scorn for all the great ones of the earth. God only is; all power belongs to him; all else is shadow, coming and going, unsubstantial, misty, dream like.

**Verse 8.** *For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup.* The punishment of the wicked is prepared, God himself holds it in readiness; he has collected and concocted woes most dread, and in the chalice of his wrath he holds it. They scoffed his feast of love; they shall be dragged to his table of justice, and made to drink their due deserts. And the wine is red. The retribution is terrible, it is blood for blood, foaming vengeance for foaming malice. The very colour of divine wrath is terrible; what must the taste be? It is full of mixture. Spices of anger, justice, and incensed mercy are there. Their misdeeds, their blasphemies, their persecutions have strengthened the liquor as with potent drugs;

"Mingled, strong, and mantling high;

Behold the wrath divine."

Ten thousand woes are burning in the depths of that fiery cup, which to the brim is filled with indignation. And he poureth out of the same. The full cup must be quaffed, the wicked cannot refuse the terrible draught, for God himself pours it out for them and into them. Vain are their cries and entreaties. They could once defy him, but that hour is over, and the time to requite them if fully come. But the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them *out, and drink them*. Even to the bitter end must wrath proceed. They must drink on and on for ever, even to the bottom where lie the lees of deep damnation; these they must suck up, and still must they drain the cup. Oh the anguish and the heart break of the day of wrath! Mark well, it is for all the wicked; all hell for all the ungodly; the dregs for the dregs; bitters for the bitter; wrath for the heirs of wrath. Righteousness is conspicuous, but over all terror spreads a tenfold night, cheerless, without a star. Oh happy they who drink the cup of godly sorrow, and the cup of salvation: these, though now despised, will then be envied by the very men who trod them under foot.

**Verse 9.** *But I will declare for ever.* Thus will the saints occupy themselves with rehearsing Jehovah's praises, while their foes are drunken with the wine of wrath. They shall chant while the others roar in anguish, and justly so, for the former Psalm informed us that such had been the case on earth,—"*thine enemies roar in the sanctuary,*"—the place where the chosen praised the Lord. I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. The covenant God, who delivered Jacob from a thousand afflictions, our soul shall magnify. He has kept his covenant which he made with the patriarch, and

has redeemed his seed, therefore will we spread abroad his fame world without end.

**Verse 10.** *All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off.* Power and liberty being restored to Israel, she begins again to execute justice, by abasing the godless who had gloried in the reign of oppression. Their power and pomp are to be smitten down. Men wore horns in those days as a part of their state, and these, both literally and figuratively, were to be lopped off; for since God abhors the proud, his church will not tolerate them any longer. But the horns of the righteous shall be exalted. In a rightly ordered society, good men are counted great men, virtue confers true rank, and grace is more esteemed than gold. Being saved from unrighteous domination, the chief among the chosen people here promises to rectify the errors which had crept into the commonwealth, and after the example of the Lord himself, to abase the haughty and elevate the humble. This memorable ode may be sung in times of great depression, when prayer has performed her errand at the mercy-seat, and when faith is watching for speedy deliverance. It is a song of the second advent, CONCERNING THE NEARNESS OF THE JUDGE WITH THE CUP OF WRATH.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**TITLE.** *Al-taschith. Destroy not.* This seems to have been used by David as a maxim during the violent persecutions of Saul, as if to remind himself to forebear revenge, though it was often in his power to inflict it, upon his unnatural enemy. *F. G. Hubbard, in "The Psalms Chronologically arranged, with Historical Introductions". New York. 1856.*

**Whole Psalm.** As these words are really a prayer, while at the same time the Psalm is thrown into the form, not of petitions, but of a thanksgiving, it ought to be considered as a thank prayer, uttered beforehand, and containing petitions within it. *Berleb. Bible.*

**Verse 1.** *Thy name is near.* The *name of God* is said to be *near*, because it had come into public notice, and was in every mind and every tongue—opposed to what is *unknown* and *obscure*, which is said to be far remote. Compare De 30:11. *Hermann Venema.*

**Verse 1.** The psalmist doubles this duty in the practice of the saints; *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, we give thanks, we do it;* as if none else did it but they, or as if they had done nothing else. *Joseph Caryl, in "A Sermon before the House of Commons, "entitled, "The Saints' Thankful Acclamation."*

**Verse 3.** *I bear up the pillars of it.* I prevent it from falling to pieces, as a house, supported by columns too weak to bear its weight, would do. *Daniel Cresswell.*

**Verse 3.** *I bear up the pillars of it.* Learn to whom the glory of bearing up the world is due. God's providence is the true Atlas which supports the world, and doth shoulder up the world, whilst it treads on sin and sinners. Upon a serious view taken of providence on this wise displayed, we may say as they said of old, "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord he is the God," 1Ki 18:39. *Thomas Crane.*

**Verse 3.** We can imagine a monarch, and especially an eastern monarch, in the plenitude of his power, and the arrogance of his pride, as he casts his haughty glance over the ensign of his might, saying to himself, "I bear up the pillars of the earth." But one could never imagine such a thought arising in the heart, or proceeding from the lips of David or Hezekiah. I know not who of the sons of Adam, frail and feeble at their best estate, could have ever said, *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it.* I know of none but him who said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, "and who, as he said these words, ascended up into heaven to exercise that sovereignty, and repair that mighty ruin which had been wrought on earth when Satan triumphed in Paradise. *Barton Bouchier.*

**Verse 4. Fools.** The ungodly are spiritual fools. If one had a child very beautiful, yet if he were a fool, the parent would have little joy in him. The Scripture hath dressed the sinner in a fool's coat: and let me tell you, better be a fool void of reason, than a fool void of grace: this is the devil's fool. Pr 14:9. Is not he a fool who refuseth a rich portion? God offers Christ and salvation, but the sinner refuseth this portion: "Israel would none of me." Ps 81:11. Is not he a fool who prefers an annuity before an inheritance? Is not he a fool who tends his mortal part, and neglects his angelical part? As if one should paint the wall of his house, and let the timber rot. Is not he a fool who will feed the devil with his soul? As that emperor who fed his lion with a pheasant. Is not he a fool who lays a snare for himself? Pr 1:18. Who consults his own shame? Hab 2:10. Who loves death? Pr 8:36. *Thomas Watson.*

**Verse 5. Horn.** The word *horn* was used in the Hebrew metaphorically to express either *honour*, as Ps 112:9 132:18, etc.; or *strength*, Mic 4:13, "I will make thine horn iron." De 33:17, etc. To humble and cast down was often represented by the figure of breaking or cutting off the horn, as here (Ps 75:10). La 2:3, "Cut off all the horn of Israel." To exalt the horn of any one was to bestow honour and dignity upon him; so also, to make it bud. Ps 132:17 89:18 Eze 29:21. Here, *to lift up the horn* betokens presumption. It was also somewhat later a symbol for kingdom, Zec 1:18, and Daniel. "*Four Friends.*"

**Verse 5. Speak not with a stiff neck.** Mr. Bruce has observed that the Abyssinian kings have a *horn* on their *diadem*; and that the keeping it erect, or in a projecting form, makes them appear as if they had a *stiff neck*; and refers to this passage for the antiquity of the usage, and the *appearance* also. *Adam Clarke.*

**Verse 6. For promotion cometh neither from the east,** etc. The word *promotion* here is used in a very expressive way; it means the *desire of self advancement*, Myrh (*harim*), and would teach us that all our inward schemes, and outward plans, cannot gain for us advancement, unless based upon the fear and love of God; we look forward to improve our circumstances, like to the ascending of a mountain, and nerve ourselves to the effort of ascent, fondly thinking that no eye watches our efforts;

but as "shame is the promotion of fools, "so disappointment is often the return of rashness... From the east promotion doth not come; the word east here is very expressive, *auwmm (mimmotza)*, the rising of the sun, the outgoing of light, the dawning of the day, and the manifesting or revealing of God. We look around; and in the early dawning of youth, with high hopes, mental energies, and perhaps superior talents, anticipate victory over our compeers, and a course of worldly success and prosperity; but alas! how often are all these hopes blighted and a succession of reverses humbles our spirits. Promotion cometh not from the west. The original is *bremmw (umimmagnarab)* and it means duskiness, darkness, and the setting sun,—hence the west. When the clouds of years press upon us, and darkened shadows overtake us in various ways, such as loss of dear and early friends, the buoyancy of youth gone by, hopes softened down to personal ease, and the power of the constitution reduced; then God often wills that promotion shall not come. We now approach to the last point from whence promotion cometh not, that is from the south, *rbrm (mid bar)* a waste place, the Arabian desert; hence the south. In dry and solitary places like the sandy desert little advancement can be looked for; like the human intellect, unless cultivated and improved by care and education it is barren as the desert to all holy feelings and improvement, the natural passions like sand choke up every patch susceptible of cultivation, and close up all the avenues to thought and devotion. A godless man is like the Arabian desert, of no profit to himself or his neighbours; like ever shifting sands being tossed to and fro by his own wayward passions; heated with the suns of turbulence, self will, and recklessness, he is a desert, a waste where God will not vouchsafe the light of his countenance for promotion. Like the disobedient Jews of old, Ps 78:49, we may speak of this man saying, "How oft did he provoke him in the wilderness and grieve him in the desert!" Let us then cultivate the higher part of our being, and then we may produce fruit unto holiness; let us not wreck so noble a ship as the soul by careless steering and neglect, but trim its sails with early good instruction, and then may we arrive at the haven where we would be. Having now illustrated the three points mentioned in our text, let us turn to the one (*the north*) where promotion or advancement may be looked for. Coldness is emblematical of purity, and coldness is an attribute of the north. The pure in heart shall see God. God is the northern light that gleams over the stillness of life's night. "He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes; he casteth forth his ice like morsels." Be it ours to be humbly dependent upon God; for whatever station he may choose to keep us in, godliness alone will prove our promotion and true riches. If our anxieties are directed toward pleasing him, then shall we prosper, and he will shew us "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and the Lamb." (Re 22:1.) *Condensed from a Sermon by Gregory Bateman, preached March 16th, 1862, on his entering upon the Vicarage of Ulrome.*

**Verse 6.** *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.* Here are three of the four winds specified, and it is said, "promotion" comes from neither of them. But why is it

not also said that promotion comes not from the *north*? that's the question. I answer;—it were answer enough to say, that we ought not to put questions curiously about such things; it should satisfy us that the Spirit of God is pleased to say it is so, and no more. Yet some tell us, the reason why it is not said promotion cometh not from the *north*, is because indeed it cometh out of the north, which, say they, is intimated in the Hebrew word for the *north*, which signifies *hidden* or *secret*. Promotion comes not from the east, nor west, nor south, but from the *north*. It comes from the north in a figure or mystery, that is, it comes from some hidden providence, or secret hand, which many take no more notice of than we do of the furthest part of the *north*. God promotes many in this world to power, and sends them great prosperity, we see not how or which way: the causes and contrivances of it are hidden close, and in the breast of God. This also is a truth; in that sense we may say, "Fair weather cometh from the *north*." Promotion is visible, but the manner of it is a secret; we see not the causes for which, nor the ways in which it cometh. It is enough to touch these niceties, and to touch them can do no hurt, while the matter arising from them hath the clear consent of, and is harmonious with other plain places of Scripture. *Joseph Caryl*.

**Verse 6.** *Promotion*; or, *lifting up*. The word is evidently an emphatic word in the Psalm; it is the same which occurs in verses four and five, and again in verse seven and verse ten. I have, therefore, given the same rendering of it throughout. The rendering of the authorized version *promotion*, besides losing sight of the manifestly designed repetition of the same word, is peculiarly unfortunate in conveying a wrong idea. *Lifting up*, in its Hebrew sense, does not mean *promotion*, as we commonly understand it, but deliverance from trouble, safety, victory. The image, in particular, of lifting up the head or the horn (the last borrowed from wild beasts, such as buffaloes, etc., in whom the horn is the symbol of strength), denotes courage, strength, and victory over enemies. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

**Verse 6.** *Nor from the south*. "From the wilderness, "the great wilderness lying in that direction. Three quarters are mentioned, the north only being omitted. This may be accounted for, supposing the Psalm to refer to Sennacherib, by the fact that the Assyrian army approached from the north; and therefore it would be natural to look in all directions but that for assistance to repel the invader. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

**Verses 6-7.** "I thought to promote thee to great honour, "said the king of Moab to Balaam; and yet that promotion ended in a dishonoured and a bloody death. I have often thought of many of the Lord's servants on earth, so superciliously passed by and passed over in man's catalogue of worthies, with what glad and grateful surprise they will at length receive that promotion denied on earth, when their own Master shall say to them, "Friend, come up higher; "and then, as they sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, shall they have honour of them that sit at meat with them. *Barton Bouchier*.

**Verses 6-10.** The rise and fall of nations and empires are in this Psalm ascribed to God. He exalts

one and puts down another at his pleasure. In this he generally uses instrumentality, but that instrumentality is always rendered effectual by his own agency. When nations or individuals are prosperous, and glorious, and powerful, they usually ascribe all to themselves or to fortune. But it is God who has raised them to eminence. When they boast he can humble them. In these verses God is considered as the governor of the world, punishing the wicked, and pouring out judgment on his enemies. The calamities of war, pestilence, and famine, are all ministers of providence to execute wrath. *Alexander Carson.*

**Verse 7.**

"Here he exalts neglected worms  
To sceptres and a crown;  
Anon the following page he turns,  
And treads the monarch down." —*Isaac Watts.*

---

**HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER**

**Verse 1.** The unceasing thanksgiving of the church, her grand cause for adoration: the nearness of her God, and the evident proof thereof in the displays of his power.

**Verse 1.**

1. Do we give thanks?
2. We do give thanks.
3. What thanks do we give.?
4. When do we give thanks?
5. Let us give thanks again.

Good resolutions commendable, how they should be made, strengthened, and performed.

**Verse 3.** The Lord the stay of his people under the worst circumstances.

**Verse 3.** Teacheth us that no disorder or confusion should hinder us from doing that which God requireth of us; nay, rather, the more things are out of order the more readily should we labour to redress them. *Thomas Wilcocks.*

**Verse 4.**

1. Who spoke to them? *I.*
2. Who were they? *Fools, wicked.*
3. What did you say?
4. What was the good of it? Or, Rebuke of sin, a duty.

**Verse 4.** The unhallowed trio:—wickedness, folly, pride.

**Verse 5.** Arguments against pride in heart, appearance, and speech.

**Verses 6-7.** The changes of providence not the tricks of fortune.

**Verse 7.** God acts as a judge and not arbitrarily in his providential arrangements.

**Verse 8.** *In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, etc.*

1. As to matter of *preparation*, consider it so, and thus it is *in the hand of the Lord*.

2. By way of *qualification*: it is he that tempers it; it was *full of mixture*.

3. By way of *distribution*, as giving to every one his share and portion in it. *Thomas Horton*.

**Verse 8.** The cup of wrath. Where it is, what it is, how full it is, who brings it, who must drink it.

**Verse 8.** *Full of mixture*. Wrath of God, remorse, memory of lost joy, fear of future, recriminations, despair, shame, etc., all these are ingredients of the mingled cup.

**Verse 8.** (*last clause*).

1. "The dregs" of the cup: the wrath of wrath, the gall of bitterness.

2. The dregs of the people: "all wicked."

**Verse 9.** Our life work: to declare and to sing.