

《The Treasury of David (Vol. 3)》 (C.H. Spurgeon)

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Psalm 31

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TITLE. To the Chief Musician—a Psalm of David. The dedication to the chief musician proves that this song of mingled measures and alternate strains of grief and woe was intended for public singing, and thus a deathblow is given to the notion that nothing but praise should be sung. Perhaps the Psalms, thus marked, might have been set aside as too mournful for temple worship, if special care had not been taken by the Holy Spirit to indicate them as being designed for the public edification of the Lord's people. May there not also be in Psalms thus designated a peculiar distinct reference to the Lord Jesus? He certainly manifests himself very clearly in the twenty-second, which bears this title; and in the one before us we plainly hear his dying voice in the fifth verse. Jesus is chief everywhere, and in all the holy songs of his saints he is the chief musician. The surmises that Jeremiah penned this Psalm need no other answer than the fact that it is "*a Psalm of David.*"

SUBJECT. The psalmist in dire affliction appeals to his God for help with much confidence and holy importunity, and ere long finds his mind so strengthened that he magnifies the Lord for his great goodness. Some have thought that the occasion in his troubled life which led to this Psalm, was the treachery of the men of Keilah, and we have felt much inclined to this conjecture; but after reflection it seems to us that its very mournful tone, and its allusion to his iniquity demand a later date, and it may

be more satisfactory to illustrate it by the period when Absalom had rebelled, and his courtiers were fled from him, while lying lips spread a thousand malicious rumours against him. It is perhaps quite as well that we have no settled season mentioned, or we might have been so busy in applying it to David's case as to forget its suitability to our own.

DIVISION. There are no great lines of demarcation; throughout the strain undulates, falling into valleys of mourning, and rising with hills of confidence. However, we may for convenience arrange it thus: David testifying his confidence in God pleads for help, Ps 31:1-6; expresses gratitude for mercies received, Ps 31:7-8; particularly describes his case, Ps 31:9-13; vehemently pleads for deliverance, Ps 31:14-18; confidently and thankfully expects a blessing, Ps 31:19-22; and closes by showing the bearing of his case upon all the people of God.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.* Nowhere else do I fly for shelter, let the tempest howl as it may. The psalmist has one refuge, and that the best one. He casts out the great sheet anchor of his faith in the time of storm. Let other things be doubtful, yet the fact that he relies on Jehovah, David lays down most positively; and he begins with it, lest by stress of trial he should afterwards forget it. This avowal of faith is the fulcrum by means of which he labours to uplift and remove his trouble; he dwells upon it as a comfort to himself and a plea with God. No mention is made of merit, but faith relies upon divine favour and faithfulness, and upon that alone. *Let me never be ashamed.* How can the Lord permit the man to be ultimately put to shame who depends alone upon him? This would not be dealing like a God of truth and grace. It would bring dishonour upon God himself if faith were not in the end rewarded. It will be an ill day indeed for religion when trust in God brings no consolation and no assistance. *Deliver me in thy righteousness.* Thou art not unjust to desert a trustful soul, or to break thy promises; thou wilt vindicate the righteousness of thy mysterious providence, and give me joyful deliverance. Faith dares to look even to the sword of justice for protection: while God is righteous, faith will not be left to be proved futile and fanatical. How sweetly the declaration of faith in this first verse sounds, if we read it at the foot of the cross, beholding the promise of the Father as yea and amen through the Son; viewing God with faith's eye as he stands revealed in Jesus crucified.

Verse 2. *Bow down thine ear to me.* Condescend to my low estate; listen to me attentively as one who would hear every word. Heaven with its transcendent glories of harmony might well engross the divine ear, but yet the Lord has an hourly regard to the weakest moanings of his poorest people. *Deliver me speedily.* We must not set times or seasons, yet in submission we may ask for swift as well as sure mercy. God's mercies are often enhanced in value by the timely haste which he uses in their bestowal; if they came late they might be too late—but he rides upon a cherub, and flies upon the wings of the wind when he intends the good of his beloved. *Be thou my strong rock.* Be my

Engedi, my Adullam; my immutable, immovable, impregnable, sublime, resort. *For an house of defence to save me*, wherein I may *dwell* in safety, not merely running to thee for temporary shelter, but abiding in thee for eternal salvation. How very simply does the good man pray, and yet with what weight of meaning! he uses no ornamental flourishes, he is too deeply in earnest to be otherwise than plain: it were well if all who engage in public prayer would observe the same rule.

Verse 3. *For thou art my rock and my fortress.* Here the tried soul avows yet again its full confidence in God. Faith's repetitions are not vain. The avowal of our reliance upon God in times of adversity is a principle method of glorifying him. Active service is good, but the passive confidence of faith is not one jot less esteemed in the sight of God. The words before us appear to embrace and fasten upon the Lord with a fiducial grip which is not to be relaxed. The two personal pronouns, like sure nails, lay hold upon the faithfulness of the Lord. O for grace to have our heart fixed in firm unstaggering belief in God! The figure of a rock and a fortress may be illustrated to us in these times by the vast fortress of Gibraltar, often besieged by our enemies, but never wrested from us: ancient strongholds, though far from impregnable by our modes of warfare, were equally important in those remoter ages—when in the mountain fastnesses, feeble bands felt themselves to be secure. Note the singular fact that David asked the Lord to be his rock Ps 31:2 because he was his rock; and learn from it that we may pray to enjoy in experience what we grasp by faith. Faith is the foundation of prayer. *Therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.* The psalmist argues like a logician with his fors and therefore. Since I do sincerely trust thee, saith he, O my God, be my director. To lead and to guide are two things very like each other, but patient thought will detect different shades of meaning, especially as the last may mean *provide for me*. The double word indicates an urgent need—we require double direction, for we are fools, and the way is rough. Lead me as a soldier, guide me as a traveller! lead me as a babe, guide me as a man; lead me when thou art with me, but guide me even if thou be absent; lead me by thy hand, guide me by thy word. The argument used is one which is fetched from the armoury of free grace: not for my own sake, but *for thy name's sake* guide me. Our appeal is not to any fancied virtue in our own names, but to the glorious goodness and graciousness which shines resplendent in the character of Israel's God. It is not possible that the Lord should suffer his own honour to be tarnished, but this would certainly be the case if those who trusted him should perish. This was Moses' plea, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?"

Verse 4. *Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me.* The enemies of David were cunning as well as mighty; if they could not conquer him by power, they would capture him by craft. Our own spiritual foes are of the same order—they are of the serpent's brood, and seek to ensnare us by their guile. The prayer before us supposes the possibility of the believer being caught like a bird; and, indeed, we are so foolish that this often happens. So deftly does the fowler do his work that simple ones are soon surrounded by it. The text asks that even out of the meshes of the net the captive one

may be delivered; and this is a proper petition, and one which can be granted; from between the jaws of the lion and out of the belly of hell can eternal love rescue the saint. It may need a sharp *pull* to save a soul from the net of temptation, and a mighty pull to extricate a man from the snares of malicious cunning, but the Lord is equal to every emergency, and the most skilfully placed nets of the hunter shall never be able to hold his chosen ones. Woe unto those who are so clever at net laying: they who tempt others shall be destroyed themselves. Villains who lay traps in secret shall be punished in public. *For thou art my strength.* What an inexpressible sweetness is to be found in these few words! How joyfully may we enter upon labours, and how cheerfully may we endure sufferings when we can lay hold upon celestial power. Divine power will rend asunder all the toils of the foe, confound their politics and frustrate their knavish tricks; he is a happy man who has such matchless might engaged upon his side. Our own strength would be of little service when embarrassed in the nets of base cunning, but the Lord's strength is ever available; we have but to invoke it, and we shall find it near at hand. If by faith we are depending alone upon the strength of the strong God of Israel, we may use our holy reliance as a plea in supplication.

Verse 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* These living words of David were our Lord's dying words, and have been frequently used by holy men in their hour of departure. Be assured that they are good, choice, wise, and solemn words; we may use them now and in the last tremendous hour. Observe, the object of the good man's solicitude in life and death is not his body or his estate, but his spirit; this is his jewel, his secret treasure; if this be safe, all is well. See what he does with his pearl! He commits it to the hand of his God; it came from him, it is his own, he has aforetime sustained it, he is able to keep it, and it is most fit that he should receive it. All things are safe in Jehovah's hands; what we entrust to the Lord will be secure, both now and in that day of days towards which we are hastening. Without reservation the good man yields himself to his heavenly Father's hand; it is enough for him to be there; it is peaceful living and glorious dying to repose in the care of heaven. At all times we should commit and continue to commit our all to Jesus' sacred care, then, though life may hang on a thread, and adversities may multiply as the sands of the sea, our soul shall dwell at ease, and delight itself in quiet resting places. *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* Redemption is a solid base for confidence. David had not known Calvary as we have done, but temporal redemption cheered him; and shall not eternal redemption yet more sweetly console us? Past deliverances are strong pleas for present assistance. What the Lord has done he will do again, for he changes not. He is a God of veracity, faithful to his promises, and gracious to his saints; he will not turn away from his people.

Verse 6. *I have hated them that regard lying vanities.* Those who will not lean upon the true arm of strength, are sure to make to themselves vain confidences. Man must have a god, and if he will not adore the only living and true God, he makes a fool of himself, and pays superstitious regard to a lie,

and waits with anxious hope upon a base delusion. Those who did this were none of David's friends; he had a constant dislike to them: the verb includes the present as well as the past tense. He hated them for hating God; he would not endure the presence of idolaters; his heart was set against them for their stupidity and wickedness. He had no patience with their superstitious observances, and calls their idols vanities of emptiness, nothings of nonentity. Small courtesy is more than Romanists and Puseyists deserve for their fooleries. Men who make gods of their riches, their persons, their wits, or anything else, are to be shunned by those whose faith rests upon God in Christ Jesus; and so far from being envied, they are to be pitied as depending upon utter vanities. *But I trust in the Lord.* This might be very unfashionable, but the psalmist dared to be singular. Bad example should not make us less decided for the truth, but the rather in the midst of general defection we should grow the more bold. This adherence to his trust in Jehovah is the great plea employed all along: the troubled one flies into the arms of his God, and ventures everything upon the divine faithfulness.

Verse 7. *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy.* For mercy past he is grateful, and for mercy future, which he believingly anticipates, he is joyful. In our most importunate intercessions, we must find breathing time to bless the Lord: praise is never a hindrance to prayer, but rather a lively refreshment therein. It is delightful at intervals to hear the notes of the high sounding cymbals when the dolorous sackbut rules the hour. Those two words, *glad* and *rejoice*, are an instructive reduplication, we need not stint ourselves in our holy triumph; this wine we may drink in bowls without fear of excess. *For thou hast considered my trouble.* Thou hast seen it, weighed it, directed it, fixed a bound to it, and in all ways made it a matter of tender consideration. A man's consideration means the full exercise of his mind; what must God's consideration be? *Thou hast known my soul in adversities.* God owns his saints when others are ashamed to acknowledge them; he never refuses to know his friends. He thinks not the worse of them for their rags and tatters. He does not misjudge them and cast them off when their faces are lean with sickness, or their hearts heavy with despondency. Moreover, the Lord Jesus knows us in our pangs in a peculiar sense, by having a deep sympathy towards us in them all; when no others can enter into our griefs, from want of understanding them experimentally, Jesus dives into the lowest depths with us, comprehending the direst of our woes, because he has felt the same. Jesus is a physician who knows every case; nothing is new to him. When we are so bewildered as not to know our own state, he knows us altogether. He has known us and will know us: O for grace to know more of him! "Man, know thyself," is a good philosophic precept, but "Man, thou art known of God," is a superlative consolation. *Adversities* in the plural—"Many are the afflictions of the righteous."

Verse 8. *And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy.* To be shut up in one's hand is to be delivered over absolutely to his power; now, the believer is not in the hand of death or the devil, much less is he in the power of man. The enemy may get a temporary advantage over us, but we are like

men in prison with the door open; God will not let us be shut up, he always provides a way of escape. *Thou hast set my feet in a large room.* Blessed be God for liberty: civil liberty is valuable, religious liberty is precious, spiritual liberty is priceless. In all troubles we may praise God if these are left. Many saints have had their greatest enlargements of soul when their affairs have been in the greatest straits. Their souls have been in a large room when their bodies have been lying in Bonner's coal hole, or in some other narrow dungeon. Grace has been equal to every emergency; and more than this, it has made the emergency an opportunity for displaying itself.

Verse 9. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble.* Now, the man of God comes to a particular and minute description of his sorrowful case. He unbosoms his heart, lays bare his wounds, and expresses his inward desolation. This first sentence pithily comprehends all that follows, it is the text for his lamenting discourse. Misery moves mercy—no more reasoning is needed. "Have mercy" is the prayer; the argument is as prevalent as it is plain and personal, "I am in trouble." *Mine eye is consumed with grief.* Dim and sunken eyes are plain indicators of failing health. Tears draw their salt from our strength, and floods of them are very apt to consume the source from which they spring. God would have us tell him the symptoms of our disease, not for his information, but to show our sense of need. *Yea, my soul and my belly (or body).* Soul and body are so intimately united, that one cannot decline without the other feeling it. We, in these days, are not strangers to the double sinking which David describes; we have been faint with physical suffering, and distracted with mental distress: when two such seas meet, it is well for us that the Pilot at the helm is at home in the midst of the water floods, and makes storms to become the triumph of his art.

Verse 10. *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing.* It had become his daily occupation to mourn; he spent all his days in the dungeon of distress. The sap and essence of his existence was being consumed, as a candle is wasted while it burns. His adversities were shortening his days, and digging for him an early grave. Grief is a sad market to spend all our wealth of life in, but a far more profitable trade may be driven there than in Vanity Fair; it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting. Black is good wear. The salt of tears is a healthy medicine. Better spend our years in sighing than in sinning. The two members of the sentence before us convey the same idea; but there are no idle words in Scripture, the reduplication is the fitting expression of fervency and importunity. *My strength faileth because of mine iniquity.* David sees to the bottom of his sorrow, and detects sin lurking there. It is profitable trouble which leads us to trouble ourselves about our iniquity. Was this the psalmist's foulest crime which now gnawed at his heart, and devoured his strength? Very probably it was so. Sinful morsels, though sweet in the mouth, turn out to be poison in the bowels: if we wantonly give a portion of our strength to sin, it will by and by take the remainder from us. We lose both physical, mental, moral, and spiritual vigour by iniquity. *And my bones are consumed.* Weakness penetrated the innermost parts of his system, the firmest parts

of his frame felt the general decrepitude. A man is in a piteous plight when he comes to this.

Verse 11. *I was a reproach among all mine enemies.* They were pleased to have something to throw at me; my mournful estate was music to them, because they maliciously interpreted it to be a judgment from heaven upon me. Reproach is little thought of by those who are not called to endure it, but he who passes under its lash knows how deep it wounds. The best of men may have the bitterest foes, and be subject to the most cruel taunts. *But especially among my neighbours.* Those who are nearest can stab the sharpest. We feel most the slights of those who should have shown us sympathy. Perhaps David's friends feared to be identified with his declining fortunes, and therefore turned against him in order to win the mercy if not the favour of his opponents. Self interest rules the most of men: ties the most sacred are soon snapped by its influence, and actions of the utmost meanness are perpetrated without scruple. *And a fear to mine acquaintance.* The more intimate before, the more distant did they become. Our Lord was denied by Peter, betrayed by Judas, and forsaken by all in the hour of his utmost need. All the herd turn against a wounded deer. The milk of human kindness curdles when a despised believer is the victim of slanderous accusations. *They that did see me without fled from me.* Afraid to be seen in the company of a man so thoroughly despised, those who once courted his society hastened from him as though he had been infected with the plague. How villainous a thing is slander which can thus make an eminent saint, once the admiration of his people, to become the general butt, the universal aversion of mankind! To what extremities of dishonour may innocence be reduced!

Verse 12. *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind.* All David's youthful prowess was now gone from remembrance; he had been the saviour of his country, but his services were buried in oblivion. Men soon forget the deepest obligations; popularity is evanescent to the last degree: he who is in every one's mouth today may be forgotten by all tomorrow. A man had better be dead than be smothered in slander. Of the dead we say nothing but good, but in the psalmist's case they said nothing but evil. We must not look for the reward of philanthropy this side of heaven, for men pay their best servants but sorry wages, and turn them out of doors when no more is to be got out of them. *I am like a broken vessel,* a thing useless, done for, worthless, cast aside, forgotten. Sad condition for a king! Let us see herein the portrait of the King of kings in his humiliation, when he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.

Verse 13. *For I have heard the slander of many.* One slanderous viper is death to all comfort—what must be the venom of a whole brood? What the ear does not hear the heart does not rue; but in David's case the accusing voices were loud enough to break in upon his quiet—foul mouths had grown so bold, that they poured forth their falsehoods in the presence of their victim. Shimei was but one of a class, and his cry of "Go up, thou bloody man," was but the common speech of thousands of the sons of Belial. All Beelzebub's pack of hounds may be in full cry against a man, and yet he may

be the Lord's anointed. *Fear was on every side.* He was encircled with fearful suggestions, threatenings, remembrances, and forebodings; no quarter was clear from incessant attack. *While they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.* The ungodly act in concert in their onslaughts upon the excellent of the earth: it is to be wondered at that sinners should often be better agreed than saints, and generally set about their wicked work with much more care and foresight than the righteous exhibit in holy enterprises. Observe the cruelty of a good man's foes! they will be content with nothing less than his blood—for this they plot and scheme. Better fall into the power of a lion than under the will of malicious persecutors, for the beast may spare its prey if it be fed to the full, but malice is unrelenting and cruel as a wolf. Of all fiends the most cruel is envy. How sorely was the psalmist bestead when the poisoned arrows of a thousand bows were all aimed at his life! Yet in all this his faith did not fail him, nor did his God forsake him. Here is encouragement for us.

Verses 14-18. In this section of the Psalm he renews his prayers, urging the same pleas as at first: earnest wrestlers attempt over and over again the same means of gaining their point.

Verse 14. *But I trusted in thee, O Lord.* Notwithstanding all afflicting circumstances, David's faith maintained its hold, and was not turned aside from its object. What a blessed saving clause is this! So long as our faith, which is our shield, is safe, the battle may go hard, but its ultimate result is no matter of question; if that could be torn from us, we should be as surely slain as were Saul and Jonathan upon the high places of the field. *I said, Thou art my God.* He proclaimed aloud his determined allegiance to Jehovah. He was no fair weather believer, he could hold to his faith in a sharp frost, and wrap it about him as a garment fitted to keep out all the ills of time. He who can say what David did need not envy Cicero his eloquence: "Thou art my God," has more sweetness in it than any other utterance which human speech can frame. Note that this adhesive faith is here mentioned as an argument with God to honour his own promise by sending a speedy deliverance.

Verse 15. *My times are in thy hand.* The sovereign arbiter of destiny holds in his own power all the issues of our life; we are not waifs and strays upon the ocean of fate, but are steered by infinite wisdom towards our desired haven. Providence is a soft pillow for anxious heads, an anodyne for care, a grave for despair. *Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.* It is lawful to desire escape from persecution if it be the Lord's will; and when this may not be granted us in the form which we desire, sustaining grace will give us deliverance in another form, by enabling us to laugh to scorn all the fury of the foe.

Verse 16. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.* Give me the sunshine of heaven in my soul, and I will defy the tempests of earth. Permit me to enjoy a sense of thy favour, O Lord, and a consciousness that thou art pleased with my manner of life, and all men may frown and slander as they will. It is always enough for a servant if he pleases his master; others may be dissatisfied, but he is not their servant, they do not pay him his wages, and their opinions have no weight with him. *Save*

me for thy mercies' sake. The good man knows no plea but mercy; whoever might urge legal pleas David never dreamed of it.

Verse 17. *Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee.* Put not my prayers to the blush! Do not fill profane mouths with jeers at my confidence in my God. *Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.* Cause them to their amazement to see my wrongs righted and their own pride horribly confounded. A milder spirit rules our prayers under the gentle reign of the Prince of Peace, and, therefore, we can only use such words as these in their prophetic sense, knowing as we do full well, that shame and the silence of death are the best portion that ungodly sinners can expect. That which they desired for despised believers shall come upon themselves by a decree of retributive justice, at which they cannot cavil—"As he loved mischief, so let it come upon him."

Verse 18. *Let the lying lips be put to silence.* A right good and Christian prayer; who but a bad man would give liars more license than need be? May God silence them either by leading them to repentance, by putting them to thorough shame, or by placing them in positions where what they may say will stand for nothing. *Which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.* The sin of slanderers lies partly in the matter of their speech; "they speak grievous things; "things cutting deep into the feelings of good men, and wounding them sorely in that tender place—their reputations. The sin is further enhanced by the manner of their speech; they speak proudly and contemptuously; they talk as if they themselves were the cream of society, and the righteous the mere scum of vulgarity. Proud thoughts of self are generally attended by debasing estimates of others. The more room we take up ourselves, the less we can afford our neighbours. What wickedness it is that unworthy characters should always be the loudest in railing at good men! They have no power to appreciate moral worth of which they are utterly destitute, and yet they have the effrontery to mount the judgment seat, and judge the men compared with whom they are as so much chaff. Holy indignation may well prompt us to desire anything which may rid the world of such unbearable impertinence and detestable arrogance.

Verses 19-22. Being full of faith, the psalmist gives glory to God for the mercy which he is assured will be his position.

Verse 19. *Oh how great is thy goodness.* Is it not singular to find such a joyful sentence in connection with so much sorrow? Truly the life of faith is a miracle. When faith led David to his God, she set him singing at once. He does not tell us how great was God's goodness, for he could not; there are no measures which can set forth the immeasurable goodness of Jehovah, who is goodness itself. Holy amazement uses interjections where adjectives utterly fail. Notes of exclamation suit us when words of explanation are of no avail. If we cannot measure we can marvel; and though we may not calculate with accuracy, we can adore with fervency. *Which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.* The

psalmist in contemplation divides goodness into two parts, that which is in store and that which is wrought out. The Lord has laid up in reserve for his people supplies beyond all count. In the treasury of the covenant, in the field of redemption, in the caskets of the promises, in the granaries of providence, the Lord has provided for all the needs which can possibly occur to his chosen. We ought often to consider the laid up goodness of God which has not yet been distributed to the chosen, but is already provided for them: if we are much in such contemplations, we shall be led to feel devout gratitude, such as glowed in the heart of David. *Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men.* Heavenly mercy is not all hidden in the storehouse; in a thousand ways it has already revealed itself on behalf of those who are bold to avow their confidence in God; before their fellow men this goodness of the Lord has been displayed, that a faithless generation might stand rebuked. Overwhelming are the proofs of the Lord's favour to believers, history teems with amazing instances, and our own lives are full of prodigies of grace. We serve a good Master. Faith receives a large reward even now, but looks for her full inheritance in the future. Who would not desire to take his lot with the servants of a Master whose boundless love fills all holy minds with astonishment?

Verse 20. *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man.* Pride is a barbed weapon: the proud man's contumely is iron which entereth into the soul; but those who trust in God, are safely housed in the Holy of holies, the innermost court, into which no man may dare intrude; here in the secret dwelling place of God the mind of the saint rests in peace, which the foot of pride cannot disturb. Dwellers at the foot of the cross of Christ grow callous to the sneers of the haughty. The wounds of Jesus distil a balsam which heals all the scars which the jagged weapons of contempt can inflict upon us; in fact, when armed with the same mind which was in Christ Jesus, the heart is invulnerable to all the darts of pride. *Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.* Tongues are more to be dreaded than beasts of prey—and when they strive, it is as though a whole pack of wolves were let loose; but the believer is secure even in this peril, for the royal pavilion of the King of kings shall afford him quiet shelter and serene security. The secret tabernacle of sacrifice, and the royal pavilion of sovereignty afford a double security to the Lord's people in their worst distresses. Observe the immediate action of God, "*Thou shalt hide,*" "*Thou shalt keep,*" the Lord himself is personally present for the rescue of his afflicted.

Verse 21. *Blessed be the Lord.* When the Lord blesses us we cannot do less than bless him in return. *For he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.* Was this in Mahanaim, where the Lord gave him victory over the hosts of Absalom? Or did he refer to Rabbath of Ammon, where he gained signal triumphs? Or, best of all, was Jerusalem the strong city where he most experienced the astonishing kindness of his God? Gratitude is never short of subjects; her Ebenezers stand so close together as to wall up her path to heaven on both sides. Whether in cities or in hamlets our blessed Lord has revealed himself to us, we shall never forget the hallowed spots: the lonely mount of

Hermon, or the village of Emmaus, or the rock of Patmos, or the wilderness of Horeb, are all alike renowned when God manifests himself to us in robes of love.

Verse 22. Confession of faults is always proper; and when we reflect upon the goodness of God, we ought to be reminded of our own errors and offences. *For I said in my haste.* We generally speak amiss when we are in a hurry. Hasty words are but for a moment on the tongue, but they often lie for years on the conscience. *I am cut off from before thine eyes.* This was an unworthy speech; but unbelief will have a corner in the heart of the firmest believer, and out of that corner it will vent many spiteful things against the Lord if the course of providence be not quite so smooth as nature might desire. No saint ever was, or ever could be, cut off from before the eyes of God, and yet no doubt many have thought so, and more than one has said so. For ever be such dark suspicions banished from our minds. *Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.* What a mercy that if we believe not, yet God abideth faithful, hearing prayer even when we are labouring under doubts which dishonour his name. If we consider the hindrances in the way of our prayers, and the poor way in which we present them, it is a wonder of wonders that they ever prevail with heaven.

Verse 23. *O love the Lord, all ye his saints.* A most affecting exhortation, showing clearly the deep love of the writer to his God: there is the more beauty in the expression, because it reveals love toward a smiting God, love which many waters could not quench. To bless him who gives is easy, but to cling to him who takes away is a work of grace. All the saints are benefited by the sanctified miseries of one, if they are led by earnest exhortations to love their Lord the better. If saints do not love the Lord, who will? Love is the universal debt of all the saved family: who would wish to be exonerated from its payment? Reasons for love are given, for believing love is not blind. *For the Lord preserveth the faithful.* They have to bide their time, but the recompense comes at last, and meanwhile all the cruel malice of their enemies cannot destroy them. *And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.* This also is cause for gratitude: pride is so detestable in its acts that he who shall mete out to it its righteous due, deserves the love of all holy minds.

Verse 24. *Be of good courage.* Keep up your spirit, let no craven thoughts blanch your cheek. Fear weakens, courage strengthens. Victory waits upon the banners of the brave. *And he shall strengthen your heart.* Power from on high shall be given in the most effectual manner by administering force to the fountain of vitality. So far from leaving us, the Lord will draw very near to us in our adversity, and put his own power into us. *All ye that hope in the Lord.* Every one of you, lift up your heads and sing for joy of heart. God is faithful, and does not fail even his little children who do but *hope*, wherefore then should we be afraid?

Verse 1. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.* Let us therefore shun mistrust; doubt is death, trust alone is life. Let us make sure that we trust the Lord, and never take our trust on trust. *Let me never be ashamed.* If David prays against being ashamed, let us strive against it. Lovers of Jesus should be ashamed of being ashamed. *C. H. S.*

Verse 1. *Deliver me in thy righteousness.* For supporting thy faith, mark well whereon it may safely rest; even upon God's *righteousness*, as well as upon his mercy. On this ground did the apostle in faith expect the crown of righteousness 2Ti 4:7-8, because the Lord from whom he expected it is a righteous judge; and the psalmist is bold to appeal to the righteousness of God. Ps 35:24. For we may be well assured that what God's goodness, grace, and mercy moved him to promise, his truth, his faithfulness, and righteousness will move him to perform. *William Gouge.*

Verses 1-3.

Shadows are faithless, and the rocks are false;
No trust in brass, no trust in marble walls;
Poor cots are even as safe as princes' halls.
Great God! there is no safety here below;
Thou art my fortress, thou that seemest my foe,
It is thou that strik'st the stroke, must guard the blow.
Thou art my God, by thee I fall or stand;
Thy grace hath given me courage to withstand
All tortures, but my conscience and thy hand.
I know thy justice is thyself; I know,
Just God, thy very self is mercy too;
If not to thee, where, whither shall I go?
—*Francis Quarles.*

Verse 2. *Bow down thy ear.* Listen to my complaint. Put thy ear to my lips, that thou mayest hear all that my *feebleness* is capable of uttering. We generally put our ear near to the lips of the sick and dying that we may hear what they say. To this the text appears to allude. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2. *Deliver me speedily.* In praying that he might be delivered *speedily* there is shown the greatness of his danger, as if he had said, All will soon be over with my life, unless God makes haste to help me. *John Calvin.* **Verses 2-3.** Be thou my strong rock, etc. What the Lord is engaged to be unto us by covenant, we may pray and expect to find him in effect. "*Be thou my strong rock,*" saith he, "*for thou art my rock.*" *David Dickson.*

Verse 3. *For thy name's sake.* If merely a creature's honour, the credit of ministers, or the glory of angels were involved, man's salvation would indeed be uncertain. But every step involves the honour of God. We plead for *his name's sake.* If God should begin and not continue, or if he should carry on

but not complete the work, all would admit that it was for some reason that must bring reproach on the Almighty. This can never be. God was self moved to undertake man's salvation. His glorious name makes it certain the top stone shall be laid in glory. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3. *For thy name's sake.* On account of the fame of thy power, thy goodness, thy truth, &c. *Lead me.* As a shepherd an erring sheep, as a leader military bands, or as one leads another ignorant of the way. See Ge 24:27 Ne 9:12-13 Ps 23:3 73:24. Govern my counsels, my affections, and my thoughts. *Martin Geier, 1614-1681.*

Verse 4. *Pull me out of the net: that noted net,* as the Hebrew hath it. *John Trapp.*

Verse 4. *Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me.* By these words, he intimates that his enemies did not only by open force come against him, but by cunning and policy attempted to circumvent him, as when they put him on, as Saul instructed them, to be the king's son-in-law, and to this end set him on to get two hundred foreskins of the Philistines for a dowry, under a pretence of goodwill, seeking his ruin; and when wait also was laid for him to kill him in his house. But he trusted in God, and prayed to be delivered, if there should be any the like enterprise against him hereafter. *John Mayer.*

Verse 4. *For thou art my strength.* Omnipotence cuts the net which policy weaves. When we poor puny things are in the net, God is not. In the old fable the mouse set free the lion, here the lion liberates the mouse. *C. H. S.*

Verse 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* These were the last words of Polycarp, of Bernard, of Huss, of Jerome of Prague, of Luther, of Melancthon, and many others. "Blessed are they," says Luther, "who die not only *for* the Lord, as martyrs, not only *in* the Lord, as all believers, but likewise *with* the Lord, as breathing forth their lives in these words, 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit.'" *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* These words, as they stand in the *Vulgate*, were in the highest credit among our ancestors; by whom they were used on all dangers, difficulties, and in the article of death. *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*, was used by the sick when about to expire, if they were sensible; and if not, the priest said it in their behalf. In *forms of prayer* for sick and dying persons, these words were frequently inserted in Latin, though all the rest of the prayer was English; for it was supposed there was something sovereign in the *language* itself. But let not the abuse of such words hinder their usefulness. For an ejaculation nothing can be better; and when the pious or the tempted with confidence use them, nothing can exceed their effect. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit,* etc. For what are the saints to commit their spirits into the hands of God by Jesus Christ? 1. That they may be safe; *i.e.*, preserved in their passage to heaven, from all the enemies and dangers that may stand in the way. When saints die, the powers of

darkness would, doubtless, if possible, hinder the ascending of their souls to God. As they are cast out of heaven, they are filled with rage to see any out of our world going thither. One thing, therefore, which the saint means in committing his spirit into the hands of God, is, that the precious *depositum* may be kept from all that wish or would attempt its ruin. And they are sure that almighty power belongs to God: and if this is engaged for their preservation, none can pluck them out of his hand. The Redeemer hath spoiled principalities and powers, and proved it by his triumphant ascension to glory; and hath all his and the believer's enemies in a chain, so that they shall be more than conquerors in and through him. Angels, for order's sake, are sent forth to minister to them and be their guard, who will faithfully attend them their charge, till they are brought to the presence of the common Lord of both. "I know," saith the apostle, "whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

2. They commit their soul into the hands of God, that they may be admitted to dwell with him, even in that presence of his where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore: where all evil is excluded, and all good present, to fill their desires, and find them matter of praise to all eternity.

3. They commit their departing spirits into the hands of God, that their bodies may be at length raised and reunited to them, and that so they may enter at last into the blessedness prepared for them that love him...The grounds on which they may do this with comfort, *i.e.*, with lively hopes of being happy for ever, are many. To mention only two:

(a) God's interest in them, and upon the most endearing foundation, that of redemption. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me.* Redeemed me from hell and the wrath to come, by giving thy Son to die for me. Lord, I am not only thy creature, but thy redeemed creature, bought with a price, saith the saint. Redeemed me from the power of my inward corruption, and from love to it, and delight in it; and with my consent hast drawn me to be thine, and thine for ever. *Lord, I am thine, save me unchangeably.*

(b) His known faithfulness. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit, O Lord God of truth.* Into thine hand I commit my spirit, who hast been a *God of truth*, in performing thy promises to all thy people that are gone before me out of this world; and has been so to me hitherto, and, I cannot doubt, wilt continue so to the end. *Daniel Wilcox.*

Verse 5. *Into thine hand.* When those hands fail me, then I am indeed abandoned and miserable! When they sustain and keep me, then am I safe, exalted, strong, and filled with good. Receive me then, O Eternal Father, for the sake of our Lord's merits and words; for he, by his obedience and his death, hath now merited from thee everything which I do not merit of myself. Into thy hands, my Father and my God, I commend my spirit, my soul, my body, my powers, my desires. I offer up to thy hands, all; to them I commit all that I have hitherto been, that thou mayest forgive and restore all; my

wounds, that thou mayest heal them; my blindness, that thou mayest enlighten it; my coldness, that thou mayest inflame it; my wicked and erring way, that thou mayest set me forth in the right path; and all my evils, that thou mayest uproot them all from my soul. I commend and offer up into thy most sacred hands, O my God, what I am, which thou knowest far better than I can know, weak, wretched, wounded, fickle, blind, deaf, dumb, poor, bare of every good, nothing, yea, less than nothing, on account of my many sins, and more miserable than I can either know or express. Do thou, Lord God, receive me and make me to become what he, the divine Lamb, would have me to be. I commend, I offer up, I deliver over into thy divine hands, all my affairs, my cares, my affections, my success, my comforts, my labours, and everything which thou knowest to be coming upon me. Direct all to thy honour and glory; teach me in all to do thy will, and in all to recognise the work of thy divine hands; to seek nothing else, and with this reflection alone to find rest and comfort in everything.

O hands of the Eternal God, who made and still preserve the heavens and earth for my sake, and who made me for yourselves, suffer me not ever to stray from you. In those hands I possess my Lamb, and all I love; in them therefore must I be also, together with him. Together with him, in these loving hands shall I sleep and rest in peace, since he in dying left me hope in them and in their infinite mercies, placed me within them, as my only and my special refuge. Since by these hands I live and am what I am, make me continually to live through them, and in them to die; in them to live in the love of our Lord, and from them only to desire and look for every good; that from them I may at last, together with the Lord, receive the crown. *Fra Thome de Jesu.*

Verse 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* No shadowy form of a dark destiny stands before him at the end of his career, although he must die on the cross, the countenance of his Father shines before him. He does not behold his life melting away into the gloomy floods of mortality. He commends it into the hands of his Father. It is not alone in the general spirit of humanity, that he will continue to live. He will live on in the definite personality of his own spirit, embraced by the special protection and faithfulness of his Father. Thus he does not surrender his life despondingly to death for destruction, but with triumphant consciousness to the Father for resurrection. It was the very centre of his testament: assurance of life; surrender of his life into the hand of a living Father. With loud voice he exclaimed it to the world, which will for ever and ever sink into the heathenish consciousness of death, of the fear of death, of despair of immortality and resurrection, because it for ever and ever allows the consciousness of the personality of God, and of personal union with him, to be obscured and shaken. With the heart of a lion, the dying Christ once more testified of life with an expression which was connected with the word of the Old Testament Psalm, and testified that the Spirit of eternal life was already operative, in prophetic anticipation, in the old covenant. Thus living as ever, he surrendered his life, through death, to the eternally living One. His death was the last and highest fact, the crown of his holy life. *J.P. Lange, D.D., in "The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ." 1864.*

Verse 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* David committed his spirit to God that he might not die, but Christ and all Christians after him, commit their spirit to God, that they may live for ever by death, and after death. This Psalm is thus connected with the twenty-second Psalm. Both of these Psalms were used by Christ on the cross. From the twenty-second he derived those bitter words of anguish, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" From the present Psalm he derived those last words of love and trust which he uttered just before his death. The Psalter was the hymn book and prayer book of Christ. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 6. *I have hated.* Holy men have strong passions, and are not so mincing and charitable towards evil doers as smooth tongued latitudinarians would have them. He who does not hate evil does not love good. There is such a thing as a good hater. *C. H. S*

Verse 6. *They that regard lying vanities.* The Romanists feign miracles of the saints to make them, as they suppose, the more glorious. They say that the house wherein the Virgin Mary was when the angel Gabriel came unto her was, many hundred years after, translated, first, out of Galilee into Dalmatia, above 2,000 miles, and thence over the sea into Italy, where also it removed from one place to another, till at length it found a place where to abide, and many most miraculous cures, they say, were wrought by it, and that the very trees when it came, did bow unto it. Infinite stories they have of this nature, especially in the Legend of Saints, which they call "The Golden Legend," a book so full of gross stuff that Ludovicus Vives, a Papist, but learned and ingenuous, with great indignations cried out, "What can be more abominable than that book?" and he wondered why they should call it "golden," when as he that wrote it was a man "of an iron mouth and of a leaden heart." And Melchior Canus, a Romish bishop, passed the same censure upon that book, and complains (as Vives also had done before him), that Laertius wrote the lives of philosophers, and Suetonius the lives of the Caesars, more sincerely than some did the lives of the saints and martyrs. They are most vain and superstitious in the honour which they give to the relics of the saints; as their dead bodies, or some parts of them; their bones, flesh, hair; yea, their clothes that they wore, or the like. "You may now, everywhere," saith Erasmus, "see held out for gain, "Mary's milk, which they honour almost as much as Christ's consecrated body; prodigious oil; so many pieces of the cross, that if they were all gathered together a great ship would scarce carry them. Here Francis's hood set forth to view; there the innermost garment of the Virgin Mary; in one place, Anna's comb; in another place, Joseph's stocking; in another place, Thomas of Canterbury's shoe; in another place, Christ's foreskin, which, though it be a thing uncertain, they worship more religiously than Christ's whole person. Neither do they bring forth these things as things that may be tolerated, and to please the common people, but all religion almost is placed in them. (Erasmus, on Mt 23:5). *Christopher Cartwright.*

Verse 6. The sense lies thus, that heathen men, when any danger or difficulty approacheth them, are solemnly wont to apply themselves to auguries and divinations, and so to false gods, to receive

advice and direction from them: but doing so and observing their responses most superstitiously, they yet gain nothing at all by it. These David detests, and keeps close to God, hoping for no aid but from him. *H. Hammond, D.D.*

Verse 7. *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy.* In the midst of trouble faith will furnish matter of joy, and promise to itself gladness, especially from the memory of by past experiences of God's mercy; as here, *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy.* ...The ground of our gladness, when we have found a proof of God's kindness to us should not be in the benefit so much as in the fountain of the benefit; for this giveth us hope to drink again of the like experience from the fountain which did send forth that benefit. Therefore David says, *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy.* *David Dickson.*

Verse 7. *Thou hast considered my trouble:*

Man's plea to man, is, that he never more
Will beg, and that he never begged before:
Man's plea to God, is, that he did obtain
A former suit, and, therefore sues again.
How good a God we serve, that when we sue,
Makes his old gifts the examples of his new!
—*Francis Quarles.*

Verse 7. *Thou hast known my soul in adversities.* One day a person who, by the calamities of war, sickness, and other affliction, had been reduced from a state of affluence to penury, came to Gotthold in great distress. He complained that he had just met one of his former acquaintances, who was even not distantly related to him, but that he had not condescended to bow, far less to speak to him, and he had turned his eyes away, and passed him as if he had been a stranger. O sir, he exclaimed with a sigh, how it pained me! I felt as if a dagger had pierced my heart! Gotthold replied, Do not think it strange at all. It is the way of the world to look high, and to pass unnoticed that which is humble and lowly. I know, however, of *One* who, though he dwelleth on high, humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth Ps 113:5-6, and of whom the royal prophet testifies: *Thou hast known my soul in adversities.* Yes; though we have lost our rich attire, and come to him in rags; though our forms be wasted because of grief, and waxed old (Ps 6:7, Luther's Version); though sickness and sorrow have consumed our beauty like a moth Ps 39:11; though blushes, and tears, and dust, overspread our face Ps 69:7, he still recognises, and is not ashamed to own us. Comfort yourself with this, for what harm will it do you at last, though men disown, if God the Lord have not forgotten you? *Christian Scriver.*

Verse 8. He openeth and no man shutteth. Let us bless the Lord for an open door which neither men nor devils can close. We are not in man's hands yet, because we are in the hands of God; else had our feet been in the stocks and not in the large room of liberty. Our enemies, if they were as able as

they are willing, would long ago have treated us as fowls do the little birds when they enclose them in their hand. C. H. S.

Verse 9. *Mine eye is consumed with grief.* This expression seems to suggest that the eye really suffers under the influence of grief. There was an old idea, which still prevails amongst the uninstructed, that the eye, under extreme grief, and with a constant profuse flow of tears, might sink away and perish under the ordeal. There is no solid foundation for this idea, but there is a very serious form of disease of the eyes, well known to oculists by the title of Glaucoma, which seems to be very much influenced by mental emotions of a depressing nature. I have known many striking instances of cases in which there has been a constitutional proneness to Glaucoma, and in which some sudden grief has brought on a violent access of the disease and induced blindness of an incurable nature. In such instances the explanation seems to be somewhat as follows. It is essential to the healthy performance of the functions of the eye, that it should possess a given amount of elasticity, which again results from an exact balance between the amount of fluid within the eye, and the external fibrous case or bag that contains or encloses it. If this is disturbed, if the fluid increases unduly in quantity, and the eye becomes too hard, pain and inflammation may be suddenly induced in the interior of the eye, and sight may become rapidly extinguished. There are a special set of nerves that preside over this peculiar physical condition, and keep the eye in a proper state of elasticity; and it is a remarkable fact, that through a long life, as a rule, we find that the eye preserves this elastic state. If, however, the function of these nerves is impaired, as it may readily be under the influence of extreme grief, or any depressing agent, the eye may become suddenly hard. Until a comparatively recent date, acute Glaucoma, or sudden hardening of the eye, attended with intense pain and inflammation, caused complete and hopeless blindness; but in the present day it is capable of relief by means of an operation. The effect of grief in causing this form of blindness seems to be an explanation of the text, *Mine eye is consumed with grief.* On application for information to the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, as to the effect of grief upon the eye, we received the above, with much other valuable information, from GEORGE CRITCHETT, Esq., the senior medical officer. The courtesy of this gentleman, and of the secretary of that noble institution, deserves special mention.

Verses 9-10.

If thou wouldst learn, not knowing how to pray,

Add but a faith, and say as beggars say: *Master, I am poor, and blind, in great distress, Hungry, and lame, and cold, and comfortless; O succour him that's gravelled on the shelf Of pain, and want, and cannot help himself Cast down thine eye upon a wretch, and take Some pity on me for sweet Jesus' sake: But hold! take heed this clause be not put in, I never begged before, nor will again.*—Francis Quarles.

Verse 10. *Mine iniquity.* Italian version, "my pains; "because that death and all miseries are come into

the world by reason of sin, the Scripture doth often confound the names of the cause and of the effects. *John Diodati.*

Verse 10. I find that when the saints are under trial and well humbled, little sins raise great cries in the conscience; but in prosperity, conscience is a pope that gives dispensations and great latitude to our hearts. The cross is therefore as needful as the crown is glorious. *Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 11. *I was a reproach among all mine enemies.* If anyone strives after patience and humility, he is a hypocrite. If he allows himself in the pleasures of this world, he is a glutton. If he seeks justice, he is impatient; if he seeks it not, he is a fool. If he would be prudent, he is stingy; if he would make others happy, he is dissolute. If he gives himself up to prayer, he is vainglorious. And this is the great loss of the church, that by means like these many are held back from goodness! which the psalmist lamenting says, *I became a reproof among all mine enemies.* *Chrysostom, quoted by J.M. Neale.*

Verse 11. *They that did see me without fled from me.* I once heard the following relation from an old man of the world, and it occurs to me, as illustrative of what we are now considering. He was at a public assembly, and saw there an individual withdrawing herself from the crowd, and going into a corner of the room. He went up to her, she was an old and intimate friend of his; he addressed himself to her—she, with a sigh, said, "Oh, I have seen many days of trouble since we last met." What does the man of the world do? Immediately he withdrew himself from his sorrow stricken friend and hid himself in the crowd. Such is the sympathy of the world with Christ or his servants. *Hamilton Verschoyle.*

Verse 12. *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind.* A striking instance of how the greatest princes are forgotten in death is found in the deathbed of Louis XIV. "The Louis that was, lies forsaken, a mass of abhorred clay; abandoned to some poor persons, and priests of the *Chapelle Ardente*, 'who make haste to put him in two lead coffins, pouring in abundant spirits of wine.' The new Louis with his court is rolling towards Choisy, through the summer afternoon: the royal tears still flow; but a word mispronounced by Monseigneur d'Artois sets them all laughing, and they weep no more." *Thomas Carlyle in "The French Revolution."*

Verse 12. *I am forgotten,* etc. As a dying man with curtains drawn, whom friends have no hope of, and therefore look off from; or rather like a dead man laid aside out of sight and out of mind altogether, and buried more in oblivion than in his grave; when the news is, "she is dead, trouble not the Master." Lu 8:49. *Anthony Tuckney, D.D., 1599-1670.*

Verse 12. *I am like a broken vessel.* As a vessel, how profitable soever it hath been to the owner, and how necessary for his turn, yet, when it is broken is thrown away, and regarded no longer: even so such is the state of a man forsaken of those whose friend he hath been so long as he was able to stand them in stead to be of advantage to them. *Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 13. *I have heard the slander of many.* From my very childhood when I was first sensible of the

concerns of men's souls, I was possessed with some admiration to find that everywhere the religious, godly sort of people, who did but exercise a serious care of their own and other men's salvation, were made the wonder and obloquy of the world, especially of the most vicious and flagitious men; so that they that professed the same articles of faith, the same commandments of God to be their law, and the same petitions of the Lord's prayer to be their desire, and so professed the same religion, did everywhere revile those that endeavoured to live in good earnest in what they said. I thought this was impudent hypocrisy in the ungodly, worldly sort of men—to take those for the most intolerable persons in the land who are but serious in their own religion, and do but endeavour to perform what all their enemies also vow and promise. If religion be bad, and our faith be not true, why do these men profess it? If it be true, and good, why do they hate and revile them that would live in the serious practise of it, if they will not practise it themselves? But we must not expect reason when sin and sensuality have made men unreasonable. But I must profess that since I observed the course of the world, and the concord of the word and providence of God, I took it for a notable proof of man's fall, and of the truth of the Scripture, and of the supernatural original of true sanctification, to find such a universal enmity between the holy and the serpentine seed, and to find Cain and Able's case so ordinarily exemplified, and he that is born after the flesh persecuting him that is born after the Spirit. And I think to this day it is a great and visible help for the confirmation of our Christian faith. *Richard Baxter.*

Verse 13. *Slander.* Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure a snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. *William Shakespeare.*

Verse 13. *They took counsel together against me,* etc. While they mangled his reputation, they did it in such a manner as that they covered their wickedness under the appearance of grave and considerate procedure, in consulting among themselves to destroy him as a man who no longer ought to be tolerated on the earth. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that his mind was wounded by so many and so sharp temptations. *John Calvin.*

Verse 14. *But I trusted in thee, O Lord.* The rendering properly is, *And I have trusted in thee,* but the Hebrew copulative particle (K), *vau, and,* is used here instead of the adversative particle *yet,* or *nevertheless.* David, setting the steadfastness of his faith in opposition to the assaults of the temptations of which he has made mention, denies that he had ever fainted, but rather maintains, on the contrary, that he stood firm in his hope of deliverance from God. Nor does this imply that he boasted of being so magnanimous and courageous that he could not be overthrown through the infirmity of the flesh. However contrary to one another they appear, yet these things are often joined together, as they ought to be, in the same person, namely, that while he pines away with grief, and is deprived of all strength, he is nevertheless supported by so strong a hope that he ceases not to call upon God. David, therefore, was not so overwhelmed in deep sorrow, and other direful sufferings, as

that the hidden light of faith could not shine inwardly in his heart; nor did he groan so much under the weighty load of his temptations, as to be prevented from arousing himself to call upon God. He struggled through many obstacles to be able to make the confession which he here makes. He next defines the manner of his faith, namely, that he reflected with himself thus—that God would never fail him nor forsake him. Let us mark his manner of speech: *I have said, Thou art my God.* In these words he intimates that he was so entirely persuaded of this truth, that God was his God, that he would not admit even a suggestion to the contrary. And until this persuasion prevails so as to take possession of our minds, we shall always waver in uncertainty. It is, however, to be observed, that this declaration is not only inward and secret—made rather in the heart than with the tongue—but that it is directed to God himself, as to him who is the alone witness of it. Nothing is more difficult, when we see our faith derided by the whole world, than to direct our speech to God only, and to rest satisfied with this testimony which our conscience gives us, *that he is our God.* And certainly it is an undoubted proof of genuine faith, when, however fierce the waves are which beat against us, and however sore the assaults by which we are shaken, we hold fast this as a fixed principle, that we are constantly under the protection of God, and can say to him freely, *Thou art our God.* *John Calvin.*

Verse 14. *Thou art my God.* How much it is more worth than ten thousand mines of gold, to be able to say, God is mine! God's servant is apprehensive of it, and he seeth no defect, but this may be complete happiness to him, and therefore he delights in it, and comforts himself with it. As he did sometime who was a great courtier in King Cyrus's court, and one in favour with him; he was to bestow his daughter in marriage to a very great man, and of himself he had no great means; and therefore one said to him, O Sir, where will you have means to bestow a dowry upon your daughter proportionable to her degree? Where are your riches? He answered, What need I care, *opou Kuros moi filos* Cyrus is my friend. But may not we say much more, *opou Kurios moi filos*, where the Lord is our friend, that hath those excellent and glorious attributes that cannot come short in any wants, or to make us happy, especially we being capable of it, and made proportionable. *John Stoughton's "Righteous Man's Plea to True Happiness," 1640.*

Verse 15. *My times are in thy hand.* It is observable that when, of late years, men grow weary of the long and tedious compass in their voyages to the East Indies, and would needs try a more compendious way by the North west passage, it ever proved unsuccessful. Thus it is that we must not use any compendious way; we may not neglect our body, nor shipwreck our health, nor anything to hasten death, because we shall gain by it. He that maketh haste (even this way) to be rich shall not be innocent; for our times are in God's hands, and therefore to his holy providence we must leave them. We have a great deal of work to do, and must not, therefore, be so greedy of our Sabbath day, our rest, as not to be contented with our working day, our labour. Hence it is that a composed frame of mind, like that of the apostle's *Php 1:21*, wherein either to stay and work, or to go and rest, is the

best temper of all. *Edward Reynolds, in J. Spencer's "Things New and Old."*

Verse 15. *My times.* He does not use the plural number, in my opinion, without reason; but rather to mark the variety of casualties by which the life of man is usually harassed. *John Calvin.*

Verse 15. *In thy hand.* The watch hangs ticking against the wall, when every tick of the watch is a sigh, and a consciousness, alas! Poor watch! I called once to see a friend, the physician and the secretary of one of the most noble and admirable of the asylums for the insane in this country. A poor creature, with a clear, bright intelligence, only that some of its chords had become unstrung, who had usually occupied itself innocently by making or unmaking watches, had just before I called, exhibited some new, alarming symptoms, dashing one and then another upon the stone floor, and shivering them. Removed into a more safe room, I visited him with the secretary. "How came you to destroy your favourite watches, so much as you loved them, and so quiet as you are?" said my friend; and the poor patient replied, in a tone of piercing agony, "I could not bear the tick, tick, ticking, and so I dashed it on the pavement." But when the watch is able to surrender itself to the maker, to the hand holding the watch, and measuring out the moments, it becomes a sight affecting indeed, but very beautiful, very sublime. We transfer our thoughts from the watch to *the hand* that holds the watch. *My times, Thy hand;* the watch and the hour have a purpose, and so are not in vain. God gives man permission to behold two things. Man can see the whole work, the plan's completeness, also the minutest work, the first step towards the plan's completeness. Nothing is more certain, nothing are men more indisposed to perceive than this. We have to

"Wait for some transcendent life,
Reserved by God to follow this."

—*Robert Browning.*

To this end God's real way is made up of all the ways of our life. His hand holds all our times. *My times;* ""*Thy hand.*" Some lives greatly differ from others. This we know; but see, some lives fulfil life's course, gain life's crown—life in their degree. This, on the contrary, others quite miss. Yet, for even human strength there must be a love meted out to rule it. It is said, there is a moon to control the tides of every sea; is there not a master power for souls? It may not always be so, apparently, in the more earthly lives, but it is so in the heavenly; not more surely does the moon sway tides, than God sways souls. It does not seem sometimes as if man found no adequate external power, and stands forth ordained to be a law to his own sphere; but even then his times are in the hands of God, as the pathway of a star is in the limitations of its system—as the movements of a satellite are in the forces of its planet. But while I would not pause on morbid words or views of life, so neither do I desire you to receive or charge me with giving only a moody, morbid view of the world, and an imperfect theology; but far other. *My times are in thy hand—the hand of my Saviour."*

"I report as a man may of God's work—all's love, but all's law. In the Godhead I seek and I find it, and

so it shall be

A face like my face that receives thee, a Man like to me Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever, a hand like this hand Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee: *See the Christ stand!*"—Robert Browning.

And now he is "the restorer of paths to dwell in." The hand of Jesus is the hand which rules our times. He regulates our life clock. Christ for and Christ in us. *My times in his hand.* My life can be no more in vain than was my Saviour's life in vain. *E. Paxton Hood, in "Dark Sayings on a Harp," 1865.*

Verse 15. When David had Saul at his mercy in the cave, those about him said, *This is the time* in which God will deliver thee. 1Sa 24:4. No, saith David, the time is not come for my deliverance till it can be wrought without sin, and I will wait for that time; for it is God's time, and that is the best time. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 16. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.* When the cloud of trouble hideth the Lord's favour, faith knoweth it may shine again, and therefore prayeth through the cloud for the dissolving of it. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. David Dickson.*

Verse 18. *Lying lips...which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.* The primitive persecutors slighted the Christians for a company of bad, illiterate fellows, and therefore they used to paint the God of the Christians with an ass's head and a book in his hand, saith Tertullian; to signify, that though they pretended learning, yet they were silly and ignorant people. Bishop Jewel, in his sermon upon Lu 11:15, cites this out of Tertullian and applies it to his times. Do not our adversaries the like, saith he, against all that profess the gospel? Oh! say they, who are those that favour this way? None but shoemakers, tailors, weavers, and such as never were at the University. These are the bishop's own words. Bishop White said in open court, that the Puritans were all a company of blockheads. *Charles Bradbury.*

Verse 18. *Lying lips...which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.* In that venerable and original monument of the Vaudois Church, entitled "The Golden Lesson, " of the date 1100, we meet with a verse, which has been thus translated:—

"If there be anyone who loves and fears Jesus Christ,
Who will not curse, nor swear, nor lie,
Nor be unchaste, nor kill, nor take what is another's.
Nor take vengeance on his enemies;
They say that he is a Vaudes, and worthy of punishment."

—*Antoine Monastier, in "A History of Vaudois Church," 1859.*

Verse 19. *Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.* As a provident man will regulate his liberality towards all men in such a manner as not to defraud his children or family, nor impoverish his own house, by spending his substance prodigally on others; so

God, in like manner, in exercising his beneficence to aliens from his family, knows well how to reserve for his own children that which belongs to them, as it were by hereditary right; that is to say, because of their adoption. *John Calvin.*

Verse 19. *Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.* Mark the phrase "Laid up for them; "his mercy and goodness it is intended for them, as a father that lays by such a sum of money, and writes on the bag, "This is a portion for such a child." But how comes the Christian to have this right to God, and all that vast and untold treasure of happiness which is in him? This indeed is greatly to be heeded; it is faith that gives him a good title to all this. That which maketh him a child, makes him an heir. Now, faith makes him a child of God. Joh 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." As therefore if you would not call your birthright into question, and bring your interest in Christ and those glorious privileges that come along with him, under a sad dispute in your soul, look to your faith. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 19. *How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.* When I reflect upon the words of thy prophet, it seems to me that he means to depict God as a father who, no doubt, keeps his children under discipline, and subjects them to the rod; but who, with all his labours and pains, still aims at nothing but to lay up for them a store which may contribute to their comfort when they have grown to maturity, and learned the prudent use of it. My Father, in this world thou hidest from thy children thy great goodness, as if it did not pertain to them. But being thy children, we may be well assured that the celestial treasure will be bestowed upon none else. For this reason, I will bear my lot with patience. But, oh! from time to time, waft to me a breath of air from the heavenly land, to refresh my sorrowful heart; I will then wait more calmly for its full fruition. *Christian Scriver.*

Verse 19. *Oh how great is thy goodness.* Let me, to set the crown on the head of the *duty of meditation*, add one thing over and above—let meditation be *carried up to admiration*: not only should we be affected, but transported, rapt up and ravished with the beauties and transcendencies of heavenly things; act meditation to admiration, endeavour the highest pitch, coming the nearest to the highest patterns, the patterns of saints and angels in heaven, whose actings are the purest, highest ecstasies and admirations. Thus were these so excellent artists in meditation, David, an high actor of admiration in meditation, as often we see it in the psalms; so in Ps 8:1,9 31:19; "*Oh how great is thy goodness*, "etc.: Ps 104:24 "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, "etc; and in other places David's meditation and admiration were as his harp, well tuned, and excellently played on, in rarest airs and highest strains; as the precious gold, and the curious burnishing; or the richest stone, and the most exquisite polishing and setting of it. So blessed Paul, who was a great artist in musing, acted high in admiration, his soul was very warm and flaming up in it: it was as a bird with a strong and long wing that soars and towers up aloft, and gets out of sight. *Nathanael Ranew.*

Verse 19. *Before the sons of men, i.e., openly.* The psalmist here perhaps refers to temporal blessings conferred on the pious, and evident to all. Some, however, have supposed the reference to be to the reward of the righteous, bestowed with the utmost publicity on the day of judgment; which better agrees with our interpretation of the former part of the verse. *Daniel Cresswell, D.D., F.R.S. (1776-1844), in loc.*

Verse 19. Believe it, Sirs, you cannot conceive what a friend you shall have of God, would you be but persuaded to enter into covenant with him, to be his, wholly his. I tell you, many that sometimes thought and did as you do now, that is, set light by Christ and hate God, and see no loveliness in him, are now quite of another mind; they would not for ten thousand worlds quit their interest in him. Oh, who dare say that he is a hard Master? Who that knows him will say that he is an unkind friend? Oh, what do poor creatures all, that they do entertain such harsh sour thoughts of God? What, do they think that there is nothing in that scripture, *Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!* Doth the psalmist speak too largely? Doth he say more than he and others could prove? Ask him, and he will tell you in verse 21, that he blesseth God. These were things he could speak to, from his own personal experience; and many thousands as well as he, to whom the Lord had showed his marvellous kindness, and therefore he doth very passionately plead with the people of God to love him, and more highly to express their sense of his goodness, that the world might be encouraged also to have good thoughts of him. *James Janeway.*

Verse 19. Very observable is that expression of the psalmist, *Oh how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought before the sons of men for them that trust in thee.* In the former clause, God's goodness is said to be *laid up*; in the latter, to be *wrought*. Goodness is laid up in the promise, wrought in the performance; and that goodness which is laid up is wrought for them that trust in God; and thus, as God's faithfulness engages us to believe, so our faith, as it were, engages God's faithfulness to perform the promise. *Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 20. *Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.* This our beloved God does secretly, so that no human eyes may or can see, and the ungodly do not know that a believer is, in God, and in the presence of God, so well protected, that no reproach or contempt, and no quarrelsome tongue can do him harm. *Arndt, quoted by W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications.* Who would have thought those prayers should ever have had any prevalence in God's ears which were mixed with so much infidelity in the petitioner's heart! *William Secker.*

Verse 22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.* No, no, Christian; a prayer sent up in faith, according to the will of God, cannot be lost, though it be delayed. We may say of it, as David said of Saul's sword and Jonathan's bow, that they never return empty. So David adds, *Nevertheless*

thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. John Flavel.

Verse 22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes,* etc. Let us with whom it was once night, improve that morning joy that now shines upon us. Let us be continual admirers of God's grace and mercy to us. He has prevented us with his goodness, when he saw nothing in us but impatience and unbelief, when we were like Jonas in the belly of hell, his bowels yearned over us, and his power brought us safe to land. What did we to hasten his deliverance, or to obtain his mercy? If he had never come to our relief till he saw something in us to invite him, we had not yet been relieved. No more did we contribute to our restoration than we do to the rising of the sun, or the approach of day. We were like dry bones without motion, and without strength. Eze 37:1-11. And we also said, that 'we were cut off for our parts, and our hope was gone, and he caused breath to enter into us, and we live.' Who is a God like to our God that pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin? that retains not his anger for ever? that is slow to wrath and delights in mercy? that has been displeased with us for a moment, but gives us hope of his everlasting kindness? Oh! what love is due from us to Christ, that has pleaded for us when we ourselves had nothing to say! That has brought us out of a den of lions, and from the jaws of the roaring lion! To say, as Mrs. Sarah Wright did, "I have obtained mercy, that thought my time of mercy past for ever; I have hope of heaven, that thought I was already damned by unbelief; I said many a time, there is no hope in mine end, and I thought I saw it; I was so desperate, I cared not what became of me. Oft was I at the very brink of death and hell, even at the very gates of both, and then Christ shut them. I was as Daniel in the lion's den, and he stopped the mouth of those lions, and delivered me. The goodness of God is unsearchable; how great is the excellency of his majesty, that yet he would look upon such a one as I; that he has given me peace that was full of terror, and walked continually as amidst fire and brimstone." *Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes:—i.e.,* Thou hast quite forsaken me, and I must not expect to be looked upon or regarded by thee any more. I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul, and so be cut off from before thine eyes, be ruined while thou lookest on 1Sa 27:1. This he said in his flight (so some read it), which notes the distress of his affairs: Saul was just at his back, and ready to seize him, which made the temptation strong; *in his haste* (so we read it), which notes the disturbance and discomposure of his mind, which made the temptation surprising, so that it found him off his guard. Note, it is a common thing to speak amiss, when we speak in haste and without consideration; but what we speak amiss in haste, we must repent of at leisure, particularly that which we have spoken distrustfully of God. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 22. *I said in my haste.* Sometimes a sudden passion arises, and out it goes in angry and froward words, setting all in an uproar and combustion: by and by our hearts recur upon us, and then we wish, "O that I had bit my tongue, and not given it such an unbridled liberty." Sometimes we break out into rash censures of those that it may be are better than ourselves, whereupon when we reflect,

we are ashamed that the fools' bolt was so soon shot, and wish we had been judging ourselves when we were censuring our brethren. *Richard Alleine.*

Verse 22. *Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.* As if he had said, when I prayed with so little faith, that I, as it were, unprayed my own prayer, by concluding my case in a manner desperate; yet God pardoned my hasty spirit, and gave me that mercy which I had hardly any faith to expect; and what use doth he make of this experience, but to raise every saint's hope in time of need? *"Be of good courage and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."* *William Gurnall.*

Verse 22. He confesseth the great distress he was in, and how weak his faith was under the temptation; this he doth to his own shame acknowledge also, that he may give the greater glory to God. Whence learn, 1.—The faith of the godly may be slackened, and the strongest faith may sometimes show its infirmity. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.* 2.—Though faith be shaken, yet it is fixed in the root, as a tree beaten by the wind keeping strong grips of good ground. Though faith seem to yield, yet it faileth not, and even when it is at the weakest, it is uttering itself in some act, as a wrestler, for here the expression of David's infirmity in faith, is directed to God, and his earnest prayer joined with it, *I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications.* 3.—Praying faith, how weak soever, shall not be misregarded of God; for *nevertheless*, saith he, *thou heardest the voice of my supplications.* 4.—There may be in a soul at one time, both grief oppressing, and hope upholding; both darkness of trouble, and the light of faith; both desperately doubting, and strong gripping of God's truth and goodness; both a fainting and a fighting; a seeming yielding in the fight, and yet a striving of faith against all opposition; both a foolish haste, and a settled staidness of faith; as here, *I said in my haste, etc.* *David Dickson.*

Verse 22. David vents his astonishment at the Lord's condescension in hearing his prayer. How do we wonder at the goodness of a petty man in granting our desires! How much more should we at the humility and goodness of the most sovereign Majesty of heaven and earth! *Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 23. *O love the Lord, all ye his saints.* The holy psalmist in the words does, with all the warmth of an affectionate zeal, incite us to the love of God, which is the incomparably noblest passion of a reasonable mind, its brightest glory and most exquisite felicity; and it is, as appears evident from the nature of the thing, and the whole train of divine revelation, the comprehensive sum of that duty which we owe to our Maker, and the very soul which animates a religious life, that we "love the Lord with all our heart, and strength, and mind." *William Dunlap. A.M., 1692-1720.*

Verse 23. *O love the Lord, all ye his saints, etc.* Some few words are to be attended in the clearing of the sense. *Saints* here in the text is or may be read, *ye that feel mercies.* "*Faithful,*" the word is sometimes taken for *persons*, sometimes *things*; and so the Lord is said to preserve true men, and truths, faithful men, and faithfulnesses. *He plenteously rewardeth the proud doer;* or, the Lord

rewardeth plenteously; *the Lord*, who doth wonderful things. *Plenteously* is either *in cumulum*, *abunde*, or *in nepotes*, as some would have it; but I would rather *commend*, than go about to *amend* translations: though I could wish some of my learned brethren's quarrelling hours were spent rather upon clearing the originals, and so conveying over pure Scripture to posterity, than in scratching others with their sharpened pens, and making cockpits of pulpits. *Hugh Peter's* "Sermon preached before both Houses of Parliament, "the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, and the Assembly of Divines, at the last Thanksgiving Day, April 2. For the recovering of the West, and disbanding of 5,000 of the King's Horse, etc., 1645.

Verse 23. *And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.* The next query is, *how God rewardeth the proud doer?* in which, though the Lord's proceedings be diverse, and many times his paths in the clouds, and his judgments in the deep, and the uttermost farthing shall be paid the proud doer at the great day; yet so much of his mind he hath left unto us, that even in this life he gives out something to the proud which he calls "the day of recompense," which he commonly manifests in these particulars:

1. By way of *retaliation*—for *Adonibezek* that would be cutting off thumbs, had his thumbs cut off. Jud 1:7. So the poor Jews that cried so loud, "Crucify him, crucify him," were so many of them crucified, that if you believe Josephus, there was not wood enough to make crosses, nor in the usual place room enough to set up the crosses when they were made. Snares are made and pits are digged by the proud for *themselves* commonly, to which the Scripture throughout gives abundant testimony.

2. By shameful *disappointments*, seldom reaping what they sow, nor eating what they catch in hunting, which is most clear in the Jewish State when Christ was amongst them. *Judas* betrays him to get money, and hardly lived long enough to spend it. *Pilate*, to please Caesar, withstands all counsels against it, and gives way to that murder, by which he ruined both himself and Caesar. The Jewish priests, to maintain that domination and honour (which they thought the son of Joseph and Mary stole from them) cried loud for his death, which proved a sepulchre to them and their glory. And the poor people that crucified him (through fear of the *Romans* taking their city) by his death had their gates opened to the *Romans*—yea, *Caesar* himself, fearing a great change in his government by Christ living near him (which today sets all the king craft in the world to work) met such a change that shortly he had neither crown nor sceptre to boast of, if you read the story of Titus and Vespasian, all which dealings of God with the proud is most elegantly set forth unto us by the psalmist. "Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made." *Hugh Peters*.

Verse 24. *Be of good courage.* Christian courage may thus be described. It is the undaunted audacity of a sanctified heart in adventuring upon difficulties and undergoing hardships for a good cause upon the call of God. The *genus*, the common nature of it is an undaunted audacity. This animosity, as some phrase it, is common both unto men and to some brutes. The lion is said to be the

strongest among beasts, that turneth not away from any. Pr 30:30. And there is an elegant description of the war horse in regard of boldness. Job 39:19, etc. And this boldness that is in brutes is spoken of as a piece of this same *courage* that God is pleased to give to men. Eze 3:9. This is the Lord's promise—"As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead." The word "harder" is the same in the Hebrew that is here in my text—*fortiorem petra*—the rock that is not afraid of any weather, summer or winter, sun and showers, heat and cold, frost and snow; it blushes not, shrinks not, it changes not its complexion, it is still the same. Such a like thing is *courage*, in the common nature of it. Secondly, consider the subject, it is the *heart*, the castle where courage commands and exerciseth military discipline; (shall I so say) it's within the bosom, it is the soul of a valiant soldier. Some conceive our English word *courage* to be derived from *cordis actio*, the very acting of the heart. A valiant man is described 2Sa 17:10 for to be a man whose heart is as the heart of a lion. And sometimes the original translated *courageous*, as Am 2:16, may most properly be rendered *a man of heart*. Beloved, valour doth not consist in a piercing eye, in a terrible look, in big words; but it consists in the mettle, the vigour that is within the bosom. Sometimes a coward may dwell at the sign of a roaring voice and of a stern countenance; whereas true fortitude may be found within his breast whose outward deportment promises little or nothing in that kind. Thirdly, note the qualification of this same subject; I said a sanctified heart; for I am not now speaking of fortitude as a moral virtue, whereof heathens that have not God are capable, and for which many among them that are not Christians, have been worthily commended. But I am now discoursing of courage as a virtue theological, as a gracious qualification, put upon the people of God by special covenant. And there are three things that do characterize it, and which do distinguish it from the moral virtue of fortitude. (1) The *root*, whence it ariseth; (2) the *rule*, whereby it is directed; (3) the *end*, to which it is referred. The *root*, whence it ariseth, is *love to God*: all the saints of God that love the Lord be of good courage. The love of Christ constraineth me to make these bold and brave adventures, saith the apostle. 2Co 5:14. The *rule*, whereby it is directed, is the *word of God*—what the Lord hath pleased to leave on record for a Christian's guidance in holy pages. 1Ch 22:12-13. "Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed." Be a man of mettle, but let thy mettle be according to my mind, according to this rule. And the *end*, to which it refers, is *God*. For every sanctified man being a self denying and a God advancing man, his God is his centre, wherein his actings, his undertakings rest; and his soul is not, yea, it cannot be satisfied but in God. *Simeon Ash's "Sermon preached before the Commanders of the Military Forces of the renowned Citie of London, 1642."*

Verse 24. *Be of good courage.* Shall I hint some of the weighty services that are charged upon all our

consciences? The work of mortification, to pick out our eyes, to chop off our hands, to cut off our feet; do you think that a milksop, a man that is not a man of a stout spirit, will do this? Now to massacre fleshly lusts, is (as it were) for a man to mangle and dismember his own body; it is a work painful and grievous, as for a man to cut off his own feet, to chop off his own hands, and to pick out his own eyes, as Christ and the apostle Paul do express it. Besides this, there are in Christian's bosoms strongholds to be battered, fortifications to be demolished; there are high hills and mountains that must be levelled with the ground; there are trenches to be made, valleys to be filled. O beloved, I may not mention the hills that lie before us in heaven way, which we must climb up, and craggy rocks that we must get over; and without courage certainly the work put upon our hands will not be discharged. There are also the walls of Jerusalem to be repaired, and the temple to be edified again. If Nehemiah had not been a man of a brave spirit he would never have gone through stitch with that church work, those weighty services which he did undertake. How this is applicable to us for the present time, the time of our begun reformation, I speak not, but rather do refer it to your considerations. I beseech you to read Ne 4:17-18, "They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded, and he that sounded the trumpet was by me." While they were at work, they were all ready for war. *Simeon Ash.*

Verse 24. *And he shall strengthen your heart.* Put thou thyself forth in a way of bold adventure for him, and his providence shall be sweetly exercised for thy good. A worthy commander, how careful he is of a brave blade, a man that will fight at a cannon's mouth! Doth he hear from him that a bone is broken? Send for the bone setter. Is he like to bleed to death? Call for the surgeon; let him post away to prevent that peril. Doth he grow weaker and weaker? Is there anything in the camp that may restore his spirit? withhold nothing; nothing is too good, too costly; would he eat gold he should have it. Thus it is with God. Oh, what letters of commendation doth he give in manifestation of his own love to them in Pergamos upon this very ground. "Thou, saith the Lord, thou hast held forth my name, and not denied it, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth!" thou didst fight for Christ in the cave where the devil commanded; thou didst stand and appear for him when other men did lose heart and courage. Here is a man that God will own; such a one shall have God's heart and hand to do him honour, to yield him comfort. And therefore I appeal to your consciences, is not this courage worth the having? worth the seeking? *Simeon Ash.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Faith expressed, confusion deprecated, deliverance sought.

Verse 1. (*first clause*). *Open avowal of faith.* 1. Duties which precede it, self examination, etc.

2. Modes of making the confession.

3. Conduct incumbent on those who have made the profession.

Verse 1. (*last clause*). How far the righteousness of God is involved in the salvation of a believer.

Verse 2. (*first clause*). God's hearing prayer a great condescension.

Verse 2 (*second clause*). How far we may be urgent with God as to time.

Verses 2-3 (*last and first clauses*). That which we have we may yet seek for.

Verses 2-3. (*last and first clauses*). That which we have we may yet seek for.

Verse 3. Work out the metaphor of God as a rocky fastness of the soul.

Verse 3. (*last clause*). 1. A blessing needed, *lead me*.

2. A blessing obtainable.

3. An argument for its being granted, *for thy name's sake*.

Verse 4. *The rescue of the ensnared.*

1. The fowlers.

2. The laying of the net.

3. The capture of the bird.

4. The cry of the captive.

5. The rescue.

Verse 4. (*last clause*). The weak one girt with omnipotence.

Verse 5. 1. Dying, in a saint's account, is a difficult work.

2. The children of God, when considering themselves as dying, are chiefly concerned for their departing immortal spirits.

3. Such having chosen God for their God, have abundant encouragement when dying, to commit their departing spirits into his hand, with hopes of their being safe and happy for ever with him. —*Daniel Wilcox*.

Verse 5. The believer's requiem. Redemption the foundation of our repose in God.

1. What we do—*commit ourselves to God*.

2. What God has done—*redeemed us*.

Verse 6. Holy detestation, as a virtue discriminated from bigotry: or, the good hater.

Verse 7. 1. An endearing attribute rejoiced in.

2. An interesting experience related.

3. A directly personal favour from God delighted in.

Verse 7. (*centre clause*). *Consider* the measure, the effects, the time, the tempering, the ending, and the recompense.

Verse 7. (*last clause*). The Lord's familiarity with his afflicted.

Verse 8. Christian liberty, a theme for gladness.

Verse 9. The mourner's lament.

Verse 9. (*last clause*). Excessive sorrow, its injurious effects on the body, the understanding, and the spiritual nature. Sin of it, cure of it.

Verses 9-10. The sick man's moan, a reminder to those who enjoy good health.

Verses 9-10. The sick man's moan, a reminder to those who enjoy good health.

Verse 10. *My strength faileth because of mine iniquity.* The weakening influence of sin.

Verse 11.. The good man evil spoken of.

Verses 12-15.

Forgot as those who in the grave abide,
And as a broken vessel past repair,
Slandered by many, fear on every side.
Who counsel take and would my life ensnare.
But, Lord, my hopes on thee are fixed: I said,
Thou art my God, my days are in thy hand;
Against my furious foes oppose thy aid,
And those who persecute my soul withstand.

—*George Sandys.*

Verse 12. The world's treatment of its best friends.

Verse 14. Faith peculiarly glorious in season of great trial.

Verse 15. The believer the peculiar care of providence.

Verse 15. (*first clause*). 1. The character of the earthly experience of the saints, "My times, "that is, the changes I shall pass through, etc.

2. The advantage of this variety.

(a) Changes reveal the various aspects of the Christian character.

(b) Changes strengthen the Christian character.

(c) Changes lead us to admire an unchanging God.

3. Comfort for all seasons.

(a) This implies the changes of life are subject to the divine control.

(b) That God will support his people under them.

(c) And, consequently, they shall result in our being abundantly profited.

4. The deportment which should characterise us. Courageous devotion to God in times of persecution; resignation and contentment in times of poverty and suffering; zeal and hope in times of labour. —*From Stems and Twigs, or Sermon Framework.*

Verse 16. A sense of divine favour.

1. Its value.

2. How to lose it.

3. How to obtain a renewal of it.

4. How to retain it.

The heavenly servant's best reward.

Verse 16. (*last clause*). A prayer for saints in all stages. Note its object, *save me*; and its plea, *Thy mercies' sake*. Suitable to the penitent, the sick, the doubting, the tried, the advanced believer, the dying saint.

Verse 17. The shame and silence of the wicked in eternity. The silence of the grave, its grave eloquence.

Verse 19. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 773." David's Holy Wonder at the Lord's Great Goodness."

Verse 20. The believer preserved from the sneers of arrogance by a sense of the divine presence, and kept from the bitterness of slander by the glory of the King whom he serves.

Verse 21. *Marvellous kindness*. Marvellous that it should come to me in such a way, at such a time, in such a measure, for so long.

Verse 21. Memorable events in life to be observed, recorded, meditated on, repeated, made the subject of gratitude, and the ground of confidence.

Verse 22. Unbelief confessed and faithfulness adored. The mischief of hasty speeches.

Verse 23. An exhortation to love the Lord. 1. The matter of it, *love the Lord*.

2. To whom addressed, *all ye his saints*.

3. By whom spoken.

4. With what arguments supported, *for the Lord preserveth*, etc.

Verse 24. Holy courage. Its excellences, difficulties, encouragements, and triumphs.

Psalm 32

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. A Psalm of David, Maschil. That David wrote this gloriously evangelic Psalm is proved not only by this heading, but by the words of the apostle Paul, in Ro 4:6-8. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, "&c. Probably his deep repentance over his great sin was followed by such blissful peace, that he was led to pour out his spirit in the soft music of this choice song. In the order of history it seems to follow the

fifty-first. *Maschil* is a new title to us, and indicates that this is an instructive or didactic Psalm. The experience of one believer affords rich instruction to others, it reveals the footsteps of the flock, and so comforts and directs the weak. Perhaps it was important in this case to prefix the word, that doubting saints might not imagine the Psalm to be the peculiar utterance of a singular individual, but might appropriate it to themselves as a lesson from the Spirit of God. David promised in the fifty-first Psalm to teach transgressors the Lord's ways, and here he does it most effectually. Grotius thinks that this Psalm was meant to be sung on the annual day of the Jewish expiation, when a general confession of their sins was made.

DIVISION. In our reading we have found it convenient to note the benediction of the pardoned, Ps 32:1-2; David's personal confession, Ps 32:3-5; and the application of the case to others, Ps 32:6-7. The voice of God is heard by the forgiven one in Ps 32:8-9; and the Psalm then concludes with a portion for each of the two great classes of men, Ps 32:10-11.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Blessed.* Like the sermon on the mount on the mount, this Psalm begins with beatitudes. This is the second Psalm of benediction. The first Psalm describes the result of holy blessedness, the thirty-second details the cause of it. The first pictures the tree in full growth, this depicts it in its first planting and watering. He who in the first Psalm is a reader of God's book, is here a suppliant at God's throne accepted and heard. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.* He is now blessed and ever shall be. Be he ever so poor, or sick, or sorrowful, he is blessed in very deed. Pardoning mercy is of all things in the world most to be prized, for it is the only and sure way to happiness. To hear from God's own Spirit the words, "*absolvo te*" is joy unspeakable. Blessedness is not in this case ascribed to the man who has been a diligent law keeper, for then it would never come to us, but rather to a lawbreaker, who by grace most rich and free has been forgiven. Self righteous Pharisees have no portion in this blessedness. Over the returning prodigal, the word of welcome is here pronounced, and the music and dancing begin. A full, instantaneous, irreversible pardon of transgression turns the poor sinner's hell into heaven, and makes the heir of wrath a partaker in blessing. The word rendered forgiven is in the original *taken off* or *taken away*, as a burden is lifted or a barrier removed. What a lift is here! It cost our Saviour a sweat of blood to bear our load, yea, it cost him his life to bear it quite away. Samson carried the gates of Gaza, but what was that to the weight which Jesus bore on our behalf? *Whose sin is covered.* Covered by God, as the ark was covered by the mercyseat, as Noah was covered from the flood, as the Egyptians were covered by the depths of the sea. What a cover must that be which hides away for ever from the sight of the all seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit! He who has once seen sin in its horrible deformity, will appreciate the happiness of seeing it no more for ever. Christ's atonement is the propitiation, the

covering, the making an end of sin; where this is seen and trusted in, the soul knows itself to be now accepted in the Beloved, and therefore enjoys a conscious blessedness which is the antepast of heaven. It is clear from the text that a man may *know* that he is pardoned: where would be the blessedness of an unknown forgiveness? Clearly it is a matter of knowledge, for it is the ground of comfort.

Verse 2. *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* The word blessed is in the plural, *oh, the blessednesses!* the double joys, the bundles of happiness, the mountains of delight! Note the three words so often used to denote our disobedience: transgression, sin, and iniquity, are the three headed dog at the gates of hell, but our glorious Lord has silenced his barkings for ever against his own believing ones. The trinity of sin is overcome by the Trinity of heaven. Non imputation is of the very essence of pardon: the believer sins, but his sin is not reckoned, not accounted to him. Certain divines froth at the mouth with rage against imputed righteousness, be it ours to see our sin not imputed, and to us may there be as Paul words it, "Righteousness imputed without works." He is blessed indeed who has a substitute to stand for him to whose account all his debts may be set down. *And in whose spirit there is no guile.* He who is pardoned, has in every case been taught to deal honestly with himself, his sin, and his God. Forgiveness is no sham, and the peace which it brings is not caused by playing tricks with conscience. Self deception and hypocrisy bring no blessedness, they may drug the soul into hell with pleasant dreams, but into the heaven of true peace they cannot conduct their victim. Free from guilt, free from guile. Those who are justified from fault are sanctified from falsehood. A liar is not a forgiven soul. Treachery, double dealing, chicanery, dissimulation, are lineaments of the devil's children, but he who is washed from sin is truthful, honest, simple, and childlike. There can be no blessedness to tricksters with their plans, and tricks, and shuffling, and pretending: they are too much afraid of discovery to be at ease; their house is built on the volcano's brink, and eternal destruction must be their portion. Observe the three words to describe sin, and the three words to represent pardon, weigh them well, and note their meaning. (See note at the end.)

Verses 3-5. David now gives us his own experience: no instructor is so efficient as one who testifies to what he has personally known and felt. He writes well who like the spider spins his matter out of his own bowels.

Verse 3. *When I kept silence.* When through neglect I failed to confess, or through despair dared not do so, *my bones*, those solid pillars of my frame, the stronger portions of my bodily constitution, *waxed old*, began to decay with weakness, for my grief was so intense as to sap my health and destroy my vital energy. What a killing thing is sin! It is a pestilent disease! A fire in the bones! While we smother our sin it rages within, and like a gathering wound swells horribly and torments terribly. *Through my roaring all the day long.* He was silent as to confession, but not as to sorrow. Horror at

his great guilt, drove David to incessant laments, until his voice was no longer like the articulate speech of man, but so full of sighing and groaning, that it resembled to hoarse roaring of a wounded beast. None knows the pangs of conviction but those who have endured them. The rack, the wheel, the flaming fagot are ease compared with the Tophet which a guilty conscience kindles within the breast: better suffer all the diseases which flesh is heir to, than lie under the crushing sense of the wrath of almighty God. The Spanish inquisition with all its tortures was nothing to the inquest which conscience holds within the heart.

Verse 4. *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me.* God's finger can crush us—what must his hand be, and that pressing heavily and continuously! Under terrors of conscience, men have little rest by night, for the grim thoughts of the day dog them to their chambers and haunt their dreams, or else they lie awake in a cold sweat of dread. God's hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down: better a world on the shoulder, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David. *My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* The sap of his soul was dried, and the body through sympathy appeared to be bereft of its needful fluids. The oil was almost gone from the lamp of life, and the flame flickered as though it would soon expire. Unconfessed transgression, like a fierce poison, dried up the fountain of the man's strength and made him like a tree blasted by the lightning, or a plant withered by the scorching heat of a tropical sun. Alas! for a poor soul when it has learned its sin but forgets its Saviour, it goes hard with it indeed. *Selah.* It was time to change the tune, for the notes are very low in the scale, and with such hard usage, the strings of the harp are out of order: the next verse will surely be set to another key, or will rehearse a more joyful subject.

Verse 5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee.* After long lingering, the broken heart bethought itself of what it ought to have done at the first, and laid bare its bosom before the Lord. The lancet must be let into the gathering ulcer before relief can be afforded. The least thing we can do, if we would be pardoned, is to acknowledge our fault; if we are too proud for this we double deserve punishment. *And mine iniquity have I not hid.* We must confess the guilt as well as the fact of sin. It is useless to conceal it, for it is well known to God; it is beneficial to us to own it, for a full confession softens and humbles the heart. We must as far as possible unveil the secrets of the soul, dig up the hidden treasure of Achan, and by weight and measure bring out our sins. *I said.* This was his fixed resolution. *I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.* Not to my fellow men or to the high priest, but unto Jehovah; even in those days of symbol the faithful looked to God alone for deliverance from sin's intolerable load, much more now, when types and shadows have vanished at the appearance of the dawn. When the soul determines to lay low and plead guilty, absolution is near at hand; hence we read, *And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* Not only was the sin itself pardoned, but the iniquity of it; the virus of its guilt was put away, and that at once, so soon as the acknowledgment was made. God's pardons are deep and thorough: the knife of mercy cuts at the roots of the ill weed of sin.

Selah. Another pause is needed, for the matter is not such as may be hurried over.

"Pause, my soul, adore and wonder,

Ask, O why such love to me?

Grace has put me in the number

Of the Saviour's family.

Hallelujah!

Thanks, eternal thanks, to thee."

Verse 6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.* If

the psalmist means that *on account of* God's mercy others would become hopeful, his witness is true.

Remarkable answers to prayer very much quicken the prayerfulness of other godly persons. Where

one man finds a golden nugget others feel inclined to dig. The benefit of our experience to others

should reconcile us to it. No doubt the case of David has led thousands to seek the Lord with hopeful

courage who, without such an instance to cheer them, might have died in despair. Perhaps the

psalmist meant *for* this favour or the like all godly souls would seek, and here, again, we can confirm

his testimony, for all will draw near to God in the same manner as he did when godliness rules their

heart. The mercy seat is the way to heaven for all who shall ever come there. There is, however, a

set time for prayer, beyond which it will be unavailing; between the time of sin and the day of

punishment mercy rules the hour, and God may be found, but when once the sentence has gone

forth pleading will be useless, for the Lord will not be found by the condemned soul. O dear reader,

slight not the accepted time, waste not the day of salvation. The godly pray while the Lord has

promised to answer, the ungodly postpone their petitions till the Master of the house has risen up and

shut to the door, and then their knocking is too late. What a blessing to be led to seek the Lord before

the great devouring floods leap forth from their lairs, for then when they do appear we shall be safe.

Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. The floods shall come, and the

waves shall rage, and toss themselves like Atlantic billows; whirlpools and waterspouts shall be on

every hand, but the praying man shall be at a safe distance, most surely secured from every ill. David

was probably most familiar with those great land floods which fill up, with rushing torrents, the beds of

rivers which at other times are almost dry: these overflowing waters often did great damage, and, as

in the case of the Kishon, were sufficient to sweep away whole armies. From sudden and

overwhelming disasters thus set forth in metaphor the true suppliant will certainly be held secure. He

who is saved from sin has no need to fear anything else.

Verse 7. *Thou art my hiding place.* Terse, short sentences make up this verse, but they contain a

world of meaning. Personal claims upon our God are the joy of spiritual life. To lay our hand upon the

Lord with the clasp of a personal "my" is delight at its full. Observe that the same man who in the

fourth verse was oppressed by the presence of God, here finds a shelter in him. See what honest

confession and full forgiveness will do! The gospel of substitution makes him to be our refuge who otherwise would have been our judge. *Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.* Trouble shall do me no real harm when the Lord is with me, rather it shall bring me much benefit, like the file which clears away the rust, but does not destroy the metal. Observe the three tenses, we have noticed the sorrowful past, the last sentence was a joyful present, this is a cheerful future. *Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* What a golden sentence! The man is encircled in song, surrounded by dancing mercies, all of them proclaiming the triumphs of grace. There is no breach in the circle, it completely rings him round; on all sides he hears music. Before him hope sounds the cymbals, and behind him gratitude beats the timbrel. Right and left, above and beneath, the air resounds with joy, and all this for the very man who, a few weeks ago, was roaring all the day long. How great a change! What wonders grace has done and still can do! *Selah.* There was a need of a pause, for love so amazing needs to be pondered, and joy so great demands quiet contemplation, since language fails to express it.

Verse 8. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.* Here the Lord is the speaker, and gives the psalmist an answer to his prayer. Our Saviour is our instructor. The Lord himself deigns to teach his children to walk in the way of integrity, his holy word and the monitions of the Holy Spirit are the directors of the believer's daily conversation. We are not pardoned that we may henceforth live after our own lusts, but that we may be educated in holiness and trained for perfection. A heavenly training is one of the covenant blessings which adoption seals to us: "All thy children shall be taught by the Lord." Practical teaching is the very best of instruction, and they are thrice happy who, although they never sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and are ignorant of Aristotle, and the ethics of the schools, have nevertheless learned to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. *I will guide thee with mine eye.* As servants take their cue from the master's eye, and a nod or a wink is all that they require, so should we obey the slightest hints of our Master, not needing thunderbolts to startle our incorrigible sluggishness, but being controlled by whispers and love touches. The Lord is the great overseer, whose eye in providence overlooks everything. It is well for us to be the sheep of his pasture, following the guidance of his wisdom.

Verse 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding.* Understanding separates man from a brute—let us not act as if we were devoid of it. Men should take counsel and advice, and be ready to run where wisdom points them the way. Alas! we need to be cautioned against stupidity of heart, for we are very apt to fall into it. We who ought to be as the angels, readily become as the beasts. *Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.* It is much to be deplored that we so often need to be severely chastened before we will obey. We ought to be as a feather in the wind, wafted readily in the breath of the Holy Spirit, but alas! we lie like motionless logs, and stir not with heaven itself in view. Those cutting bits of affliction show how

hard mouthed we are, those bridles of infirmity manifest our headstrong and wilful manners. We should not be treated like mules if there was not so much of the ass about us. If we will be fractious, we must expect to be kept in with a tight rein. Oh, for grace to obey the Lord willingly, lest like the wilful servant, we are beaten with many stripes. Calvin renders the last words, "Lest they kick against thee," a version more probable and more natural, but the passage is confessedly obscure—not however, in its general sense.

Verse 10. *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.* Like refractory horses and mules, they have many cuts and bruises. Here and hereafter the portion of the wicked is undesirable. Their joys are evanescent, their sorrows are multiplying and ripening. He who sows sin will reap sorrow in heavy sheaves. Sorrows of conscience, of disappointment, of terror, are the sinner's sure heritage in time, and then for ever sorrows of remorse and despair. Let those who boast of present sinful joys, remember the *shall be* of the future and take warning. *But he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.* Faith is here placed as the opposite of wickedness, since it is the source of virtue. Faith in God is the great charmer of life's cares, and he who possesses it, dwells in an atmosphere of grace, surrounded with the bodyguard of mercies. May it be given to us of the Lord at all times to believe in the mercy of God, even when we cannot see traces of its working, for to the believer, mercy is as all surrounding as omniscience, and every thought and act of God is perfumed with it. The wicked have a hive of wasps around them, *many sorrows*; but we have a swarm of bees storing honey for us.

Verse 11. *Be glad.* Happiness is not only our privilege, but our duty. Truly we serve a generous God, since he makes it a part of our obedience to be joyful. How sinful are our rebellious murmurings! How natural does it seem that a man blest with forgiveness should be glad! We read of one who died at the foot of the scaffold of overjoy at the receipt of his monarch's pardon; and shall we receive the free pardon of the King of kings, and yet pine in inexcusable sorrow? "*In the Lord.*" Here is the directory by which gladness is preserved from levity. We are not to be glad in sin, or to find comfort in corn, and wine, and oil, but in our God is to be the garden of our soul's delight. That there is a God and such a God, and that he is ours, ours for ever, our Father and our reconciled Lord, is matter enough for a never ending psalm of rapturous joy. *And rejoice, ye righteous,* redouble your rejoicing, peal upon peal. Since God has clothed his choristers in the white garments of holiness, let them not restrain their joyful voices, but sing aloud and shout as those who find great spoil. *And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.* Our happiness should be demonstrative; chill penury of love often represses the noble flame of joy, and men whisper their praises decorously where a hearty outburst of song would be far more natural. It is to be feared that the church of the present day, through a craving for excessive propriety, is growing too artificial; so that enquirers' cries and believers' shouts would be silenced if they were heard in our assemblies. This may be better than boisterous

fanaticism, but there is as much danger in the one direction as the other. For our part, we are touched to the heart by a little sacred excess, and when godly men in their joy over leap the narrow bounds of decorum, we do not, like Michal, Saul's daughter, eye them with a sneering heart. Note how the pardoned are represented as upright, righteous, and without guile; a man may have many faults and yet be saved, but a false heart is everywhere the damning mark. A man of twisting, shifty ways, of a crooked, crafty nature, is not saved, and in all probability never will be; for the ground which brings forth a harvest when grace is sown in it, may be weedy and waste, but our Lord tells us it is *honest* and good ground. Our observation has been that men of double tongues and tricky ways are the least likely of all men to be saved: certainly where grace comes it restores man's mind to its perpendicular, and delivers him from being doubled up with vice, twisted with craft, or bent with dishonesty. Reader, what a delightful Psalm! Have you, in perusing it, been able to claim a lot in the goodly land? If so, publish to others the way of salvation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Title. The term *Maschil* is prefixed to thirteen Psalms. Our translators have not ventured to do more, in the *text*, than simply print the word in English characters; in the *margin* however they render it, as the Geneva version had done before them, "to give instruction." It would be going too far to affirm that this interpretation is subject to no doubt. Some good Hebraists take exception to it; so that, perhaps, our venerable translators did well to leave it untranslated. Still the interpretation they have set down in the margin, as it is in the most ancient, so it is sustained by the great preponderance of authority. It agrees remarkably with the contents of the thirty-second Psalm, which affords the earliest instance of its use, for that Psalm is preeminently didactic. Its scope is to instruct the convicted soul how to obtain peace with God, and be compassed about with songs of deliverance. *William Binnie, D.D., in "The Psalms: Their History, Teachings, and Use," 1870.*

Whole Psalm. This is a Didactic Psalm, wherein David teacheth sinners to repent by his doctrine, who taught them to sin by his example. This science is universal and pertaineth to all men, and which necessarily we must all learn; princes, priests, people, men, women, children, tradesmen; all, I say, must be put to this school, without which lesson all others are unprofitable. But to the point. This is a mark of a true penitent, when he hath been a stumbling block to others, to be as careful to raise them up by his repentance as he was hurtful to them by his sin; and I never think that man truly penitent who is ashamed to teach sinners repentance by his own particular proof. The Samaritan woman, when she was converted, left her bucket at the well, entered the city, and said, "Come forth, yonder is a man who hath told me all that I have done." And our Saviour saith to St. Peter, "When thou art converted, strength thy brethren." Joh 4:29 Lu 22:32. St. Paul also after his conversion is not ashamed to call himself chiefest of all sinners, and to teach others to repent of their sins by repenting

for his own. Happy, and thrice happy, is the man who can build so much as he hath cast down.
Archibald Symson.

Whole Psalm. It is told of Luther that one day being asked which of all the Psalms were the best, he made answer, "*Psalmi Paulini*," and when his friends pressed to know which these might be, he said, "The 32nd, the 51st, the 130th, and the 143rd. For they all teach that the forgiveness of our sins comes, without the law and without works, to the man who believes, and therefore I call them Pauline Psalms; and David sings, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared, 'this is just what Paul says, 'God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' Ro 11:32. Thus no man may boast of his own righteousness. That word, 'That thou mayest be feared, 'dusts away all merit, and teaches us to uncover our heads before God, and confess *gratia est, non meritum: remissio, non satisfactio*; it is mere forgiveness, not merit at all." *Luther's Table Talk.*

Whole Psalm. Some assert that this Psalm used to be sung on the day of expiation. *Robert Leighton.*

The Penitential Psalms. When Galileo was imprisoned by the Inquisition at Rome, for asserting the Copernican System, he was enjoined, as a penance, to repeat the Seven Penitential Psalms every week for three years. This must have been intended as extorting a sort of confession from him of his guilt, and acknowledgment of the justice of his sentence; and in which there certainly was some cleverness and, indeed, humour, however adding to the iniquity (or foolishness) of the proceeding. Otherwise it is not easy to understand what idea of painfulness or punishment the good fathers could attach to a devotional exercise such as this, which, in whatever way, could only have been agreeable and consoling to their prisoner. *M. Montague, in "The Seven Penitential Psalms in Verse...with an Appendix and Notes," 1844.*

Verse 1. Blessed. Or, O blessed man; or, Oh, the felicities of that man! to denote the most supreme and perfect blessedness. As the elephant, to denote its vast bulk, is spoken of in the plural number, *Behemoth.* *Robert Leighton.*

Verse 1. Notice, this is the first Psalm, except the first of all, which begins with Blessedness. In the first Psalm we have the blessing of innocence, or rather, of him who only was innocent: here we have the blessing of repentance, as the next happiest state to that of sinlessness. *Lorinus, in Neale's Commentary.*

Verse 1. Blessed is the man, saith David, *whose sins are pardoned*, where he maketh remission of sins to be true felicity. Now there is no true felicity but that which is enjoyed, and felicity cannot be enjoyed unless it be felt; and it cannot be felt unless a man know himself to be in possession of it; and a man cannot know himself to be in possession of it, if he doubt whether he hath it or not; and therefore this doubting of the remission of sins is contrary to true felicity, and is nothing else but a torment of the conscience. For a man cannot doubt whether his sins be pardoned or not, but

straightway, if his conscience be not seared with a hot iron, the very thought of his sin will strike a great fear into him; for the fear of eternal death, and the horror of God's judgment will come to his remembrance, the consideration of which is most terrible. *William Perkins.*

Verse 1. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* Get your sins hid. There is a covering of sin which proves a curse. Pr 28:13. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; "there is a *covering* it, by not confessing it, or which is worse, by denying it—Gehazi's covering—a covering of sin by a lie; and there is also a covering of sin by justifying ourselves in it. I have not done this thing; or, I did no evil in it. All these are evil coverings: he that thus covereth his sin shall not prosper. But there is a *blessed* covering of sin: forgiveness of sin is the hiding it out of sight, and that's the blessedness. *Richard Alleine.*

Verse 1. *Whose transgression is forgiven.* We may lull the soul asleep with carnal delights, but the virtue of that opium will be soon spent. All those joys are but stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret—a poor sorry peace that dares not come to the light and endure the trial; a sorry peace that is soon disturbed by a few serious and sober thoughts of God and the world to come; but when once sin is pardoned, then you have true joy indeed. "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Mt 9:2. *Thomas Manton.*

Verse 1. *Forgiven.* Holy David, in the front of this Psalm shows us wherein true happiness consists: not in beauty, honour, riches (the world's trinity), but in the forgiveness of sin. The Hebrew word to *forgive*, signifies to carry out of sight; which well agrees with that Jer 50:20. "In those days, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." This is an incomprehensible blessing, and such as lays a foundation for all other mercies. I shall but glance at it, and lay down these five assertions about it. 1. Forgiveness is an act of God's free grace. The Greek word *to forgive*, deciphers the original of pardon; it ariseth not from anything inherent in us, but is the pure result of free grace. Isa 43:25. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." When a creditor forgives a debtor, he doeth it freely. Paul cries out, "I obtained mercy." 1Ti 1:13. The Greek signifies, "I was be-mercied; "he who is pardoned, is all bestrewed with mercy. When the Lord pardons a sinner, he doth not pay a debt, but gives a legacy.

2. God in forgiving sin, remits the guilt and penalty. Guilt cries for justice: no sooner had Adam eaten the apple, but he saw the flaming sword, and heard the curse; but in remission God doth indulge the sinner; he seems to say thus to him: Though thou art fallen into the hands of my justice, and deserve to die, yet I will absolve thee, and whatever is charged upon thee shall be discharged.

3. Forgiveness of sin is through the blood of Christ. Free grace is the impulsive cause; Christ's blood is the meritorious. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb 9:22. Justice would be revenged either on the sinner or the surety. Every pardon is the price of blood.

4. Before sin is forgiven, it must be repented of. Therefore repentance and remission are linked together. "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." Lu 24:47. Not that repentance doth in a Popish sense merit forgiveness; Christ's blood must wash our tears; but repentance is a qualification, though not a cause. He who is humbled for sin will the more value pardoning mercy.

5. God having forgiven sin, he will call it no more into remembrance. Jer 31:34. The Lord will make an act of indemnity, he will not upbraid us with former unkindnesses, or sue us with a cancelled bond. "He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Mic 7:19. Sin shall not be cast in as a cork which riseth up again, but as lead which sinks to the bottom. How should we all labour for this covenant blessing! *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 1. *Sin is covered.* Every man that must be happy, must have something to hide and cover his sins from God's eyes; and nothing in the world can do it, but Christ and his righteousness, typified in the ark of the covenant, whose cover was of gold, and called a propitiatory, that as it covered the tables that were within the ark, so God covers our sins against those tables. So the cloud covering the Israelites in the wilderness, signified God's covering us from the danger of our sins. *Thomas Taylor's "David's Learning: or the Way to True Happiness."* 1617.

Verse 1. *Sin covered.* This *covering* hath relation to some nakedness and filthiness which should be covered, even sin, which defileth us and maketh us naked. Why, saith Moses to Aaron, hast thou made the people naked? Ex 32:25. The garments of our merits are too short and cannot cover us, we have need therefore to borrow of Christ Jesus his merits and the mantle of his righteousness, that it may be unto us as a garment, and as those breeches of leather which God made unto Adam and Eve after their fall. Garments are ordained to cover our nakedness, defend us from the injury of the weather, and to adorn us. So the mediation of our Saviour serveth to cover our nakedness, that the wrath of God seize not upon us—he is that "white raiment" wherewith we should be clothed, that our filthy nakedness may not appear—to defend us against Satan—he is "mighty to save," etc.—and to be an ornament to decorate us, for he is that "*wedding garment:*" "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Re 3:18 Isa 63:1 Mt 22:11 Ro 13:14. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 1. The object of pardon—about which it is conversant, is set forth under diverse expressions—*iniquity, transgression, and sin.* As in law many words of like import and signification are heaped up and put together, to make the deed and legal instrument more comprehensive and effectual. I observe it the rather, because when God proclaims his name the same words are used, Ex 34:7, "Taking away iniquity, transgressions, and sin." Well, we have seen the meaning of the expression. Why doth the holy man of God use such vigour and vehemency of inculcation. "*Blessed is the man!*" and again, "*Blessed is the man!*" Partly with respect to his own case. David knew how sweet it was to have sin pardoned; he had felt the bitterness of sin in his own soul, to the drying up of

his blood, and therefore he doth express his sense of pardon in the most lively terms. And then, partly, too, with respect to those for whose use this instruction was written, that they might not look upon it as a light and trivial thing, but be thoroughly apprehensive of the worth of so great a privilege. Blessed, happy, thrice happy they who have obtained pardon of their sins, and justification by Jesus Christ. *Thomas Manton.*

Verses 1-2. In these verses *four* evils are mentioned; 1.—*Transgression*, (evp) *pesha*. 2. *Sin*, (hajx) *chataah*. 3.—*Iniquity*, (Nwe) *avon*. 4.—*Guile*, (hymd) *remiyah*. The *first* signifies the *passing over a boundary, doing what is prohibited*. The *second* signifies the *missing of a mark, not doing what was commanded*; but it is often taken to express *sinfulness*, or sin in the nature, producing transgression in the life. The *third* signifies *what is turned out of its proper course or situation; anything morally distorted or perverted*. *Iniquity*, what is contrary to *equity* or *justice*. The *fourth* signifies *fraud, deceit, guile*, etc. To remove these evils, *three* acts are mentioned: *forgiving, covering, and not imputing*.

1. TRANSGRESSION, (evp) *pesha*, must be forgiven, (ywsn) *nesui*, borne away, *i.e.*, by a vicarious sacrifice; for *bearing sin, or bearing away sin*, always implies this.

2. SIN, (hajx) *chataah*, must be *covered*, (ywob) *kesui*, hidden from the sight. It is odious and abominable, and must be put out of sight.

3. INIQUITY, (Nwe) *avon*, what is *perverse* or *distorted*, must not be imputed, (bsxyal) *lo yachshobh*, must *not be reckoned to his account*.

4. GUILLE, (hymd) *remiyah*, must be annihilated from the soul. *In whose spirit there is no GUILLE*. The man whose *transgression* is forgiven; whose *sin* is hidden, God having cast it as a millstone into the depths of the sea; whose *iniquity* and *perversion* is not reckoned to his account; and whose *guile*, the deceitful and desperately wicked heart, is annihilated, being emptied of sin, and filled with righteousness, is necessarily a happy man. *Adam Clarke.*

Verses 1-2. *Transgression*. Prevarication. Some understand by it sins of omission and commission.

Sin. Some understand those inward inclinations, lusts, and motions, whereby the soul swerves from the law of God, and which are the immediate cause of external sins.

Iniquity. Notes original sin, the root of all.

Levatus, forgiven, eased, signifies to take away, to bear, to carry away. Two words in Scripture are chiefly used to denote remission, to expiate, to bear or carry away: the one signifies the manner whereby it is done, namely, atonement, the other the effect of this expiation, carrying away; one notes the meritorious cause, the other the consequent.

Covered. Alluding to the covering of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Menochius thinks it alludes to the manner of writing among the Hebrews, which he thinks to be the same with that of the Romans; as writing with a pencil upon wax spread upon tables, which when they would blot out they made the wax plain, and drawing it over the writing, covered the former letters. And so it is equivalent with that

expression of "blotting out sin, "as in the other allusion it is with "casting sin into the depths of the sea."

Impute. Not charging upon account. As sin is a defection from the law, so it is forgiven; as it is offensive to God's holiness, so it is covered; as it is a debt involving man in a debt of punishment, so it is not imputed; they all note the certainty, and extent, and perfection of pardon: the three words expressing sin here, being the same that are used by God in the declaration of his name. *Stephen Charnock.*

Verses 1-2, 6-7. Who is blessed? Not he who cloaks, conceals, confesses not his sin. As long as David was in this state he was miserable. There was guile in his spirit Ps 32:2 misery in his heart, his very bones waxed old, his moisture was dried up as the drought in summer Ps 32:3-4. Who is blessed? He that is without sin, he who sins not, he who grieves no more by his sin the bosom on which he reclines. This is superlative blessedness, its highest element the happiness of heaven. To be like God, to yield implicit, ready, full, perfect obedience, the obedience of the heart, of our entire being; this is to be blessed above all blessedness. But among those who live in a world of sin, who are surrounded by sin, who are themselves sinners, who is blessed? *He whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity;* and especially does he feel it to be so, who can, in some degree, enter into the previous state of David's soul Ps 32:3-4. Ah, in what a wretched state was the psalmist previously to this blessedness! How must sin have darkened and deadened his spiritual faculties, to have guile in the spirit of one who could elsewhere exclaim, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, " any way of pain or grief, any way of sin which most surely leads to these. Ps 139:23-34. What a mournful condition of soul was his, who while he roared all the day long, yet kept silence before God, had no heart to open his heart unto God, was dumb before him, not in submission to his will, not in accepting the punishment of his iniquity Le 26:46, not in real confession, and honest, upright, and sincere acknowledgment of his iniquity to him against whom he had committed it. *"I kept silence,* "not merely I was silent, *"I kept silence,* "resolutely, perseveringly; I kept it notwithstanding all the remembrance of my past mercies, notwithstanding my reproaches of conscience, and my anguish of heart. I kept it notwithstanding *"thy hand was heavy upon me day and night,* "notwithstanding *"my moisture,* "all that was spiritual in me, my vital spirit, all that was indicative of spiritual life in my soul, seemed dried up and gone. Yes, Lord, notwithstanding all this, I *kept* it. But Nathan came, thou didst send him. He was to me a messenger full of reproof, full of faithfulness, but full of love. He came with thy word, and with the word of a King there was power. I acknowledged my sin unto him, and my iniquity did I not hide, but this was little. Against thee, thee only, did I sin, and to thee was my confession made. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, O Lord. I solemnly said that I would do so, and I did it. I confessed my transgression unto the Lord, *"and thou forgavest the iniquity of my*

sin."

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. Behold the man who is blessed; blessed in the state of his mind, his guileless spirit, his contrite heart, the fruit of the spirit of grace; blessed in the forgiveness of a forgiving God; a forgiveness, perfect, entire, lacking nothing, signified by sin "covered, "iniquity not imputed" of the Lord; blessed in the blessings which followed it. *Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* Beneath the hollow of that hand which was once so heavy upon me, I can now repose. Thou art my hiding place, I dread thee no more; nay, I dwell in thee as my habitation, and my high tower, my covert, my safety, my house. Safe in thy love, whatever trouble may be my portion, and by the mouth of Nathan thy servant thou hast declared that trouble shall be my portion, I shall yet be preserved; yea, more, so fully wilt thou deliver me that I believe thou wilt encompass me so with the arms of thy mercy, as to call forth songs of grateful praise for thy gracious interposition.

Behold, the blessedness of him whom God forgives! No wonder, then, that the psalmist adds, *for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.* As much as if he had said, Surely after this thy gracious conduct towards me, all that truly love and fear thee, every one that is godly, when he hears of thy dealings with me, "will pray unto thee." Encouraged by my example, he will not keep silence as I foolishly and sinfully did, but will confess and supplicate before thee, since thou art to be "found, "and hast so wondrously shown that thou art, of all that truly seek thee, since there is *the place* of finding, as I lay my hand upon the victim, and look through that victim to him the promised Seed; since there is *the time* of finding, declared in thy word, and manifested by the secret drawing of my heart to thee by thy grace; since the unwillingness is not in thee, but in thy sinning creature to come to thee; *for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee*, then, however deep the water floods may be, however fierce the torrent, and headlong the stream, they shall not even come nigh unto him, much less shall they overwhelm him. *James Harrington Evans, M.A., 1785-1849.*

Verse 2. *Unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* Aben Ezra paraphrases it, of *whose sins God does not think*, does not regard them, so as to bring them into judgment, reckoning them as if they were not; *ou me logizetai does not count or calculate them*; does not require for them the debt of punishment. To us the remission is entirely free, our Sponsor having taken upon him the whole business of paying the ransom. His suffering is our impunity, his bond our freedom, and his chastisement our peace; and therefore the prophet says, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." *Robert Leighton.*

Verse 2. *In whose spirit there is no guile.* In the saint's trouble, conscience is full of Scripture sometimes, on which it grounds its verdict, but very ill interpreted. Oh, saith the poor soul, this place is against me! *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there*

is no guile. Here, saith he, is a description of a sincere soul, to be one in whose spirit there is no guile; but I find much guile in me, therefore I am not the sincere one. Now this is a very weak, yea, false inference. By a spirit without guile, is not meant a person that hath not the least deceitfulness and hypocrisy remaining in his heart. To be without sin, and to be without guile, in this strict sense are the same—a prerogative here on earth peculiar to the Lord Christ 1Pe 2:22, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." And therefore when we meet with the same phrase attributed to the saints, as to Levi, Mal 2:6; "Iniquity was not found in his lips;" and to Nathanael, Joh 1:47: "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile!" we must sense it in an inferior way, that may suit with their imperfect state here below, and not put that which was only Christ's crown on earth, and is the glorified saint's robe in heaven, on the weak Christian while militant here on earth, not only with a devil without, but with a body of sin within him. Wipe thine eyes again, poor soul, and then if thou readest such places, wherein the Spirit of God speaks so highly and hyperbolically of his saint's grace, thou shalt find he doth not assert the perfection of their grace, free from all mixture of sin, but rather to comfort poor drooping souls, and cross their misgiving hearts, which, from the presence of hypocrisy, are ready to overlook their sincerity as none at all, he expresses his high esteem of their little grace, by speaking of it as if it were perfect, and their hypocrisy none at all. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 2. *In whose spirit there is no guile.* When once pardon is realized, the believer has courage to be truthful before God: he can afford to have done with *guile* in the spirit. Who would not declare all his debts when they are certain to be discharged by another? Who would not declare his malady when he was sure of a cure? True faith knows not only that *guile* before God is impossible, but also that it is no longer necessary. The believer has nothing to conceal: he sees himself as before God, stripped, and laid open, and bare; and if he has learned to see himself as he is, so also has he learned to see God as he reveals himself. There is no *guile* in the spirit of one who is justified by faith; because in the act of justification truth has been established in his inward parts. There is no *guile* in the spirit of him who sees the truth of himself in the light of the truth of God. For the truth of God shows him at once that in Christ he is perfectly righteous before God, and in himself he is the chief of sinners. Such a one knows he is not his own, for he is bought with a price, and therefore he is to glorify God. There is no *guile* in the spirit of him whose real object is to glorify Christ and not himself. But when a man is not quite true to Christ, and has not quite ceased to magnify self, there may be *guile*, for he will be more occupied with thoughts about himself than with the honour of Christ. But if the truth, and honour, and glory of Christ be his supreme care, he may leave himself out of the question, and, like Christ, "O commit himself to him that judgeth righteously." *J. W. Reeve, M.A., in "Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm," 1860.*

Verse 2. *No guile.* Sincerity is that property to which pardoning mercy is annexed. True, indeed, it is that Christ covers all our sins and failings; but it is only the sincere soul over which he will cast his

skirt. *Blessed is he whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* None will doubt this; but which is the man? The next words tell us his name; *And in whose spirit there is no guile.* Christ's righteousness is the garment which covers the nakedness and shame of our unrighteousness; faith the grace that puts this garment on; but what faith? None but the faith unfeigned, as Paul calls it. 2Ti 1:5. "Here is water," said the eunuch, "what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Ac 8:36. Now mark Philip's answer, Ac 8:37, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest; "as if he had said, Nothing but an hypocritical heart can hinder thee. It is the false heart only that finds the door of mercy shut. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 2. *Guile.* The guile of the spirit is an inward corruption in the soul of man, whereby he dealeth deceitfully with himself before God in the matter of salvation. *Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 3. *My bones waxed old.* God sports not at the sins of his elect, but outwardly doth deal with them more hardly, and chastise them more rigorously than he doth the reprobate. David's troubles and pains were partly external, partly internal: external I call those that were cast on his body; internal upon his conscience. And in the body were torments and vexations, seizing sometimes on his flesh—which was less painful—sometimes on his bones, which was more grievous, yea, almost intolerable, as experience teacheth. And this is God's just recompense; when we bestow our strength on sin, God abates it, and so weakens us. Samson spent his strength on Delilah, but to what weakness was he brought! Let us, therefore, learn, that God hath given us bones and the strength thereof for another use, that is, to serve him, and not waste or be prodigal of them in the devil's service. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 3. *My bones waxed old.* By bones, the strength of the body, the inward strength and vigour of the soul is meant. The conscience of sin, and the terror of judgment doth break the heart of a true penitent, so long as he beholdeth his sin deserving death, his judge ready to pronounce the sentence of it, hell open to receive him for it, and the evil angels, God's executioners, at hand to hurry him to it. *Samuel Page, in "David's Broken Heart," 1646.*

Verse 3. *My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* David here not only mourns for sin as a man, but he roars, as it were, like a pained beast. He seems fitter for a wilderness to cry out, than for a secret chamber to weep in; at other times he can "water his couch" in the night, now he "roars" all the day long; at other times, "his moisture is dried, "now his "bones, "the pillars of his house shake and wax old. *Alexander Carmichael, 1677.*

Verse 4. *Thy hand.* A correcting hand, whereby God scourges and buffets his own children. Now the sense of God's power punishing or correcting, is called God's hand, as 1Sa 5:11. The hand of God was sore at Ekron, because of the ark; and a *heavy* hand in resemblance, because when men smite they lay their hand heavier than ordinary. Hence, we may note three points of doctrine: first, that all afflictions are God's hand; secondly, that God lays his hand heavily often upon his dear children;

thirdly, that God often continues his heavy hand night and day on them. *Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 4. *My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* Another meaning may be attributed to these words. We may suppose the psalmist to be referring to *spiritual drought.* *Charles H. Bingham, B.A., in "Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm," 1836.*

Verse 4. *My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* The summer is from the middle of August to the middle of November. The intensity of the heat is great, and almost intolerable...Up to the beginning or middle of September there are no showers, rain being as scarce in summer as snow...The dry grass of the fields sometimes takes fire, and produces desolating conflagrations, and the parched earth is cleft and broken into chasms. *John Eadie, D.D., LL.D., in Biblical Cyclopaedia, 1868.*

Verse 4. *The drought of summer.* Dr. Russell, in his account of the weather at Aleppo, which very much resembles that of Judea, says that the verdure of the spring fades before the middle of May, and before the end of that month the whole country puts on so parched and barren an aspect that one would scarce think it capable of producing anything, there being but very few plants that have vigour enough to resist the extreme heat. *Thomas Harmer's "Observations," 1775.*

Verse 4. *The drought of summer.* During the twelve years from 1846 to 1859 only two slight showers fell in Jerusalem between the months of May and October. One fell in July, 1858, another in June 1859. *Dr. Whitty's "Water Supply of Jerusalem," quoted in Kitto's Cyclopaedia.*

Verse 4. If God striketh those so sore whom he favoureth, how sharply and sore will he strike them whom he favoureth not. *Gregory.*

Verses 4-5. If our offences have been not gnats, but camels, our sorrow must be not a drop, but an ocean. Scarlet sins call for bloody tears; and if Peter sin heinously he must weep bitterly. If, then, thy former life hath been a cord of iniquity, twisted with many threads, a writing full of great blots, a course spotted with various and grievous sins, multiply thy confessions and enlarge thy humiliation; double thy fastings and treble thy prayers; pour out thy tears, and fetch deep sighs; in a word, iterate and aggravate thy acknowledgments, though yet, as the apostle saith in another case, I say in this, "Grieve not as without hope, "that upon thy sincere and suitable repentance divine goodness will forgive thee thy sins. *Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.* The godly man is ingenuous in laying open his sins. The hypocrite doth veil and smother his sin; he doth not *abscindere peccatum*, but *abscondere*; like a patient that hath some loathsome disease in his body, he will rather die than confess his disease; but a godly man's sincerity is seen in this—he will confess and shame himself for sin. "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly." 2Sa 24:17. Nay, a child of God will confess sin in particular; an unsound Christian will confess sin by wholesale; he will acknowledge he is a sinner in general, whereas David doth, as it were, point with his finger to the

sore: "I have done this evil" Ps 51:4; he doth not say I have done evil, but this evil. He points at his blood guiltiness. *Thomas Watson*.

Verse 5. *I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* Be thine own accuser in the free confession of thy sins. *Peccavi pater* (as the prodigal child), "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." For it fares not in the court of heaven as it doth in our earthly tribunals. With men a free confession makes way for a condemnation; but with God, the more a sinner bemoans his offence, the more he extenuates the anger of his Judge. Sin cannot but call for justice, as it is an offence against God; yet, when once it is a wound to the soul it moveth him to mercy and clemency. Wherefore as David having but resolved to confess his sins, was accosted eftsoon with an absolution: so, *Tu agnosce, et Dominus ignoscet* (Augustine.) Be thou unfeigned in confessing, and God will be faithful in forgiving. 1Jo 1:9. Only let *confessio peccati be professo desinendi* (Hilary.)—the acknowledgment of thy sin an obligation to leave it; and then thou mayest build upon it. "He that confesseth and forsaketh shall have mercy." Pr 28:13. *Isaac Craven's Sermon at Paul's Cross, 1630*

Verse 5. *I said, I will confess, etc.* Justified persons, who have their sins forgiven, are yet bound to confess sin to God...There are many queries to be dispatched in the handling of this point. The first query is, what are the reasons why persons justified and pardoned are yet bound to make confession of sin unto God in private? The reasons are six. First, they are to confess sin unto God because holy confession gives a great deal of ease and holy quiet unto the mind of a sinner: concealed and indulged guilt contracts horror and dread on the conscience. Secondly, because God loves to hear the complaints and the confessions of his own people. Lying on the face is the best gesture, and the mourning weed the best garment that God is well pleased with. A third reason is, because confession of sin doth help to quicken the heart to strong and earnest supplication to God (see Ps 32:6). Confession is to the soul as the whetstone is to the knife, that sharpens it and puts an edge on it; so doth confession of sin. Confessing thy evils to God doth sharpen and put an edge on thy supplication; that man will pray but faintly that doth confess sin but slightly. A fourth reason is, because confession of sin will work a holy contrition and a godly sorrow in the heart. Ps 38:18. Declaration doth work compunction. Confession of sin is but the causing of sin to recoil on the conscience, which causeth blushing and shame of face, and grief of heart. A fifth reason is, because secret confession of sin doth give a great deal of glory to God. It gives glory to God's justice. I do confess sin, and do confess God in justice may damn me for my sin. It gives glory to God's mercy. I confess sin, yet mercy may save me. It gives glory to God's omniscience. In confessing sin I do acknowledge that God knoweth my sin. A sixth reason why justified persons must confess sin unto God is, because holy confession of sin will embitter sin, and endear Christ to them, when a man shall let sin recoil on his conscience, by a confession. *Condensed from Christopher Love's "Soul's Cordial," 1683.*

Verse 5. *I said, I will confess...and thou forgavest.* It remaineth as a truth, remission is undoubtedly annexed to confession. *Tantum valent tres syllabae PEC-CA-VI*, saith St. Austin, of so great force are those three syllables in the Latin, three words in the English, when uttered with a contrite heart, "*I have sinned.*" Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 5. *Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* This sin seems very probably to have been his adultery with Bathsheba, and murder of Uriah. Now David, to make the pardoning mercy of God more illustrious, saith he did not only forgive his *sin*, but the *iniquity* of his sin; and what was that? Surely the worst that can be said of that, his complicated sin, is that there was so much hypocrisy in it, he woefully juggled with God and man in it; this, I do not doubt to say, was *the iniquity* of his sin, and put a colour deeper on it than the blood which he shed. And the rather—I lay the accent there—because God himself, when he would set out the heinousness of this sin, seems to do it rather from the hypocrisy in the fact than the fact itself, as appears by the testimony given this holy man 1Ki 15:5: "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." Were there not other false steps which David took beside this? Doth the Spirit of God, by excepting this, declare his approbation of all that else he ever did? No, sure the Spirit of God records other sins that escaped this eminent servant of the Lord; but all those are drowned here, and this mentioned is the only stain of his life. But why? Surely because there appeared less sincerity, yea, more hypocrisy in this one sin than in all his others put together; though David in them was wrong as to the matter of his actions, yet his heart was more right in the manner of committing them. But here his sincerity was sadly wounded, though not to the total destruction of the habit, yet to lay it in a long swoon, as to any actings thereof. And truly the wound went very deep when that grace was stabbed in which did run the life blood of all the rest. We see, then, God hath reason, though his mercy prompted him, yea, his covenant obliged him, not to let his child die of this wound, yet so to heal it that a scar might remain upon the place, a mark upon the sin, whereby others might know how odious hypocrisy is to God. William Gurnall.

Verse 5. *Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* We must observe the *matter forgiven*, and the *manner of forgiving*. The matter forgiven is the *iniquity of his sin*. It is disputed what is here meant by *iniquity*, whether *culpa* or *paena*. Some understand *paenam*, and think that an allusion is made in this word unto the message of Nathan, wherein God doth remit the heaviest stroke of his wrath, but yet retains some part in punishing the child, and permitting Absalom to rebel and abuse king David's concubines: so Theodoret, *Deus non condigna paena Davidem punivit*. Some understand *culpam*, and will have this phrase to be an amplification of that, as if *superbia defendens*, or *taciturnitas celans*, or *impietas contra Deum assurgens*, or some such great guilt were meant by this phrase. But as I do not censure these opinions, which may well stand, so I think the phrase looks back into that

word which was in the *confession*. The sin confessed was (evp) and this is but an analysis of this word; for (ytajx Nwe), what is it, word for word, but the *perverseness of my aberration?* (hajx) is an aberration from the scope or mark whereat we aim; all men aim at felicity, but most men stray from it, because they are not led by the law that guides unto it, the violating whereof is called (hajx) But some do stray out of mere ignorance, and they only break the law; some out of stubbornness, which will not submit themselves to the Lawgiver; these men's sin is called *perverseness*, which God is said here to forgive. So that David did not confess more against himself than God includes in his pardon. Well may God exceed our desire; he never doth come short thereof if it do concern our spiritual, our eternal good. As he doth exclude no sinner that doth confess, so doth he except against no sin that is confessed. *Arthur Lake*.

Verse 6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found,* etc. Seeing he is such a God, who should refuse or delay his return! Surely every rational and pious mind will, without delay, invoke so gentle and mild a Lord; *will pray to him while he is exorable*, or, as the Hebrew expresses it, *in a time of finding*. For he who promises pardon, does not promise tomorrow. There are *tempora fandi*—certain times in which he may be spoken with, and a certain appointed day of pardon and of grace, which if a man by stupid perverseness despise, or by sloth neglect, surely he is justly overwhelmed with eternal might and misery, and must necessarily perish by the deluge of divine wrath; since he has contemned and derided that Ark of salvation which was prepared, and in which whoever enters into it shall be safe, while the world is perishing. *Robert Leighton*.

Verse 6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray to thee*, saith David. *For this!* What? Because of his sins. And who? Not the most wicked, but the *godly*, in this respect, have cause to pray. And for what should he pray? Surely, for renewed pardon, for increase of grace, and for the perfection of glory. We cannot say we have no sin. Oh, then let us pray with David, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!" Where there is a double emphasis observable, it is not *ab hoste*, but *a servo*. Though God's servant, yet he would not have God to enter into judgment with him. And again, *ne intres*, it is the very entrance into judgment that he dreads, and prayeth against; not only do not *proceed*, but do not so much as *enter*. *Nathanael Hardy*.

Verse 6. *For this shall every one that is godly.* We are here furnished with a fact which does not appear in the history of David. It is commonly supposed that after his grievous fall, till Nathan reproved him, he had been careless and stupefied; and this has often been adduced as a proof of the hardening nature of sin. But the thing was far otherwise. He was all the while tortured in his mind, yet unwilling to humble himself before God, and condemn himself before men, as he ought to have done. He kept silence and endeavoured to pass off the distress by time, palliation, and excuse. But the repression and concealment of his anguish preyed not only upon his peace, but his health, and

endangered life itself. At length he was reduced to the deepest penitence, and threw himself, by an unqualified confession, on the compassion of God. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee.* Here we see not only that all the godly pray, but every one of them prays for pardon. This is the very thing which our Saviour teaches his disciples: "When ye pray, say, Forgive us our trespasses." And this praying does not only regard the manifestation of forgiving mercy, as some would have it, but the exercise of it. *William Jay.*

Verse 6. *Godly.* A godly man is like God, he hath the same judgment with God! he thinks of things as God doth; he hath a God like disposition; he partakes of the divine nature. 2Pe 1:4. A godly man doth bear God's name and image: godliness is God likeness. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 6. *A time.* There be seasons, which, if taken, sweeten actions, and open the door for their better entertainment: Pr 25:11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver;" the Hebrew is, A word spoken upon its wheels: fit times and seasons are wheels to carry words with great advantage. And so for actions; when things are done in due time they are beautiful, acceptable. When God gives rain to a land in season, how acceptable is it! when a tree bears fruit in its season, it is grateful: so when angels or men do things seasonably, it is pleasing to the Lord Christ: there are fit times, which, if we miss, actions are unlovely, and miss of their aims. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.* There are times, if we have the wisdom to discern them, when prayer will be seasonable, acceptable, effectual. *William Greenhill.*

Verse 6. *Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.* The effects of prayer heretofore have been wonderful. Prayer hath sent down hailstones from heaven to overcome five kings with their armies. Prayer hath shut up the windows of heaven that it should not rain, and again hath opened them that the earth might give her increase. Prayer hath stayed the swift course of the sun and caused it to go backward fifteen degrees. Prayer hath held God's hands that he could not strike when he was ready to plague his people. Prayer without any other help or means hath thrown down the strong walls of Jericho. Prayer hath divided the sea that the floods thereof could not come near the Israelites. In this place it delivereth the faithful man from all the dangers of this world. *Surely in the floods of many waters they shall not come nigh unto him.* The sum is this, That no calamity of this world, no troubles of this life, no terrors of death, no guiltiness of sin, can be so great, but that a *godly* man by means of his faith and felicity in Christ shall wade out of them well enough. For howsoever other things go, still he shall have such a solace in his soul, such a comfort in his conscience, such a heaven in his heart, knowing himself reconciled to God and justified by faith, that, *Surely in the floods of many waters they shall not come nigh unto him.* Which, that it may better appear, I shall desire you to observe two things, the danger, the deliverance. The danger is in these words, *In the floods of many waters;* where the tribulations that the godly man is subject to in this life are likened, first, to *waters;* then to *many waters;* thirdly, to a *flood* of many waters. The deliverance is

in these words, *Surely they shall not come near him*; where the deliverance of the godly man hath three degrees also. First, "they shall not come *near*"; secondly, *him*, "they shall not come near *him*"; then, *surely*—"surely they shall not come near him." *Thomas Playfere*.

Verse 6. *The floods of great waters.* The afflictions of the faithful are likened to *waters*. Fire and water have no mercy, we say. But of the two water is the worst. For any fire may be quenched with water; but the force of water, if it begins to be violent, cannot by any power of man, be resisted. But these our tribulations which are *waters* are "*many waters*." Our common proverb is, "Seldom comes sorrow alone:" but as waters come rolling and waving many together, so the miseries of this life. *Thomas Playfere*.

Verse 6. *Floods of great waters.* Unfamiliar with the sudden flooding of thirsty water courses, we seldom comprehend the full force of the most striking images in the Old and New Testaments. *W.J. Conybeare, and J.S. Howson, in "Life and Epistles of St. Paul."*

Verse 6. *In the floods, etc.* Washed he may be, as Paul was in the shipwreck, but not drowned with those floods of great waters: be they never so great they are bounded. *Joseph Trapp*.

Verse 6. *Him.* This word must in no case be omitted; it helpeth us to answer a very strong objection. For it may be said, Many holy men have lost their goods, have suffered great torments in their body, have been troubled also in mind; how then did not the "floods of many waters" come near them? The word *him* helps us to answer. The very philosophers themselves reckoned their goods pertained no more to them, than, be it spoken with reverence and regard, the parings of their nails. Zenon hearing news he had lost all he had by sea, said only thus, Thou hast done very well, Fortune, to leave me nothing but my cloak. Another, called Anaxarchus, when as Nicocreon the tyrant commanded he should be beaten to death in a mortar, spake thus to the executioner, Beat and bray as long as thou wilt Anaxarchus his bag or satchel (so he called his own body), but Anaxarchus thou canst not touch. Yet these, making so small reckoning of their goods and body, set their minds notwithstanding at a high rate. The mind of a man is himself, say they. Hence it is that Julius Caesar, when Amyclas the pilot was greatly afraid of the tempest, spake to him thus: What meanest thou to fear, base fellow? dost thou not know thou carriest Caesar with thee? As if he should say, Caesar's body may well be drowned, as any other man's may; but his mind, his magnanimity, his valour, his fortitude, can never be drowned. Thus far went philosophy; but divinity goeth a degree further. For philosophy defines *him*, that is, a man, by his reason, and the moral virtues of the mind; but divinity defines a Christian man by his faith, and his conjunction thereby with Christ. Excellently saith Saint Austin: Whence comes it that the soul dieth? Because faith is not in it. Whence that the body dieth? Because a soul is not in it. Therefore the soul of thy soul is faith. So that if we would know what is a faithful man, we must define him, not by his natural soul, as he is reasonable, but by the soul of his soul, which is his faith. And then we easily answer the objection, that a flood may come near a faithful man's goods,

near his body, near his reasonable soul; but to his faith, that is, to HIM, it can never come near.
Thomas Playfere.

Verse 6. Few verses in the Psalms are harder to be understood than this: and none has given rise to more varied expositions among the commentators. *For this.* Some will have it: encouraged by this example, that after so foul a fall God so readily forgave. Others again: *for this*, namely, warned by this example, they who are holy shall make their prayers that they may not be permitted to fall as David did. Whichever be the sense, they will argue from this passage, that the state of absolute and enduring perfection is impossible to a Christian in this life. *Lorinus, and Cajetan (1469-1534), quoted by Neale.*

Verse 7. *Thou art my hiding place.* David does not say, "Thou art a hiding place" merely, as one among many; or *the* "hiding place," as the only one; but, "Thou art *my* hiding place." *There* lies all the excellency of the text. "He is *mine*;" I have embraced the offer of his salvation, "says David; "I have applied to him in my own person: I have, as a sinner, taken shelter in his love and compassion; I have placed myself under his wings; I have covered myself with the robe of his righteousness; and now, therefore, I am safe." "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." This is having a part and a lot in the matter, having the personal and individual benefit of the Saviour's work of atonement. How different is an *appropriating* from a *speculative* faith! Men tell us that they believe the doctrine, that they acknowledge the truth, that they assent to our creed; and they say, that to declare to them the character of Christ as the sinner's only help and safety, is merely putting before them what they already know. Now, follow up the idea suggested by the figure in our text, and see the folly and danger of acting thus. Suppose a traveller upon a bleak and exposed heath to be alarmed by the approach of a storm. He looks out for shelter. But if his eye discern a place to hide him from the storm, does he stand still and say, "I see there *is* a shelter, and therefore I may remain where I am"? Does he not betake himself to it? Does he not run, in order to escape the stormy wind and tempest? It was a "hiding place" before; but it was *his* hiding place only when he ran into it, and was safe. Had he not gone into it, though it might have been a protection to a thousand other travellers who resorted there, to him it would have been as if no such place existed. Who does not see at once, from this simple illustration, that the blessings of the gospel are such only in their being *appropriated* to the soul? The physician can cure only by being *applied to*; the medicine can heal only by being *taken*; money can enrich only by being *possessed*; and the merchantman in the parable would have been none the wealthier for discovering that there was a "pearl of great price," had he not made it *his*. So with the salvation of the gospel: if Christ is the "Balm in Gilead," *apply* the remedy; if he is the "physician there," *go to him*; if he is the "pearl of great price," *sell all that you have and buy it*; and if he is the "hiding place," *run into it and be safe*; there will be no solid joy and peace in the mind until he is *your* "hiding place." *Fountain Elwin, 1842.*

Verse 7. *Thou art my hiding place.* An allusion, probably, to the *city of refuge.* Adam Clarke.

Verse 7. *Hiding place.* Kirke White has a beautiful hymn upon this word, beginning, "Awake, sweet harp of Judah, wake." We have no room to quote it, but it will be found in "Our Own Hymn Book," No. 381.

Verse 7. *Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.* If we content ourselves with that word which our translators have chosen here, *trouble*, we must rest in one of these two senses; either that God shall arm, and indue those that are his with such a constancy, as those things that trouble others shall not trouble them; but, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in them, so their consolation also aboundeth by Christ:" "As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" 2Co 1:5 6:9; for God uses both these ways in the behalf of his servants—sometimes to suspend the working of that that should work their torment, as he suspended the rage of the lions for Daniel, and the heat of the fire in the furnace for the others; sometimes by imprinting a holy stupefaction and insensibleness in the person that suffers; so St. Lawrence was not only patient, but merry and facetious when he lay broiling upon the fire, and so we read of many other martyrs that have been less moved, less affected with their torments than their executioners or their persecutors have been. That which troubled others never troubled them; or else the phrase must have this sense, that though they be troubled with their troubles, though God submit them so far to the common condition of men, that they be sensible of them, yet he shall preserve them from that trouble so as that it shall never overthrow them, never sink them into a dejection of spirit, or diffidence in his mercy! they shall find storms, but a stout and strong ship under foot; they shall feel thunder and lightning, but garlands of triumphant bays shall preserve them; they shall be trodden into earth with scorns and contempt, but yet as seed is buried, to multiply to more. So far this word of our translators assists our devotion, *Thou shalt preserve me from trouble*, thou shalt make me insensible of it, or thou shalt make me victorious in it. *John Donne.*

Verse 7. *Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* In these words the prophet David riseth up by a gradation, and goeth beyond that which he had formerly said concerning his confidence in God. First, he had said that God was his *hiding place*; secondly, that he would *preserve him in trouble*; and now, thirdly, that the Lord would make him *joyful*, and to triumph over his troubles and enemies, by compassing him, instead of troubles, with mercies... Learn to acknowledge God's goodness to thyself with particular application, as David saith here, "Thou shalt compass *me* about with songs of deliverance." Not only confess his goodness to others, as to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; nor only his deliverance of Noah, Daniel, Lot; but also his mercies to and deliverance of thyself, as Paul did: "Christ gave himself for *me*, and died for *me*." Ga 2:20. This will exceedingly whet up thankfulness; whereas only to acknowledge God good in himself, or to others, and not to thyself, will

make thee murmur and repine. *Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 7. *Thou shalt compass me about.* This word imports, that as we are besieged on every side with troubles, so we are compassed with as many comforts and deliverances; as our crosses grow daily, so our consolations are augmented day by day. We are on every side offended and on every side defended; therefore we ought on every side to sound God's praise, as David saith, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me." Ps 103:1. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 7. *Songs of deliverance.* In that he will not be content only with thanks, but also will have them conjoined with *songs*, he letteth us see how high all the strings of his heart are bent that he cannot contain himself for the mercies of God to his church, and for his manifold deliverances for the same. Many sing praises to God with an half open mouth; and, albeit, they can sing aloud any filthy ballad in their house, they make the mean, I warrant you, in the church, that scarce can they hear the sound of their own voice. I think they be ashamed to proclaim and show forth God's praises, or they fear to deafen God by their loud singing; but David bent all his forces within and without to praise his God. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 8. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.* No other than God himself can undertake so much as is promised in the text. For here is faith, a rectifying of the understanding, *I will instruct thee*, and in the original there is somewhat more than our translation reaches to; it is there, *Intelligere faciam te, I will make thee understand.* Man can instruct, God only can make us understand. And then it is *Faciam te, I will make thee, thee understand*; the work is the Lord's, the understanding is the man's: for God does not work in man as the devil did in idols and *in pythonissis*, and *in ventriloquis*, in possessed persons, who had no voluntary concurrence with the action of the devil, but were merely passive; God works so in man as that he makes man work too, *faciam te, I will make thee understand*; that that shall be done by me, but in thee; the power that rectifies the act is God's, the act is man's; *Faciam te*, says God, I will make thee, thee, every particular person (for that arises out of this singular and distributive word, *thee*, which threatens no exception, no exclusion), I will make every person to whom I present instruction, capable of that instruction; and if he receive it not, it is only his, and not my fault. And so this first part is an instruction *de credendis*, of such things, as by God's rectifying of our understanding we are bound to believe. And then, in a second part, there follows a more particular instructing, *Docebo, "I will teach thee, "and that in via, "in the way*; "it is not only *de via*, to teach thee which is the way, that thou mayest find it, but *in via*, how to keep the way when thou art in it; he will teach thee, not only *ut gradiaris*, that you may walk in it and not sleep, but *quomodo gradieris*, that you may walk in it and not stray; and so this second part is an institution *de agendis*, of those things which, thine understanding being formerly rectified, and deduced into a belief, thou art bound to do. And then in the last words of the text, *I will guide thee with mine eye*, there is a third part, and establishment, a confirmation by an incessant watchfulness in God; he will

consider, consult upon us (for so much the original word imports), he will not leave us to contingencies, to fortune; no, nor to his own general providence, by which all creatures are universally in his protection and administration, but he will ponder us, consider us, study us; and that with his eye, which is the sharpest and most sensible organ and instrument, soonest feels if anything be amiss, and so inclines him quickly to rectify us; and so this third part is an instruction *de sperandis*, it hath evermore a relation to the future, to the constancy and perseverance of God's goodness towards us; to the end, and in the end he will guide us with his eye: except the eye of God can be put out we cannot be put out of his sight and his care. So that, both our freight which we are to take in, that is, what we are to believe concerning God; and the voyage which we are to make, how we are to steer and govern our course, that is, our behaviour and conversation in the household of the faithful; and then the haven to which we must go, that is, our assurance of arriving at the heavenly Jerusalem, are expressed in this chart, in this map, in this instruction, in this text. *John Donne*.

Verse 8. This threefold repetition, *I will instruct thee, I will teach thee, I will guide thee*, teaches us three properties of a good teacher. First, to make the people understand the way of salvation; secondly, to go before them; thirdly, to watch over them and their ways. *Archibald Symson*.

Verse 8. *The way*. If we compare this way with all other ways, it will whet our care to enter into and continue in it; for, first, this is the *King's highway*, in which we have promise of protection. Ps 91:11. Secondly, God's ways are the *cleanest* of all. 2Sa 22:31. Thirdly, God's ways are the *rightest* ways; and, being rightest, they be also the *shortest* ways. Ho 14:9. Fourthly, God's ways are most *lightsome and cheerful*. Pr 3:17. Therefore, God's ways being the safest, cleanest, rightest, shortest, and lightsomest ways, we must be careful to walk in them. *Condensed from Thomas Taylor*.

Verse 8. *I will guide thee with mine eye*. We read in natural story (A reviewer remarks upon the bad natural history which we quote. We reply that to alter it would be to spoil the allusions, and we are making a book for men, not for babes. No person in his senses is likely at this day to believe the fables which in former ages passed current for facts.), of some creatures, *Qui solo oculorum aspectu fovent ova* (Pliny), which hatch their eggs only by looking upon them. What cannot the eye of God produce and hatch in us? *Plus est quod probatur aspectu, quam quod sermone* (Ambrose.) A man may seem to commend in words, and yet his countenance shall dispraise. His word infuses good purposes into us; but if God continue his eye upon us it is a further approbation, for he is a God of pure eyes, and will not look upon the wicked. "This land doth the Lord thy God care for, and the eyes of the Lord are always upon it from beginning of the year, even to the end thereof." De 11:12. What a cheerful spring, what a fruitful autumn hath that soul, that hath the eye of the Lord always upon her! The eye of the Lord upon me makes midnight noon; it makes Capricorn Cancer, and the winter's the summer's solstice; the eye of the Lord sanctifies, nay, more than sanctifies, glorifies all the eclipses of dishonour, makes melancholy cheerfulness, diffidence assurance, and turns the jealousy of the

sad soul into infallibility...This guiding us with his eye manifests itself in these two great effects; conversion to him, and union with him. First, his eye works upon ours; his eye turns ours to look upon him. Still it is so expressed with an *Ecce*; "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon all them that fear him; "his eye calls ours to behold that; and then our eye calls upon his, to observe our cheerful readiness...When, as a well made picture doth always look upon him that looks upon it, this image of God in our soul is turned to him, by his turning to it, it is impossible we should do any foul, any uncomely thing in his presence...The other great effect of his guiding us with his eye, is, that it unites us to himself; when he fixes his eye upon us, and accepts the return of ours to him, then he "keeps" us as the "apple" of his "eye." Zec 2:8 ...These are the two great effects of his guiding us by his eye, that first, his eye turns us to himself, and then turns us into himself; first, his eye turns ours to him, and then, that makes us all one with himself, so as that our afflictions shall be put upon his patience, and our dishonours shall be injurious to him; we cannot be safer than by being his; but thus we are not only his, but he; to every persecutor, in every one of our behalf, he shall say, *Cur me? Why persecutest thou me?* And as he is all power, and can defend us, so here he makes himself all eye, which is the most tender part, and most sensible of our pressures. *Condensed from John Donne.*

Verse 8. *I will guide thee with mine eye.* Margin, *I will counsel thee, mine eye shall be upon thee.* The margin expresses the sense of the Hebrew. The literal *meaning* is, "I will counsel thee; mine eyes shall be upon thee." De Wette: "my eye shall be directed towards thee." The *idea* is that of one who is telling another what way he is to take in order that he may reach a certain place; and he says he will watch him, or will keep an eye upon him; he will not let him go wrong. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 8. *Mine eye.* We may consider mercies as the beamings of the Almighty's eye, when the light of his countenance is lifted up upon us; and that man as guided by the eye, whom mercies attract and attach to his Maker. But oh! let us refuse to be guided by the eye, and it will become needful that we be curbed with the hand. If we abuse our mercies, if we forget their Author, and yield him not gratefully the homage of our affections, we do but oblige him, by his love for our souls, to apportion us disaster and trouble. Complain not, then, that there is so much of sorrow in your lot; but consider rather how much of it you may have wilfully brought upon yourselves. Listen to the voice of God. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye—mine eye, whose glance gilds all that is beautiful, whose light disperses all darkness, prevents all danger, diffuses all happiness. And why, then, is it that ye are sorely disquieted? why is it that "fear and the pit" are so often upon you; that one blessing after another disappears from your circle; and that God seems to deal with you as with the wayward and unruly, on whom any thing of gentleness would be altogether lost? Ah! if you would account for many mercies that have departed, if you would insure permanence to those that are yet left, examine how deficient you may hitherto have been, and strive to be more diligent for the future, in obeying an admonition which implies that we should be guided by*

the soft lusters of the eye, if our obduracy did not render indispensable the harsh constraints of the rein. *Henry Melvill.*

Verse 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, etc.* How many run mad of this cause, inordinate and furious lusts! The prophet Jeremiah, Jer 2:24, compares Israel to "a swift dromedary, traversing her ways, "and to "a wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure." *Be ye not*, said the psalmographer, "as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." Men have understanding, not beasts; yet when the frenzy of lust overwhelms their senses, we may take up the word of the prophet and pour it on them: "Every man is a beast by his own knowledge." And therefore "man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like unto beasts that perish" Ps 49:20. Did not the bridle of God's overruling providence restrain their madness, they would cast off the saddle of reason, and kick nature itself in the face. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, etc.* According to the several natures of these two beasts, the fathers and other expositors have made several interpretations; at least, several allusions. They consider the horse and the mule to admit any rider, any burden, without discretion or difference, without debate or consideration; they never ask whether their rider be noble or base, nor whether their load be gold for the treasure, or roots for the market. And those expositors find the same indifference in an habitual sinner to any kind of sin; whether he sin for pleasure, or sin for profit, or sin but for company, still he sins. They consider in the mule, that one of his parents being more ignoble than the other, he is like the worst, he hath more of the ass than of the horse in him; and they find in us, that all our actions and thoughts taste more of the more ignoble part of the earth than of heaven. St. Hierome thinks fierceness and rashness to be presented in the horse, and sloth in the mule. And St. Augustine carries these two qualities far; he thinks that in this fierceness of the horse the Gentiles are represented, which ran far from the knowledge of Christianity; and by the laziness of the mule the Jews, who came nothing so fast, as they were invited by their former helps to the embracing thereof. They have gone far in these allusions and applications; and they might have gone as far further as it had pleased them; they have sea room enough, that will compare a beast and a sinner together; and they shall find many times, in the way, the beast the better man. *John Donne.*

Verse 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, etc.* Consider the causes why a broken leg is incurable in a horse, and easily curable in a man. The horse is incapable of counsel to submit himself to the farrier; and therefore in case his leg be set he flings, flounces, and flies out, unjointing it again by his misemployed mettle, counting all binding to be shackles and fetters unto him: whereas a man willingly resigns himself to be ordered by the *surgeon*, preferring rather to be a prisoner for some days, than a cripple all his life. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding;* but "let patience have its perfect work in thee." Jas 1:4. *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 9. *Bit and bridle* (Norw-ntk) The LXX render the first of these two words by calinw, the second by kemw. The word calinos signifies the iron of the common bridle, which is put into the horse's mouth, the bit, or curb. But kemoz was something like a muzzle, which was put upon mischievous horses or mules to keep them from biting. Xenophon says, that it allowed them to breathe, but kept the mouth shut, so that they could not bite. Not knowing the term of art for this contrivance, I call it a muzzle. The verb (brq) is a military term, and signifies to advance, as an enemy, to attack. The "coming near," therefore, intended here, is a coming near to do mischief. The admonition given by the psalmist to his companions, is to submit to the instruction and guidance graciously promised from heaven, and not to resemble, in a refractory disposition, those ill conditioned colts which are not to be governed by a simple bridle; but, unless their jaws are confined by a muzzle, will attack the rider as he attempts to mount, or the groom as he leads them to the pasture and the stable. *Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 9. *Lest they come near unto thee.* The common version of this clause would be suitable enough in speaking of a wild beast, but in reference to a mule or a horse the words can only mean, because they will not follow or obey thee of their own accord; they must be constantly coerced, in the way both of compulsion and restraint. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 9. "Be ye not like a horse or mule, which have no understanding, and whose ornament is a bridle and bit, to hold them: they do not come unto thee *of themselves.*" *Charles Carter, in "The Book of Psalms."* 1869. *A new Translation.*

Verse 10. *He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.* Even as in the midst of the sphere is the centre, from which all lines being drawn do tend towards their circumference: so a good Christian man hath God for his circumference; for whatever he thinketh, speaketh, or doth, it tendeth to Christ, of whom he is compassed round about. *Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 10. *Mercy shall compass him about.* He shall be *surrounded* with mercy—as one is surrounded by the air, or by the sunlight. He shall find mercy and favour everywhere—at home, abroad; by day, by night; in society, in solitude; in sickness, in health; in life, in death; in time, in eternity. He shall walk amidst mercies; he shall die amidst mercies; he shall live in a better world in the midst of eternal mercies. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 10. "Mark that text," said Richard Adkins to his grandson Abel, who was reading to him the thirty-second Psalm. "Mark that text, 'He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.' I read it in my youth and believed it; and now I read it in my old age, thank God, I know it to be true. Oh! it is a blessed thing in the midst of the joys and sorrows of the world, Abel, to trust in the Lord." *The Christian Treasury, 1848.*

Verse 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.* This exhortation containeth three parts. First, what he doth exhort unto, *to rejoice.* Secondly, whom, the *righteous, and upright men.* Thirdly, the limitation, *in the Lord.* He exhorteth them three

times—be glad, rejoice, and be joyful; and as he made mention of a threefold blessing, so doth he of a threefold joy. Wherein we have two things necessary to be observed. First the dulness of our natures, who as slow horses need many spurs and provocations to spiritual things, whereas we are naturally overmuch bent to carnal things, that we need no incitations thereunto. But by the contrary in spiritual things, we are cast into a deep sleep, who cannot be awakened at the first cry; but as men after drink have need to be roused often, that they may behold the light; so men drunken with the pleasures of sin, as Nazianzen saith, must be wakened by divers exhortations; as this same prophet in the subsequent Psalm redoubles his exhortations for the same effect. And the apostle to the Philippians saith: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice," Php 4:4. Next, perceive that this exhortation grows: for the word *be glad*, properly in the original signifieth an inward and hearty joy, by the presence or hope at least of a thing desirable or good. The word *rejoice*, to express our joy by some outward gesture, sometimes used for dancing, as, "The hills skip for gladness." Ps 65:12. The word *be joyful*, to cry for gladness, as the dumb man's tongue shall sing. This gradation teacheth us, that this is the nature of spiritual joy—that it still increaseth in us by certain degrees, until it come to the perfection of all joy, which is signified by the last word, importing, as it were, a triumph and shouting after victory. So that they are truly penitent who have overcome sin and Satan in their spiritual combat, and have triumphed over them as vanquished enemies. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous.* There's never a joyful man alive but a believer. Will you say that men take pleasure in their sins? Why, that is the *Devil's* joy; or that they rejoice in full barns and bags? That is the *fool's* joy; or that they rejoice in wine, that is, all dainties that gratify the palate? That is a *Bedlam* joy. Read and believe Ec 2:3; indeed, from the first verse to the eleventh, the whole book, but especially that chapter, is the most divine philosophy that ever was or will be. *Christopher Fowler (1610-1678), in "Morning Exercises."*

Verse 11. *Shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.* When the poet Carpani enquired of his friend Haydn, how it happened that his church music was so cheerful, the great composer made a most beautiful reply. "I cannot," he said, "make it otherwise, I write according to the thoughts I feel: when I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance, and leap, as it were, from my pen: and, since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve him with a cheerful spirit." *John Whitecross's Anecdotes.*

Verse 11. Here the sensual man, that haply would catch hold when it is said, *Rejoice*, by and by, when it is added, *in the Lord*, will let his hold go. But they that, by reason of the billows and waves of the troublesome sea of this world, cannot brook the speech when it is said, *Rejoice*, are to lay sure hold fast upon it when it is added, *Rejoice in the Lord.* *Henry Airay.*

Verse 11.

O sing unto this glittering glorious King.

O praise his name let every living thing;
Let heart and voice, like bells of silver, ring
The comfort that this day doth bring.

—*Kinwellmersh, quoted by A. Moody Stuart.*

Verse 11. It is storied by the famous Tully concerning Syracuse, that there is no day throughout the whole year so stormy and tempestuous in which the inhabitants have not some glimpse and sight of the sun. The like observation may be truly made on all those Psalms of David in which his complaints are most multiplied, his fears and pressures most insisted on; that there is not any of them so totally overcast with the black darkness of despair, but that we may easily discern them to be here and there intervened and streaked with some comfortable expressions of his faith and hope in God. If in the beginning of a Psalm we find him restless in his motions, like Noah's dove upon the overspreading waters; yet in the close we shall see him like the same dove returning with an olive branch in its mouth, and fixing upon the ark. If we find him in another Psalm staggering in the midst of his distresses, through the prevalence of carnal fears, we may also in it behold him recovering himself again, by fetching arguments from faith, whose topics are of a higher elevation than to be shaken by the timorous suggestions that arise from the flesh. If at another time we behold him like to a boat on drift, that is, tossed and beaten by the inconstant winds and fierce waves; yet we shall still find all his rollings and agitations to be such as carry him towards the standing shore, where he rides at last both in peace and safety. *William Spurstowe.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Gospel benedictions. Take the first Psalm with thirty-second, show the doctrinal and practical harmoniously blended. Or, take the first, the thirty-second, and the forty-first, and show how we go from reading the word, to feeling its power, and thence to living charitably towards men.

Verse 1. *Evangelical Blessedness.* 1. The original condition of its possessor.

2. The nature of the benefit received.

3. The channel by which it came.

4. The means by which it may be obtained by us.

Verses 1-2. The nature of sin and the modes of pardon.

Verse 2. Non imputation, a remarkable doctrine.—Prove, explain, and improve it.

Verse 2. *No guile.* The honesty of heart of the pardoned man.

Verse 3. *Retention of our griefs to ourselves.* Natural tendency of timidity and despair; danger of it; means of divulging grief; encouragements to do so; the blessed person who is ready to hear confession. The silent mourner the greatest sufferer.

Verses 3-4. "Terrible Conviction and Gentle Drawings." See "Spurgeon's Sermons, "No. 313.

Verse 4. The sorrows of a convinced soul. Daily, nightly, from God, heavy, weakening, destroying.

Verse 4. (*last clause*) Spiritual drought.

Verse 5. The gracious results of a full confession; or, confession and absolution scripturally explained.

Verse 6. The *godly* man's picture, drawn with a Scripture pencil. *Thomas Watson*.

Verse 6. The experience of one, the encouragement of all.

Verse 6. (*first clause*).—The day of grace, how to improve it.

Verse 6. (*whole verse*).—Pardon of sin the guarantee that other mercies shall be given.

Verse 6. (*last clause*).—Imminent troubles, eminent deliverances.

Verse 6. (*last clause*).—The felicity of the faithful. *Thomas Playfere*.

Verse 7. Danger felt, refuge known, possession claimed, joy experienced.

Verse 7. (*first sentence*).—Christ, a hiding place from sin, Satan, and sorrow, in death and at judgment.

Verse 7. (*second sentence*).—Troubles from which saints shall be preserved.

Verse 7. (*last sentence*).—The circle of song—who draws the circle, what is the circumference, who is in the centre.

Verse 7. *Songs of deliverance*. From guilt, hell, death, enemies, doubts, temptations, accidents, plots, etc. The divine schoolmaster, his pupils, their lessons, their chastisements and their rewards.

Verse 8. The power of the eye. *Henry Melvill*. In which he vainly tries to prove infant baptism and episcopacy, which he admits are not expressly taught in Scripture, but declares them to be hinted at as with the divine eye.

Verse 9. God's bits and bridles, the mules who need them, and reasons why we ought not to be of the number.

Verse 9. How far in our actions we are better, and how far worse than horses and mules.

Verse 10. The many sorrows which result from sin. The encompassing mercy of the believer's life even in his most troublesome times. The portion of the wicked, and the lot of the faithful.

Verse 11. A believer's gladness. *Its spring*, "in the Lord; " *its vivacity*, "shout; " *its propriety*, it is commanded; *its beautiful results and its abundant reasons*.

Verse 11. *Upright in heart*, an instructive description. Not horizontal or grovelling, nor bent, nor inclined, but vertical in heart.

WORKS UPON THE THIRTY-SECOND PSALM

This treatyse concernynge the fruytful songes of David the Kynge & prophete in the seuen penytencyall psalmes. Deuyded in seuen sermons was made and compyled by the ryght reuerent fader In god Juhau fysshher doctore of dyuynyte & bysshop of Rochester at the exortacyo and

sterynge of the most excellet princesse Margarete contesse of Rychemont and Derby & moder to our souerayne lorde Kynge henry the VII.

(No date, but marked in the B.M. Cat. 1509. An 8 volume edition has on Title Page, An. M.D.J.A.)

David's Learning, or Way to True Happiness: in a Commentarie upon *the 32 Psalme*. Preached and now published by THOMAS TAYLOR, late fellow of Christ's College in Cambridge. London: 1617.

David's Teares. By SIR JOHN HAYWARD, Knight, Doctor of Lawe. London. Printed by John Bell. 1623. On Psalms VI, XXXII, and CXXX.

Meditations on Psalm XXXII. in Archbishop Leighton's Works.

In the Works of JOHN DONNE: *Sermons on Psalm XXXII*. Vols. II., III. Alford's Edition.

A Godly and Fruitful Exposition on the Thirty-second Psalme, the *Third of the Penitentials*; in *A Sacred Septenarie; or, a Godly and Fruitful Exposition on the Seven Psalmes of Repentance*. By Mr. ARCHIBALD SYMSON, late Pastor of the Church at Dalkeeth in Scotland. 1638.

Meditations and Disquisitions upon the 32 Psalme, in *Meditations and Disquisitions upon the Seven Psalmes of David, commonly called the Penitential Psalmes*. By SIR RICHARD BAKER, Knight. 1639.

Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm. By CHARLES H. BINGHAM, B.A., *Curate of Hale Magna*. 1836.

Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm, preached in Portman Chapel, Baker Street, during Lent, 1859. By the Rev. J. W. REEVE, M.A., Minister of the Chapel. 1859.

Psalm 33

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. This song of praise bears no title or indication of authorship; to teach us, says Dickson, "to look upon Holy Scripture as altogether inspired of God, and not put price upon it for the writers thereof."

SUBJECT AND DIVISION. The praise of Jehovah is the subject of this sacred song. The righteous are exhorted to praise him, Ps 33:1-3; because of the excellency of his character, Ps 33:4-5; and his majesty in creation, Ps 33:6-7. Men are bidden to fear before Jehovah because his purposes are accomplished in providence, Ps 33:8-11. His people are proclaimed blessed, Ps 33:12. The omniscience and omnipotence of God, and his care for his people are celebrated, in opposition to the weakness of an arm of flesh, Ps 33:13-19; and the Psalm concludes with a fervent expression of

confidence, Ps 33:20-21, and an earnest prayer, Ps 33:22.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Rejoice in the Lord.* Joy is the soul of praise. To delight ourselves in God is most truly to extol him, even if we let no notes of song proceed from our lips. That God is, and that he is such a God, and our God, ours for ever and ever, should wake within us an unceasing and overflowing joy. To rejoice in temporal comforts is dangerous, to rejoice in self is foolish, to rejoice in sin is fatal, but to rejoice in God is heavenly. He who would have a double heaven must begin below to rejoice like those above. *O ye righteous.* This is peculiarly your duty, your obligations are greater, and your spiritual nature more adapted to the work, be ye then first in the glad service. Even the righteous are not always glad, and have need to be stirred up to enjoy their privileges. *For praise is comely for the upright.* God has an eye to things which are becoming. When saints wear their choral robes, they look fair in the Lord's sight. A harp suits a blood washed hand. No jewel more ornamental to a holy face than sacred praise. Praise is not comely from unpardoned professional singers; it is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout. Crooked hearts make crooked music, but the upright are the Lord's delight. Praise is the dress of saints in heaven, it is meet that they should fit it on below.

Verse 2. *Praise the Lord with harp.* Men need all the help they can get to stir them up to praise. This is the lesson to be gathered from the use of musical instruments under the old dispensation. Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days, when Jesus gives us spiritual manhood, we can make melody without strings and pipes. We who do not believe these things to be expedient in worship, lest they should mar its simplicity, do not affirm them to be unlawful, and if any George Herbert or Martin Luther can worship God better by the aid of well tuned instruments, who shall gainsay their right? *We* do not need them, they would hinder than help our praise, but if others are otherwise minded, are they not living in gospel liberty? *Sing unto him.* This is the sweetest and best of music. No instrument like the human voice. As a help to singing the instrument is alone to be tolerated, for keys and strings do not praise the Lord. *With the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.* The Lord must have a full octave, for all notes are his, and all music belongs to him. Where several pieces of music are mentioned, we are taught to praise God with all the powers which we possess.

Verse 3. *Sing unto him a new song.* All songs of praise should be *unto him.* Singing for singing's sake is nothing worth; we must carry our tribute to the King, and not cast it to the winds. Do most worshippers mind this? Our faculties should be exercised when we are magnifying the Lord, so as not to run in an old groove without thought; we ought to make every hymn of praise a new song. To keep up the freshness of worship is a great thing, and in private it is indispensable. Let us not present old worn out praise, but put life, and soul, and heart, into every song, since we have new mercies

every day, and see new beauties in the work and word of our Lord. *Play skilfully.* It is wretched to hear God praised in a slovenly manner. He deserves the best that we have. Every Christian should endeavour to sing according to the rules of the art, so that he may keep time and tune with the congregation. The sweetest tunes and the sweetest voices, with the sweetest words, are all too little for the Lord our God; let us not offer him limping rhymes, set to harsh tunes, and growled out by discordant voices. *With a loud noise.* Heartiness should be conspicuous in divine worship. Well bred whispers are disreputable here. It is not that the Lord cannot hear us, but that it is natural for great exultation to express itself in the loudest manner. Men shout at the sight of their kings: shall we offer no loud hosannahs to the Son of David?

Verse 4. *For the word of the Lord is right.* His ordinances both natural, moral, and spiritual, are right, and especially his incarnate Word, who is the Lord our righteousness. Whatever God has ordained must be good, and just, and excellent. There are no anomalies in God's universe, except what sin has made; his word of command made all things good. When we look at his word of promise, and remember its faithfulness, what reasons have we for joy and thankfulness! *And all his works are done in truth.* His work is the outflow of his word, and it is true to it. He neither doth nor saith anything ill; in deed and speech he agrees with himself and the purest truth. There is no lie in God's word, and no sham in his works; in creation, providence, and revelation, unalloyed truth abounds. To act truth as well as to utter it is divine. Let not children of God ever yield their principles in practice any more than in heart. What a God we serve! The more we know of him, the more our better natures approve his surpassing excellence; even his afflicting works are according to his truthful word.

"Why should I complain of want of distress,
Afflictions or pain? he told me no less;
The heirs of salvation, I know from his word,
Through much tribulation must follow their Lord."

God writes with a pen that never blots, speaks with a tongue that never slips, acts with a hand which never fails. Bless his name.

Verse 5. *He loveth righteousness and judgment.* The theory and practice of right he intensely loves. He doth not only approve the true and the just, but his inmost soul delights therein. The character of God is a sea, every drop of which should become a wellhead of praise for his people. The righteousness of Jesus is peculiarly dear to the Father, and for its sake he takes pleasure in those to whom it is imputed. Sin, on the other hand, is infinitely abhorrent to the Lord, and woe unto those who die in it; if he sees no righteousness in them, he will deal righteously with them, and judgment stern and final will be the result. *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.* Come hither, astronomers, geologists, naturalists, botanists, chemists, miners, yea, all of you who study the works of God, for all your truthful stories confirm this declaration. From the midge in the sunbeam to leviathan in the ocean

all creatures own the bounty of the Creator. Even the pathless desert blazes with some undiscovered mercy, and the caverns of ocean conceal the treasures of love. Earth might have been as full of terror as of grace, but instead thereof it teems and overflows with kindness. He who cannot see it, and yet lives in it as the fish lives in the water, deserves to die. If earth be full of mercy, what must heaven be where goodness concentrates its beams?

Verse 6. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.* The angelic heavens, the sidereal heavens, and the firmament or terrestrial heavens, were all made to start into existence by a word; what if we say by *the Word*, "For without him was not anything made that is made." It is interesting to note the mention of the Spirit in the next clause, *and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth*; the *breath* is the same as is elsewhere rendered Spirit. Thus the three persons of the Godhead unite in creating all things. How easy for the Lord to make the most ponderous orbs, and the most glorious angels! A word, a breath could do it. It is as easy for God to create the universe as for a man to breathe, nay, far easier, for man breathes not independently, but borrows the breath in his nostrils from his Maker. It may be gathered from this verse that the constitution of all things is from the infinite wisdom, for his word may mean his appointment and determination. A wise and merciful Word has arranged, and a living Spirit sustains all the creation of Jehovah.

Verse 7. *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap.* The waters were once scattered like corn strewn upon a threshing floor: they are now collected in one spot as an heap. Who else could have gathered them into one channel but their great Lord, at whose bidding the waters fled away? The miracle of the Red Sea is repeated in nature day by day, for the sea which now invades the shore under the impulse of sun and moon, would soon devour the land if bounds were not maintained by the divine decree. *He layeth up the depth in storehouses.* The depths of the main are God's great cellars and storerooms for the tempestuous element. Vast reservoirs of water are secreted in the bowels of the earth, from which issue our springs and wells of water. What a merciful provision for a pressing need? May not the text also refer to the clouds, and the magazines of hail, and snow, and rain, those treasures of merciful wealth for the fields of earth? These aqueous masses are not piled away as in lumber rooms, but in storehouses for future beneficial use. Abundant tenderness is seen in the foresight of our heavenly Joseph, whose granaries are already filled against earth's time of need. These stores might have been, as once they were, the ammunition of vengeance, they are now a part of the commissariat of mercy.

Verse 8. *Let all the earth fear the Lord.* Not only Jews, but Gentiles. The psalmist was not a man blinded by national prejudice, he did not desire to restrict the worship of Jehovah to the seed of Abraham. He looks for homage even to far off nations. If they are not well enough instructed to be able to praise, at least let them fear. There is an inferior kind of worship in the trembling which involuntarily admits the boundless power of the thundering God. A defiant blasphemer is out of place

in a world covered with tokens of the divine power and Godhead: the whole earth cannot afford a spot congenial for the erection of a synagogue of Atheism, nor a man in whom it is becoming to profane the name of God. *Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.* Let them forsake their idols, and reverently regard the only living God. What is here placed as a wish may also be read as a prophecy: the adoration of God will yet be universal.

Verse 9. *For he spake, and it was done.* Creation was the fruit of a word. Jehovah said, "Light be, and light was. The Lord's acts are sublime in their ease and instantaneousness. "What a word is this?" This was the wondering enquiry of old, and it may be ours to this day. *He commanded, and it stood fast.* Out of nothing creation stood forth, and was confirmed in existence. The same power which first uplifted, now makes the universe to abide; although we may not observe it, there is as great a display of sublime power in confirming as in creating. Happy is the man who has learned to lean his all upon the sure word of him who built the skies!

Verse 10. *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought.* While his own will is done, he takes care to anticipate the wilfulness of his enemies. Before they come to action he vanquishes them in the council chamber; and when, well armed with craft, they march to the assault, he frustrates their knaveries, and makes their promising plots to end in nothing. Not only the folly of the heathen, but their wisdom too, shall yield to the power of the cross of Jesus: what a comfort is this to those who have to labour where sophistry, and philosophy, falsely so called, are set in opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus. *He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.* Their persecutions, slanders, falsehoods, are like puff balls flung against a granite wall—they produce no result at all; for the Lord overrules the evil, and brings good out of it. The cause of God is never in danger: infernal craft is outwitted by infinite wisdom, and Satanic malice held in check by boundless power.

Verse 11. *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever.* He changes not his purpose, his decree is not frustrated, his designs are accomplished. God has a predestination according to the counsel of his will, and none of the devices of his foes can thwart his decree for a moment. Men's purposes are blown to and from like the thread of the gossamer or the down of the thistle, but the eternal purposes are firmer than the earth. *The thoughts of his heart to all generations.* Men come and go, sons follow their sires to the grave, but the undisturbed mind of God moves on in unbroken serenity, producing ordained results with unerring certainty. No man can expect his will or plan to be carried out from age to age; the wisdom of one period is the folly of another, but the Lord's wisdom is always wise, and his designs run on from century to century. His power to fulfil his purposes is by no means diminished by the lapse of years. He who was absolute over Pharaoh in Egypt is not one whit the less today the King of kings and Lord of lords; still do his chariot wheels roll onward in imperial grandeur, none being for a moment able to resist his eternal will.

Verse 12. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.* Israel was happy in the worship of the only

true God. It was the blessedness of the chosen nation to have received a revelation from Jehovah. While others grovelled before their idols, the chosen people were elevated by a spiritual religion which introduced them to the invisible God, and led them to trust in him. All who confide in the Lord are blessed in the largest and deepest sense, and none can reverse the blessing. *And the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.* Election is at the bottom of it all. The divine choice rules the day; none take Jehovah to be their God till he takes them to be his people. What an ennobling choice this is! We are selected to no mean estate, and for no ignoble purpose: we are made the peculiar domain and delight of the Lord our God. Being so blessed, let us rejoice in our portion, and show the world by our lives that we serve a glorious Master.

Verse 13. *The Lord looketh from heaven.* The Lord is represented as dwelling above and looking down below; seeing all things, but peculiarly observing and caring for those who trust in him. It is one of our choicest privileges to be always under our Father's eye, to be never out of sight of our best Friend. *He beholdeth all the sons of men.* All Adam's sons are as well watched as was Adam himself, their lone progenitor in the garden. Ranging from the frozen pole to the scorching equator, dwelling in hills and valleys, in huts and palaces, alike doth the divine eye regard all the members of the family of man.

Verse 14. *From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.* Here the sentiment is repeated: it is worth repeating, and it needs repeating, for man is most prone to forget it. As great men sit at their windows and watch the crowd below, so doth the Lord; he gazes intently upon his responsible creatures, and forgets nothing of what he sees.

Verse 15. *He fashioneth their hearts alike.* By which is meant that all hearts are equally fashioned by the Lord, kings' hearts as well as the hearts of beggars. The text does not mean that all hearts are created originally alike by God, such a statement would scarcely be true, since there is the utmost variety in the constitutions and dispositions of men. All men equally owe the possession of life to the Creator, and have therefore no reason to boast themselves. What reason has the vessel to glorify itself in presence of the potter? *He considereth all their words.* Not in vain doth God see men's acts: he ponders and judges them. He reads the secret design in the outward behaviour, and resolves the apparent good into its real elements. This consideration foretokens a judgment when the results of the divine thoughts will be meted out in measures of happiness or woe. Consider thy ways, O man, for God considereth them!

Verse 16. *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host.* Mortal power is a fiction, and those who trust in it are dupes. Serried ranks of armed men have failed to maintain an empire, or even to save their monarch's life when a decree from the court of heaven has gone forth for the empire's overthrow. The all seeing God preserves the poorest of his people when they are alone and friendless, but ten thousand armed men cannot ensure safety to him whom God leaves to

destruction. *A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.* So far from guarding others, the valiant veteran is not able to deliver himself. When his time comes to die, neither the force of his arms nor the speed of his legs can save him. The weakest believer dwells safely under the shadow of Jehovah's throne, while the most mighty sinner is in peril every hour. Why do we talk so much of our armies and our heroes? the Lord alone has strength, and let him alone have praise.

Verse 17. *An horse is a vain thing for safety.* Military strength among the Orientals lay much in horses and scythed chariots, but the psalmist calls them a lie, a deceitful confidence. Surely the knight upon his gallant steed may be safe, either by valour or by flight? Not so, his horse shall bear him into danger or crush him with its fall. *Neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.* Thus the strongest defences are less than nothing when most needed. God only is to be trusted and adored. Sennacherib with all his calvary is not a match for one angel of the Lord, Pharaoh's horses and chariots found it vain to pursue the Lord's anointed, and so shall all the leaguered might of earth and hell find themselves utterly defeated when they rise against the Lord and his chosen.

Verse 18. *Behold.* For this is a greater wonder than hosts and horses, a surer confidence than chariots or shields. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him.* That eye of peculiar care is their glory and defence. None can take them at unawares, for the celestial watcher foresees the designs of their enemies, and provides against them. They who fear God need not fear anything else; let them fix their eye of faith on him, and his eye of love will always rest upon them. *Upon them that hope in his mercy.* This one would think to be a small evidence of grace, and yet it is a valid one. Humble hope shall have its share as well as courageous faith. Say, my soul, is not this an encouragement to thee? Dost thou not hope in the mercy of God in Christ Jesus? Then the Father's eye is as much upon thee as upon the elder born of the family. These gentle words, like soft bread, are meant for babes in grace, who need infant's food.

Verse 19. *To deliver their soul from death.* The Lord's hand goes with his eye; he sovereignly preserves those whom he graciously observes. Rescues and restorations hedge about the lives of the saints; death cannot touch them till the King signs his warrant and gives him leave, and even then his touch is not so much mortal as immortal; he doth not so much kill us as kill our mortality. *And to keep them alive in famine.* Gaunt famine knows its master. God has meal and oil for his Elijahs somewhere. "Verily thou shalt be fed" is a divine provision for the man of faith. The Preserver of men will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish. Power in human hands is outmatched by famine, but God is good at a pinch, and proves his bounty under the most straitened circumstances. Believer, wait upon thy God in temporals. His eye is upon thee, and his hand will not long delay.

Verse 20. *Our soul waits for the Lord.* Here the godly avow their reliance upon him whom the Psalm extols. To wait is a great lesson. To be quiet in expectation, patient in hope, single in confidence, is one of the bright attainments of a Christian. Our soul, our life, must hang upon God; we are not to

trust him with a few gewgaws, but with all we have and are. *He is our help and our shield.* Our help in labour, our shield in danger. The Lord answereth all things to his people. He is their all in all. Note the three "*ours*" in the text. These holdfast words are precious. Personal possession makes the Christian man; all else is mere talk.

Verse 21. *For our hearts shall rejoice in him.* The duty commended and commanded in the first verse is here presented to the Lord. We, who trust, cannot but be of a glad heart, our inmost nature must triumph in our faithful God. *Because we have trusted in his holy name.* The root of faith in due time bears the flower of rejoicing. Doubts breed sorrow, confidence creates joy.

Verse 22. Here is a large and comprehensive prayer to close with. It is an appeal for *mercy*, which even joyful believers need; and it is sought for in a proportion which the Lord has sanctioned. "According to your faith be it unto you," is the Master's word, and he will not fall short of the scale which he has himself selected. Yet, Master, do more than this when hope is faint, and bless us far above what we ask or even think.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. A thanksgiving of the church triumphant in the latter ages, for her final deliverance, by the overthrow of Antichrist and his armies. *Samuel Horsley.*

Whole Psalm. Let us follow the holy man a moment in his meditation. His Psalm is not composed in scholastic form, in which the author confines himself to fixed rules; and, scrupulously following a philosophic method, lays down principals, and infers consequences. However, he establishes principles, the most proper to give us sublime ideas of the Creator; and he speaks with more precision of the works and attributes of God than the greatest philosophers have spoken of them. How absurdly have the philosophers treated of *the origin of the world!* How few of them have reasoned conclusively on this important subject! Our prophet solves the important question by one single principle; and, what is more remarkable, this principle, which is nobly expressed, carries the clearest evidence with it. The principle is this: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," Ps 33:6. This is the most rational account that was ever given of the creation of the world. The world is the work of a self efficient will, and it is this principle alone that can account for its creation. The most simple appearances in nature are sufficient to lead us to this principle. Either my will is self efficient, or there is some other being whose will is self efficient. What I say of myself, I say of my parents; and what I affirm of my parents, I affirm of my more remote ancestors, and of all the finite creatures from whom they derive their existence. Most certainly either finite beings have a self efficient will, which it is impossible to suppose, for a finite creature with a self efficient will is a contradiction: either, I say, a finite creature has a self efficient will, or there is a First Cause who has a self efficient will; and that there is such a Being is the

principle of the psalmist; "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

If philosophers have reasoned inconclusively on the origin of the world, they have spoken of *its government* with equal uncertainty. The psalmist determines this question with a great facility, by a single principle, which results from the former, and which, like the former, carries its evidence with it.

"The Lord looketh from heaven; he considereth all the works of all the inhabitants of the earth, " Ps 33:13-14. This is the doctrine of providence. And on what is the doctrine of providence founded? On this principle: God "fashioneth their hearts alike, "Ps 33:15. Attend a moment to the evidence of this reasoning, my brethren. The doctrine of providence expressed in these words, "God considereth the works of the inhabitants of the earth, "is a necessary consequence of his principle, "God fashioneth their hearts alike; "and this principle is a necessary consequence of that which the psalmist had before laid down to account for the origin of the world. Yes, from that doctrine of God the Creator of men, follows that of God the inspector, the director, rewarder, and the punisher of their actions. One of the most specious objections that has ever been opposed to the doctrine of providence, is a contrast between the grandeur of God and the meanness of men. How can such an insignificant creature as man be the object of the care and attention of such a magnificent being as God? No objection can be more specious, or, in appearance, more invincible. The distance between the meanest insect and the mightiest monarch, who treads and crushes reptiles to death without the least regard to them, is a very imperfect image of the distance between God and man. That which proves that it would be beneath the dignity of a monarch to observe the motions of ants, or worms, to interest himself in their actions, to punish, or to reward them, seems to demonstrate that God would degrade himself were he to observe, to direct, to punish, to reward mankind, who are infinitely inferior to him. But one fact is sufficient to answer this specious objection: that is, God has created mankind. Does God degrade himself more by governing than by creating mankind? Who can persuade himself that a wise Being has given to intelligent creatures faculties capable of obtaining knowledge and virtue, without willing that they should endeavour to acquire knowledge and virtue? Or who can imagine, that a wise Being, who wills that his intelligent creatures should acquire knowledge and virtue, will not punish them if they neglect those acquisitions; and will not show by the distribution of his benefits that he approves their endeavours to obtain them?

Unenlightened philosophers have treated of *the attributes of God* with as much abstruseness as they have written of his works. The moral attributes of God, as they are called in the schools, were mysteries which they could not unfold. These may be reduced to two classes; attributes of *goodness*, and attributes of *justice*. Philosophers, who had admitted these, have usually taken that for granted which they ought to have proved. They collected together in their minds all perfections; they reduced them all to one object which they denominated *a perfect being*: and supposing, without proving, that

a perfect being existed, they attributed to him, without proof, everything that they considered as a perfection. The psalmist shows by a surer way that there is a God supremely just and supremely good. It is necessary, in order to convince a rational being of the justice and goodness of God, to follow such a method as that which we follow to prove his existence. When we would prove the existence of God, we say, there are creatures, therefore there is a Creator. In like manner, when we would prove that a creature is a just and a good being, we say, there are qualities of goodness and justice in creatures, therefore he, from whom these creatures derive their existence, is a being just and good. Now, this is the reasoning of the psalmist in this Psalm: "The Lord loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord" Ps 33:5; that is to say, it is impossible to consider the work of the Creator, without receiving evidence of his goodness. And the works of nature which demonstrate the goodness of God, prove his justice also; for God has created us with such dispositions, that we cannot enjoy the gifts of his goodness without obeying the laws of his righteousness. The happiness of an individual who procures a pleasure by disobeying the laws of equity, is a violent happiness, which cannot be of long duration; and the prosperity of public bodies, when it is founded in iniquity, is an edifice which, with its basis, will be presently sunk and gone.

But what we would particularly remark is, that *the excellent principle of the psalmist concerning God are not mere speculations*; but truths from which he derives practical inferences; and he aims to extend their influence beyond private persons, even to legislators and conquerors. One would think, considering the conduct of mankind, that the consequences, which are drawn from the doctrines of which we have been speaking, belong to none but to the dregs of the people; that lawgivers and conquerors have a plan of morality peculiar to themselves, and are above the rules to which other men must submit. Our prophet had other notions. What are his maxims of policy? They are all included in these words: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance," Ps 33:12. What are his military maxims? They are all included in these words: "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength," Ps 33:16-17. Who proposes these maxims? A hermit, who never appeared on the theatre of the world? or a man destitute of the talents necessary to shine there? No: one of the wisest of kings; one of the most bold and able generals: a man whom God has self elected to govern his chosen people, and to command those armies which fought the most obstinate battles, and gained the most complete victories. Were I to proceed in explaining the system of the psalmist, I might prove, that as he had a right to infer the doctrine of providence from the works of nature, and that of the moral attributes of God from the works of creation; so from the doctrines of the moral attributes of God, of providence, and of the works of creation, he had a right to conclude, that no conquerors or lawgivers could be truly happy but those who acted agreeably to the laws of the just and good Supreme. *James*

Saurin.

Verse 1. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous. Exult, ye righteous, in Jehovah!* The Hebrew verb, according to the etymologists, originally means to dance for joy, and is therefore a very strong expression for the liveliest exultation. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 1. *Rejoice, O ye righteous:* not in yourselves, for that is not safe, but *in the Lord.* *Augustine.*

Verse 1. *Praise is comely for the upright.* Praise is not comely for any but the godly. A profane man stuck with God's praise is like a dunghill stuck with flowers. Praise in the mouth of a sinner is like an oracle in the mouth of a fool: how uncomely is it for him to praise God, whose whole life is a dishonouring of God? It is as indecent for a wicked man to praise God, who goes on in sinful practices, as it is for an usurer to talk of living by faith, or for the devil to quote Scripture. The godly are only fit to be choristers in God's praise; it is called, "the garment of praise." Isa 61:3. This garment sits handsome only on a saint's back. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 1. This Psalm is coupled with the foregoing one by the *catchword* with which it opens, which is a repetition of the exhortation with which the preceding ends, *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous;* "Shout for joy, all ye *upright.*" *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1. He pleaseth God whom God pleaseth. *Augustine.*

Verse 2. *Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.* Here we have the first mention of musical instruments in the Psalms. It is to be observed that the early fathers almost with one accord protest against their use in churches; as they are forbidden in the Eastern church to this day, where yet, by the consent of all, the singing is infinitely superior to anything that can be heard in the West. *J. M. Neale.*

Verse 2. *Harp; Psaltery, etc.* Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize. *Thomas Aquinas.* It was only permitted to the Jews, as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols; but now instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal. *Chrysostom.* The use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the Christian churches as it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain song. *Justin Martyr.*

Verse 2. (*last clause*). It is said that David praised God upon *an instrument of ten strings;* and he would never have told how many strings there were, but that without doubt he made use of them all. God hath given all of us bodies, as it were, instruments of many strings; and can we think it music good enough to strike but one string, to call upon him with our tongues only? No, no; when the still sound of the heart by holy thoughts, and the shrill sound of the tongue by holy words, and the loud sound of the hands by pious works, do all join together, that is God's concert, and the only music wherewith he is affected. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 3. Sing unto him. I. Singing is the music of *nature*. The Scriptures tell us the mountains sing Isa 55:12; the valleys sing Ps 65:13; the trees of the wood sing 1Ch 16:33; nay, the air is the birds' music room, they chant their musical notes. II. Singing is the music of *ordinances*. Augustine reports of himself, that when he came to Milan and heard the people sing, he wept for joy in the church to hear that pleasing melody. And Beza confesses that at his first entrance into the congregation, and hearing them sing the ninety-first Psalm, he felt himself exceedingly comforted, and did retain the sound of it afterwards upon his heart. The Rabbins tell us that the Jews, after the feast of the Passover was celebrated, sang the hundred and eleventh and five following Psalms; and our Saviour and his apostles sang a hymn immediately after the blessed Supper. Mt 26:30. III. Singing is the music of *saints*. (1.) They have performed this duty in their greatest *numbers*. Ps 149:1-2. (2.) In their greatest *straits*. Isa 26:19. (3.) In their greatest *flight*. Isa 42:10-11. (4.) In their greatest *deliverances*. (5.) In their greatest *plenties*. Isa 65:14. In all these changes singing hath been their stated duty and delight. And indeed it is meet that the saints and servants of God should sing forth their joys and praises to the Lord Almighty: every attribute of him can set both their song and their tune. IV. Singing is the music of *angels*. Job tells us "the morning stars sang together," Job 38:7. Now these "morning stars," as Pineda tells us, are the angels; to which the Chaldee paraphrase accords, naming these morning stars, *aciem angelorum*, an host of angels. Nay, when this heavenly host was sent to proclaim the birth of our dearest Jesus, they deliver their message in this raised way of duty. Lu 2:13. They were (*ainountev*), delivering their messages in a laudatory singing, the whole company of angels making a musical quire. Nay, in heaven there is the angels' joyous music; they there sing hallelujahs to the Most High, and to the Lamb who sits upon the throne, Re 5:11. V. Singing is the music of *heaven*; the glorious saints and angels accent their praises this way, and make one harmony in their state of blessedness; and this is the music of the Bride chamber. The saints who were tuning here their Psalms, are now singing their hallelujahs in a louder strain, and articulating their joys, which here they could not express to their perfect satisfaction; here they laboured with drowsy hearts, and faltering tongues; but in glory these impediments are removed, and nothing is left to jar their joyful celebration. *John Wells, in "Morning Exercises."*

Verse 3. A new song. That is to say, a *new* and recent composition on account of recent benefits; or constantly new songs, song succeeding song as daily new material for divine praise offers itself to the attentive student of the works of God. Or *new*, that is, always fresh and full of life, and renewed as new occasions offer themselves: as Job says, "My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand." Or *new, i.e.*, not common but rare and exquisite; as the new name in Re 2:17; the new commandment; Joh 13:34. Or this respects the gospel state, wherein is a new covenant Heb 8:8, a new Jerusalem Re 21:2, a new man Eph 2:15, and all things new, 2Co 5:17. *New*, on account of its matter being unknown of men: as in Re 14:3, "They sung a new song, "and no man could learn that

song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. *New* may be used in opposition to old. The song of Moses is old, and of the Lamb is new. *Martin Geir* (1614-1681), in "*Poli Synopsis Criticorum*."

Verse 3. *Sing unto him a new song.* Put off oldness: ye know the new song. A new man, a New Testament, a new song. A new song belongeth not to men that are old; none learn that but new men, renewed through grace from oldness, and belonging now to the New Testament, which is the kingdom of heaven. *Augustine*.

Verse 3. *A new song;* namely, sung with such fervency of affections as novelties usually bring with them; or, always new, seeing God's graces never wax old; or, sung by the motion of this new spirit of grace, which doth not so much look after the old benefits of the creation as after the new benefit of the redemption in Christ, which renews all things. Ps 40:3 96:1 Re 5:9 14:3. *John Diodati*.

Verse 3. *Sing unto him a new song.* It is a melancholy proof of the decline of the church, when the exhortation to sing a new song is no longer attended to: in such a case, there is need of the greatest care to prevent the old ones falling into oblivion. *E. W. Hengstenberg*.

Verse 3. *Play skilfully.* It is not an easy matter to praise God aright; it must be done *corde, ore, spere*, with the very best of the best. *John Trapp*.

Verse 4. *The word of the Lord is right.* His word of promise given to the church. The divine revelation to all setting forth what is to be believed, hoped for, and done. The decrees of God and his penal judgments. The whole counsel and determination of God in the creation and government of the world. *Is right*, without defect or error. The word *right* is opposed to *tortuous*; it means true or certain. *John de Pineda* (1577-1637); *D.H. Mollerus* (1639), and others, in *Synopsis*.

Verse 4. *All his works are done in truth.*

Truth is in each flower

As well as in the most solemn things of God:

Truth is the voice of nature and of time—

Truth is the startling monitor within us—

Nought is without it, it comes from the stars,

The golden sun, and every breeze that blows—

Truth, it is God! and God is everywhere!

—*William Thomas Bacon*.

Verse 5. *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.* If we reflect on the prodigious number of human beings who constantly receive their food, raiment, and every pleasure they enjoy, from their mother earth, we shall be convinced of the great liberality with which nature dispenses her gifts; and not only human beings, but an innumerable quantity of living creatures besides—inhabitants of the air, the waters, and the earth—are daily indebted to nature for their support. Those animals which are

under our care are still indebted to the earth for their subsistence; for the grass, which nature spontaneously produces, is their chief food. The whole race of fishes, except those which men feed for their amusement, subsist without any of their aid. The species of birds which is perhaps the most despised and most numerous, is the sparrow. What they require for their support is incredible, but nature takes care to feed them; they are however but the smallest part of her children. So great is the quantity of insects, that ages may pass before even their species and classes can be known. How many and how diversified the sorts of flies that play in the air! The blood taken from us by the gnat is very accidental food for them; and we may suppose that where there is one gnat that lives upon it, there are millions that have never tasted human blood, or that of any other animal. On what can all these creatures subsist? Perhaps every handful of earth contains living insects; they are discovered in every drop of water; their multiplying and means of support are incomprehensible. While nature is thus prolific in children, she is also fruitful in means for their subsistence; or, rather, it is the God of nature who has poured into her bosom this inexhaustible store of riches. He provides each creature with its food and dwelling. For them he causes the grass and other herbs to grow, leaving each to select its proper food. And, however mean many creatures may appear to us, he feeds and assists them all. O Almighty God, how manifest is thy greatness! Thou dost what the united efforts of all mankind would fail to accomplish. Thou hast given life, and breath, and being to all creatures that live in the air, the waters, or the earth. Surely thou wilt do for thy believing people what thou dost for animals and insects! When we are filled with doubts and fears, let us consider the ravens whom the Lord feeds when they cry. Let them and all creatures beside, which man takes no care of, teach us the art of contentment. The great Author of nature knows all our wants. Let us cast our every care on him, for he careth for us; and may we come boldly to the throne of grace in faith and sincerity, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in every time of need. *Christopher Christian Sturm.*

Verse 5. *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.* To hear its worthless inhabitants complain, one would think that God dispensed *evil*, not *good*. To examine the operation of his hand, everything is marked with mercy, and there is no place where his goodness does not appear. The *overflowing kindness* of God fills the earth. Even the iniquities of men are rarely a bar to his goodness: he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends his rain upon the *just* and the *unjust*. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 5. *The goodness of the Lord.* In discoursing on the glorious perfections of God, his *goodness* must by no means be omitted; for though all his perfections are his glory, yet this is particularly so called, for when Moses, the man of God, earnestly desired to behold a grand display of the glory of Jehovah, the Lord said in answer to his petition, "I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee;" thus intimating that he himself accounted his goodness to be his glory Ex 33:19 34:7; and it includes that mercy, grace, longsuffering, and truth, which are afterwards mentioned. When it relieves the miserable, it is *mercy*; when it bestows favours on the worthless, it is *grace*; when it bears with

provoking rebels, it is *long suffering*; when it confers promised blessings, it is *truth*; when it supplies indigent beings, it is *bounty*. *The goodness of God* is a very comprehensive term; it includes all the forms of his kindness shown to men; whether considered as creatures, as sinners, or as believers.

George Burder, 1838

Verse 5. *The goodness of the Lord.* He might, if he had pleased, have made everything we tasted bitter, everything we saw loathsome, everything we touched a sting, every smell a stench, every sound a discord. *William Paley, D.D., 1743-1805.*

Verse 6. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.* That the (hwd) is not *spirit*, but *breath*, is evident from the words *of his mouth* (compare Isa 11:4), and from the parallelism with *word*. Simple *word* is simple *breath*; both together, they stand in contrast to that exercise of strength, that labour, that use of means and instruments without which feeble man can bring nothing to perfection. Then there are the parallel passages, "All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job 27:3. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job 33:4. "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust, thou sendest forth thy *breath*, they are created." Ps 104:29,30. On the other hand, however, the exposition which would interpret (wyp xwr), without reference to the *Spirit of God*, cannot be a correct one. In the history of the creation, to which the verse before us, as well as verses seven and nine, generally refer, the creation is described as the work of the SPIRIT of God, and his WORD. First, the *Spirit of God* moved upon the face of the waters, then God *said*. We may also suppose that the Spirit and the power of God are here represented by the *figure* of breath, because that in man is the first sign of life. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 6. *By the word of the Lord.* May be understood of the hypostatic Word, as John teaches us. Joh 1:1. (*John Cocceius*), 1603-1669. This is an illustration of the old saying, that while Grotius finds Christ nowhere, Cocceius finds Christ everywhere. *C. H. S.*

Verse 6. Let any make a world, and he shall be a God, saith Augustine; hence is it that the church maketh it the very first article of her Creed to believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. *John Weemse.*

Verses 6, 9. It is all one with God to do as to say, to perform as to promise; it is as easy, he is as willing, as able, to do the one as the other. There is no such distance betwixt God's saying and doing, as amongst men. His saying is doing: *He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.* *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.* "The worlds were framed by the word of God." Heb 11:3. There is omnipotence in his word, both of command and promise; therefore called, "The word of his power." Heb 1:3. One word of his can do more in an instant than the united powers of heaven and earth can do in eternity. This consideration removes at once the chief discouragements that hinder the lively actings of faith; for what is it that weakens our confidence of the promises'

performance, but because we look upon the accomplishment as uncertain or difficult, or future and afar off! Now from hence faith may conclude the performance is certain, easy, and present. *David Clarkson.*

Verse 7. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap, etc. "God called the gathering together of the waters, seas." Ge 1:10. This unstable element must, like all other elements, be put under law, and confined within bounds, that there might be a habitable earth for man and all the creatures around him. Thus the psalmist sings, *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.* The boundary was such as to cause his servants to wonder. They looked from the shore, as we do, and under the influence of a well known law, the billows in their heaving swells, seemed as if they would, as if they did, touch the sky itself; and as if they were so much higher than the shore, that they were in danger of leaving their basin and stretching over the land. Just such an impression, we with all our science, popularly hold. The prophets thus looked as we do, and under the same kind of feeling. How wonderful, they thought, is all this! A low barrier of sand is made Jehovah's agent for bounding the deep. "The Lord hath placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it." Jer 5:22. *John Duns, D.D., in "Science and Christian Thought," 1868.*

Verse 7. *The waters of the sea.* Of all objects that I have ever seen, there is none which affect my imagination so much as the sea or ocean. I cannot see the heavings of this prodigious bulk of waters, even in a calm, without a very pleasing astonishment; but when it is worked up in a tempest, so that the horizon on every side is nothing but foaming billows and floating mountains, it is impossible to describe the agreeable horror that rises from such a prospect. A troubled ocean, to a man who sails upon it, is, I think, the biggest object that he can see in motion, and consequently gives his imagination one of the highest kinds of pleasure that can arise from greatness. I must confess it is impossible for me to survey this world of fluid matter without thinking on the hand that first poured it out, and made a proper channel for its reception. Such an object naturally raises in my thoughts the idea of an Almighty Being, and convinces me of his existence as much as a metaphysical demonstration. The imagination prompts the understanding, and by the greatness of the sensible object, produces in it the idea of a Being who is neither circumscribed by time nor space. *Spectator.*

Verse 7. *As a heap.* Dealing with fluids as if they were solids, with an obvious allusion to Ex 15:8. *Depths,* masses of water. The main point of the description is God's handling these vast liquid masses, as men handle solid substances of moderate dimensions, heaping the waves up, and storing them away, as men might do with stones or wheat. *J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 7. The vast masses of waters which had hitherto covered the entire surface of the globe, was on the third day of creation brought within narrower compass, and large tracts of the submerged

earth reclaimed and rendered habitable ground...The waters were, *for the most part*, congregated together in one vast body, instead of being universally diffused over the face of the earth. This is the state of things which we now contemplate; the various great seas and oceans constituting in fact but one body of water called in different regions by different names, as the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Southern, etc., oceans. *George Bush*, on Ge 1:9.

Verse 8. *Let all the earth.* For who can doubt that God can do as he wills upon earth, since he so tamed the unconquerable nature of the sea? *Hugo Grotius*, 1583-1645.

Verse 8. *Let all the earth fear the Lord*, etc. Let them not fear another instead of him. Doth a wild beast rage? Fear God. Doth a serpent lie in wait? Fear God. Doth man hate thee? Fear God. Doth the devil fight against thee? Fear God. For the whole creation is under him whom thou art commanded to fear. *Augustine*.

Verse 9. *He spake, and it was done.* As we say in Latin, *Dictum factum*, SAID DONE, no delay having interposed. *Hugo Grotius*.

Verse 9. *He spake, and it was done*; so that the creatures were not emanations from the divine nature, but effects of the divine will, the fruits of intelligence, and design, and counsel. *William Binnie, D.D.*

Verse 10. *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought*, etc. The more the Pharisees of old, and their successors the prelates of late, opposed the truth, the more it prevailed. The Reformation in Germany was much furthered by the Papists' opposition; yea, when two kings (amongst many others), wrote against Luther, namely, Henry 8th of England, and Ludovicus of Hungary, this kingly title being entered into the controversy (making men more curious to examine the matter), stirred up a general inclination towards Luther's opinions. *Richard Younge's Christian Library*, 1655.

Verse 11. *The counsel of the Lord.* Note the contrast between the counsel of the heathen in the last verse, and the counsel of the Lord in this. *C. H. S.*

Verse 11. *The thoughts.* The same word as *devices* in the preceding verse. *William de Burgh, D.D., in loc.*

Verse 11. The wheels in a watch or a clock move contrary one to another, some one way, some another, yet all serve the intent of the workman, to show the time, or to make the clock strike. So in the world, the providence of God may seem to run cross to his promises; one man takes this way, another runs that way; good men go one way, wicked men another, yet all in conclusion accomplish the will, and centre in the purpose of God the great Creator of all things. *Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 11. (*last clause*). Think not, brethren, because he said, *The thoughts of his heart*, that God as it were sitteth down and thinketh what he should do, and taketh counsel to do anything, or not to do anything. To thee, O man, belongs such tardiness. *Augustine*.

Verse 12. *Blessed—whom he hath chosen.* A man may have his name set down in the chronicles, yet lost; wrought in durable marble, yet perish; set upon a monument equal to a Colossus, yet be ignominious; inscribed on the hospital gates, yet go to hell; written in the front of his own house, yet another come to possess it; all these are but writings in the dust, or upon the waters, where the characters perish so soon as they are made; they no more prove a man happy than the fool could prove Pontius Pilate because his name was written in the Creed. But the true comfort is this, when a man by assurance can conclude with his own soul that his name is written in those eternal leaves of heaven, in the book of God's election, which shall never be wrapped up in the cloudy sheets of darkness but remain legible to all eternity. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 12. *The people whom he hath chosen.* Some read it, The people which hath chosen him for their inheritance. It cometh all to one. See De 26:17-19. *John Trapp.*

Verse 12. It's an happiness to have an interest in one greater than ourselves; an interest in a beggar is of no worth, because he is of no power; but interest in a prince all men seek, therefore it is said, *Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.* *Joseph Symonds.*

Verse 12. Lest it should be thought that men obtain so great a good by their own efforts and industry, David teaches us expressly that it proceeds from the fountain of God's gracious electing love that we are accounted the people of God. *John Calvin.*

Verse 12. I have sometimes compared the *great* men of the world, and the *good* men of the world to the *consonants* and *vowels* in the alphabet. The *consonants* are the most and the biggest letters; they take up most room, and carry the greatest bulk; but, believe it, the *vowels* though they are the fewest and least of all the letters, yet they are most useful; they give the greatest sound of all; there is no pronunciation without vowels. O beloved, though the *great* men of the world take up room, and make a show above others, yet they are but *consonants*, a company of mute and dumb *consonants* for the most part; the *good men* they are the *vowels* that are of the greatest use and most concernment at every turn: *a good man* to help with his prayers; *a good man* to advise with his counsels; *a good man* to interpose with his authority; this is the loss we lament, we have lost *a good man*; death has blotted out a *vowel*; and I fear me there will be much silence where he is lacking; silence in the bed, and silence in the house, and silence in the shop, and silence in the church, and silence in the parish, for he was everywhere a *vowel*, *a good man* in every respect. *John Kitchin, M.A., in a Funeral Sermon, 1660.*

Verse 15. *He fashioneth their hearts alike.* As an illustration of the passage as it stands in our version, we append the following:—"Every circumstance concurs in proving that mankind are not composed of species essentially different from each other; that, on the contrary, there was originally but one species, which, after multiplying and spreading over the whole surface of the earth, has undergone various changes, from the influence of climate, food, mode of living, diseases, and

mixture of dissimilar individuals; that at first these changes were not so conspicuous, and produced only individual varieties; that these varieties became afterward more specific, because they were rendered more general, more strongly marked, and more permanent, by the continual action of the same causes; and that they are transmitted from generation to generation." *G. L. Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1707-1788.*

Verse 15. The Creator of all things *fashioneth their hearts alike*; the word (dxy), which signifies together at once, intimating that the hearts of all men though separated from one another by never so vast a gulf of time or place, are as exactly alike in respect of their original inclinations, as if they had been all moulded at the same time. The worship of a God and then some kind of religion, is necessary to us, we cannot shift it off. *William Pinke, 1631.*

Verse 15. (*last clause*). Two men give to the poor, one seeketh his reward in heaven, the other the praise of men. Thou in two seest one thing, God understandeth two. For he understandeth what is within, and knoweth what is within; their ends he seeth, their base intentions he seeth. *He understandeth all their works. Augustine.*

Verse 16. *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host.* At the battle of Arbela, the Persian hosts numbered between five hundred thousand and a million men, but they were utterly put to the rout by Alexander's band of fifty thousand; and the once mighty Darius was soon vanquished. Napoleon led more than half a million of men into Russia:

"Not such the numbers, nor the host so dread,
By northern Bren, or Scythian Timour led."

But the terrible winter left the army a mere wreck, and their leader was soon a prisoner on the lone rock of St. Helena. All along the line of history this verse has been verified. The strongest battalions melt like snowflakes when God is against them. *C. H. S.*

Verse 16. *A mighty man; or a giant; Goliath for instance.* As the most skilful swimmers are often drowned, so here. *John Trapp.*

Verses 16-17.

Not the chief his serried lances,
Not his strength secures the brave;
All in vain the warhorse prances,
Weak his force his lord to save.

—*Richard Mant.*

Verses 16-17. The weakness and insufficiency of all human *power*, however great, as before of all human *intellect*. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verses 16-17. As a passenger in a storm, that for shelter against the weather, steps out of the way, betakes him to a fair spread oak, stands under the boughs, with his back close to the body of it, and

finds good relief thereby for the space of some time; till at length comes a sudden gust of wind, that tears down a main arm of it, which falling upon the poor passenger, either maims or mischieves him that resorted to it for succour. Thus falleth it out with not a few, meeting in the world with many troubles, and with manifold vexations, they step aside out of their own way, and too, too often out of God's, to get under the wing of some great one, and gain, it may be, some aid and shelter thereby for a season; but after awhile, that great one himself coming down headlong, and falling from his former height of favour, or honour, they are also called in question and to fall together with him, that might otherwise have stood long enough on their own legs, if they had not trusted to such an arm of flesh, such a broken staff that deceived them. *Thomas Gataker.*

Verse 17. *An horse.* If the strength of horses be of God, or be his gift Job 39:19, then trust not in the strength of horses: use the strength of horses, but do not trust the strength of horses. If you trust the strength which God hath given to horses, you make them your god. How often doth God forbid trusting in the strength of horses, as knowing that we are apt to trust in anything that is strong, though but a beast. *An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.* As if God had said, you think a horse can save you, but know he is a vain thing. And when the psalmist saith, "A horse is a vain thing," he doth not mean it of a weak horse, but of a horse of the greatest strength imaginable; such a horse is a vain thing to save a man, neither can he deliver any by his strength; and therefore the Lord, when he promised great deliverances to his people, lest they should expect it by the strength of horses, saith Ho 1:7, "I will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen;" as if he had told them, do not look after creature strength to be saved by; a horse will be a vain thing to save you, and I can save you effectually without horses, and I will. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 17-20. Man is sensible of his want of earthly blessings, and will never cease, with excessive care, diligence, and vexation, to hunt after them, till he come to know that God will provide for him. When one hath great friends which they are known to lean upon, we say of them, such need take no care, they know such and such will see to them. On the contrary, come to one who knows no end of toiling and caring, ask him, Why will you thus tire yourself out? He will answer, I must needs do it, I have none but myself to trust to. So Christ followeth his disciples' carefulness to this door, their unbelief, which did not let them consider our heavenly Father cared for them. No present estate, though never so great, can free the heart from distraction, because it is subject to decay and vanishing; we shall never cast the burden of care off our own shoulders, till we learn by faith to cast it upon the Lord, whose eye is over us for good. He will never renounce carnal supports who make not God the stay of his soul for outward things. He will trust in the abundance of his riches, wisdom, friends, or strength, that makes not God his strength. The heart of man, being aware of his inability to sustain himself if he be not underset, will seek out some prop, true or false, sound or rotten, to lean

unto. They will go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, who look not to the Holy One of Israel, and seek not the Lord. *John Ball.*

Verse 18. *Behold*, etc. Hitherto he had given a proof of God's providence towards *all men*, but now he descends to a particular proof of it, by his care over his *church*, which he wonderfully guides, defends, and protects in all dangers and assaults; and that notice may be taken of it, he begins with, "*Behold!*" *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 18. *The eye of the Lord is upon.* Look upon the sun, how it casts light and heat upon the whole world in its general course, how it shineth upon the good and the bad with an equal influence; but let its beams be but concentrated in a burning glass, then it sets fire on the object only, and passeth by all others: and thus God in the creation looketh upon all his works with a general love, *erant omnia valde bona*, they pleased him very well. Oh! but when he is pleased to cast the beams of his love, and cause them to shine upon his elect through Christ, then it is that their hearts burn within them, then it is that their affections are inflamed; whereas others are but as it were a little warmed, have a little shine of common graces cast upon them. *Richard Holdsworth, 1651.*

Verse 18. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.* This is a very encouraging character. They who cannot claim the higher distinctions of religion, may surely know that they "fear God, and hope in his mercy." Some may wonder at the combination; and suppose that the qualities are incompatible with each other. But the first Christians "walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost." They may think that the fear will injure the hope, or the hope the fear. But these are even mutually helpful; and they are, not only never so beautiful, but never so influential as when they are blended. The fear promotes hope by the evidence it affords; and by keeping us from loose and careless walking, which must always affect our peace and pleasure. And hope no less befriends this fear. For never is God seen so glorious, so worthy of all our devotedness to him as when we hope in his mercy; and even the more assured we are of his regard, the more we shall enquire, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? The more we shall tremble at the thought of offending and grieving him, the more we shall continue upon our knees praying, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, *my Strength and my Redeemer.*" It is called "a lively hope:" and Christians know, by experience, that upon all their principles and duties it has the same influence as Spring has upon the fields and the gardens. *William Jay.*

Verse 18. *Who hope in his mercy.* When thou canst not get assurance, make as much improvement of the grounds upon which thou mayest build *hopes* of salvation. The probable grounds thou hast, thou wouldst not part with for all the world. If thy heart is not full of joy through sense of God's love, yet thine eyes are full of tears, and thy soul full of sorrow, through the sense of thy sin: wouldst thou

change thy condition with any hypocrite whatsoever, with the richest man that hath no grace? I would not have thee rest satisfied with a probability, but yet bless God for a probability of salvation. Is it nothing that one that hath deserved hell most certainly, should have a probability that he should escape it? Would not this be a little ease to the torments of the damned, if they had but a strong probability that they should be saved? but *no hope* makes it heavy. When thou art sick, thou enquirest of the physician, Sir, what do you think of me? Shall I live, or shall I die? If he reply it is not certain, but there is *good hopes*, it is probable you will live and do well; this is some support unto thee in thy sickness. *Thomas Doolittle, M.A. (1630-1707), in "Morning Exercises."*

Verse 18. The weakest believer, the least of saints, hath ground to hope. The gospel is so ordered, the covenant so methodised, God hath made such ample provision, that every one may "have good hope through grace" 1Th 2:16; and all that bear this character are allowed, encouraged, nay, commanded to hope: their hoping is as mighty a pleasure to God, as it is a comfort to themselves. *Samuel Doolittle's "Righteous Man's Hope in Death," 1693.*

Verses 18-19. During the siege of Rochelle, which was endured with unexampled bravery for nearly fifteenth months, the inhabitants were reduced by famine to the misery of being obliged to have recourse to the flesh of horses, asses, mules, dogs, cats, rats, and mice; and a single peck of corn is said to have been sold for a sum equivalent to about twenty-five pounds sterling of our money in the present day. There were numerous examples of great and liberal generosity among the inhabitants. Some dispensed their charity so secretly that their names were never discovered. Among the rest, the following example is narrated:—"The Sieur de la Goute, an honorary king's advocate, had a sister, the widow of a merchant named Prosni, who, being a very religious and benevolent woman, at the time when the famine became more severe than it had been, freely assisted the poor with her present surplus. Her sister-in-law, the wife of her brother, De la Goute, being differently inclined, reproved her for her conduct, asking her in anger, 'What she would do when all should be expended?' Her reply was, 'My sister, *the Lord will provide for me.*' The siege was continued, and the famine increased its fearful ravages; and poor widow Prosni, who had four children, found herself in a great strait—all her store of provisions being exhausted. She applied to her sister for relief, who, in the stead of comforting, reproached her for her improvidence; tauntingly adding that, as she had done mighty well to be so reduced under all her great faith and fine words, that '*the Lord will provide for her.*' so in good time he might provide for her. Wounded to the heart by these words, poor widow Prosni returned to her house in sad distress; resolving nevertheless to meet death patiently. On reaching her home, her children met her with gladdened hearts and joyous faces, and told her that a man, to them an entire stranger, had knocked at the door, it being late; and, on its being opened, he threw in a sack of about two bushels of wheat; and then, without saying a word, suddenly departed. The widow Prosni, scarcely able to believe her own eyes, with an overflowing, grateful heart towards

her gracious benefactor, immediately ran to her sister-in-law as quickly as her famished condition would allow; and upon seeing her, exclaimed aloud, *'My sister, the Lord HATH provided for me;'* and, saying no more, returned home again. By means of this unexpected relief, conveyed to her so opportunely, she was enabled to support herself and family until the end of the siege, and she never knew to whom she was instrumentally indebted for this timely and merciful assistance." *The Biblical Treasury, Vol. 4*

Verse 20. *Our soul waiteth for the Lord.* There is an emphasis on the word *soul* which should be attended to; for although this is a common mode of speech among the Hebrews, yet it expresses earnest affection; as if believers should say, We sincerely rely upon God with our whole heart, accounting him our shield and help. *John Calvin.*

Verse 20. *Our soul.* Not our souls, but *our soul*, as if they all had only one. And what is the language of God by the prophet? "I will give them one heart and one way." And thus the two disciples going to Emmaus exclaimed, upon their discovery and surprise, "Did not our heart burn within us?" And thus in the beginning of the gospel it was said, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul." We have seen several drops of water on the table, by being brought to touch, running into one. If Christians were better acquainted with each other, they would easily unite. *William Jay.*

Verse 20. *He is our help.* Antigonus, king of Syria, being ready to give battle near the Isle of Andreos, sent out a squadron to watch the motions of his enemies, and to descry their strength: return was made that they had more ships, and better manned than he was. "How?" says Antigonus, "that cannot be; *quam multis meipsum opponis* (for how many dost thou reckon me?)" intimating that the dignity of a general weighed down many others, especially when poised with valour and experience. And where is valour, where is experience to be found, if not in God? He is the Lord of hosts; with him alone is strength and power to deliver Israel our of all her troubles. He may do it, he can do it, he will do it; he is wise in heart and mighty in strength; besides him there is no Saviour, no deliverer; he is a shield to the righteous, strength to the weak, a refuge to the oppressed. He is *instar omnium* (all in all), and who is like unto him in all the world? *John Spencer.*

Verse 20. There is an excellent story of a young man, that was at sea in a mighty raging tempest; and when all the passengers were at their wits' end for fear, he only was merry; and when he was asked the reason of his mirth, he answered, "That the pilot of the ship was his father, and he knew his father would have a care of him." The great and wise God, who is our Father, hath from all eternity decreed what shall be the issue of all wars, what the event of all troubles; he is our pilot, he sits at the stern; and though the ship of the church or state be in a sinking condition, yet be of good comfort, our Pilot will have a care of us. There is nothing done in the lower house of Parliament on earth, but what is first decreed in the higher house in heaven. All the lesser wheels are ordered and overruled by the upper. Are not five sparrows, saith Christ, sold for a farthing? One sparrow is not worth half a farthing.

And there's no man shall have half a farthing's worth of harm more than God hath decreed from all eternity. *Edmund Calamy.*

Verse 22. *According as we hope in thee; not according to any merits of theirs, but according to the measure of grace, of the grace of hope which God had bestowed on them, and encouraged them to exercise on him, in expectation of finding grace and mercy with him. John Gill.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Whole Psalm. This Psalm is *eucharistic*: the contents are:

1. *An exhortation to praise God Ps 33:1-3.*
2. *The arguments to enforce the duty Ps 33:4-19.*
3. *The confidence of God's people in his name, their happiness, and petition Ps 33:20-22.*

—Adam Clarke.

Verse 1. Rejoicing—the soul of praise; the Lord—a wellspring of joy. Character—indispensable to true enjoyment.

Verse 1. (*last clause*). *Praise comely. What?* Vocal, meditative, habitual praise. *Why?* It is comely as wings to an angel, we mount with it; as flowers to a tree, it is our fruit; as a robe to a priest, it is our office; as long hair to a woman, it is our beauty; as a crown to a king, it is our highest honour. *When?* Evermore, but chiefly amid blasphemy, persecution, sickness, poverty, death. *Whom?* Not from the ungodly, hypocritical, or thoughtless. To be without praise is to miss our comeliest adornment.

Verse 2. Instrumental music. Is it lawful? Is it expedient? If so, its uses, limits, and laws. A sermon to improve congregational music.

Verse 3. (*first clause*). The duty of maintaining the freshness of our devotions. Freshness, skill, and heartiness, to be combined in our congregational psalmody.

Verse 4. God's word and works, their rightness, and agreement, and our view of both.

Verse 4. (*first clause*). The word doctrinal, preceptive, historical, prophetic, promissory, and experimental, always right, *i.e.*, free from error or evil.

Verse 4. (*second clause*). God's work of creation, providence, and grace, always in conformity with truth. His hatred of everything like a sham.

Verses 4-5. A fourfold argument for praise, from the *truth*, the *faithfulness* the *justice*, and *goodness* of God:

1. *For the word of the Lord is right.*
2. *All his works are done in truth.*
3. *He loveth righteousness and judgment.*
4. *The earth is full of his goodness.*

—Adam Clarke.

Verse 5. Justice and goodness equally conspicuous in the divine action.

Verse 5. (*last clause*). A matchless theme for an observant eye and an eloquent tongue.

Verse 6. The power of the Word and the Spirit in the old and new creations.

Verse 7. God's control of destructive and reconstructive agencies.

Verse 7. The storehouses of the Great Husbandman.

Verse 8. Reasons for universal worship, obstacles to it, future prospects of it, our duty in relation to it.

Verse 8. (*last clause*). Awe—the soul of worship.

Verse 9. *The irresistible word of Jehovah* in creation, in calling his people, in their comfort and deliverance, in their entrance to glory.

Verse 10. Educated and philosophical heathen within the reach of missions.

Verses 10-11. The opposing counsels.

Verse 11. The eternity, immutability, efficiency, and wisdom of the divine decrees. God's purposes, "the thoughts of his heart," hence their wisdom, and yet more their love.

Verse 12. Two elections made by a blessed people and a gracious God, and their happy result. The happiness of the church of God. God's delight in his people, and their delight in him.

Verse 13. Omniscience and its lessons.

Verses 13-15. The doctrine of providence.

Verse 15. God's acquaintance with men hearts, and his estimate of their actions. The similarity of human nature.

Verses 16-18. The fallacy of human trust, and the security of faith in God.

Verse 18. Hoping in the mercy of God—false and true forms distinguished.

Verse 18.

1. The eyes of God's *knowledge* are upon them.
2. The eyes of his *affection* are upon them.
3. The eyes of his *providence* are upon them.

—*William Jay.*

Verse 19. Life in famine, natural and spiritual, especially a famine of inward hope and legal satisfaction.

Verse 20. *Waiting for the Lord*, includes:

1. Conviction—a persuasion that the Lord is the supreme good.
2. Desire—it is expressed by hungering and thirsting after righteousness.
3. Hope.
4. Patience—God is never slack concerning his promise.

—*William Jay.*

Verse 20. (*first clause*). The believer's hourly position.

Verse 21. Joy, the outflow of faith.

Verse 22. A prayer for believers only.

Verse 22. Measure for measure, or mercy proportioned to faith.

Psalm 34

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. Of this transaction, which reflects no credit upon David's memory, we have a brief account in 1Sa 21:1-15. Although the gratitude of the psalmist prompted him thankfully to record the goodness of the Lord in vouchsafing an undeserved deliverance, yet he weaves none of the incidents of the escape into the narrative, but dwells only on the grand fact of his being heard in the hour of peril. We may learn from his example not to parade our sins before others, as certain vainglorious professors are wont to do who seem as proud of their sins as old Greenwich pensioners of their battles and their wounds. David played the fool with singular dexterity, but he was not so real a fool as to sing of his own exploits of folly. In the original, the title does not teach us that the psalmist composed this poem at the time of his escape from Achish, the king or Abimelech of Gath, but that it is intended to commemorate that event, and was suggested by it. It is well to mark our mercies with well carved memorials. God deserves our best handiwork. David in view of the special peril from which he was rescued, was at great pains with this Psalm, and wrote it with considerable regularity, in almost exact accordance with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This is the second alphabetical Psalm, the twenty-fifth being the first.

DIVISION. The Psalm is split into two great divisions at the close of Ps 34:10, when the Psalmist having expressed his praise to God turns in direct address to men. The first ten verses are A HYMN, and the last twelve A SERMON. For further assistance to the reader we may subdivide thus: In Ps 34:1-3, David vows to bless the Lord, and invites the praise of others; from Ps 34:4-7 he relates his experience, and in Ps 34:8-10 exhorts the godly to constancy of faith. In Ps 34:1-14, he gives direct exhortation, and follows it up by didactic teaching from Ps 34:15-22 to the close.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *I will bless the Lord at all times.* He is resolved and fixed, *I will*; he is personally and for himself determined, let others so as they may; he is intelligent in head and inflamed in heart—he

knows to whom the praise is due, and what is due, and for what and when. To Jehovah, and not to second causes our gratitude is to be rendered. The Lord hath by right a monopoly in his creatures praise. Even when a mercy may remind us of our sin with regard to it, as in this case David's deliverance from the Philistine monarch was sure to do, we are not to rob God of his meed of honour because our conscience justly awards a censure to our share in the transaction. Though the hook was rusty, yet God sent the fish, and we thank him for it. *At all times*, in every situation, under every circumstance, before, in and after trials, in bright days of glee, and dark nights of fear. He would never have done praising, because never satisfied that he had done enough; always feeling that he fell short of the Lord's deservings. Happy is he whose fingers are wedded to his harp. He who praises God for mercies shall never want a mercy for which to praise. To bless the Lord is never unseasonable. *His praise shall continually be in my mouth*, not in my heart merely, but in my mouth too. Our thankfulness is not to be a dumb thing; it should be one of the daughters of music. Our tongue is our glory, and it ought to reveal the glory of God. What a blessed mouthful is God's praise! How sweet, how purifying, how perfuming! If men's mouths were always thus filled, there would be no repining against God, or slander of neighbours. If we continually rolled this dainty morsel under our tongue, the bitterness of daily affliction would be swallowed up in joy. God deserves blessing with the heart, and extolling with the mouth—good thoughts in the closet, and good words in the world.

Verse 2. *My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.* Boasting is a very natural propensity, and if it were used as in this case, the more it were indulged the better. The exultation of this verse is no mere tongue bragging, "*the soul*" is in it, the boasting is meant and felt before it is expressed. What scope there is for holy boasting in Jehovah! His person, attributes, covenant, promises, works, and a thousand things besides, are all incomparable, unparalleled, matchless; we may cry them up as we please, but we shall never be convicted of vain and empty speech in so doing. Truly he who writes these words of comment has nothing of his own to boast of, but much to lament over, and yet none shall stop him of his boast in God so long as he lives. *The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.* They are usually grieved to hear boastings; they turn aside from vauntings and lofty speeches, but boasting in the Lord is quite another matter; by this the most lowly are consoled and encouraged. The confident expressions of tried believers are a rich solace to their brethren of less experience. We ought to talk of the Lord's goodness on purpose that others may be confirmed in their trust in a faithful God.

Verse 3. *O magnify the Lord with me.* Is this request addressed to the humble? If so it is most fitting. Who can make God great but those who feel themselves to be little? He bids them help him to make the Lord's fame greater among the sons of men. Jehovah is infinite, and therefore cannot really be made greater, but his name grows in manifested glory as he is made known to his creatures, and thus he is said to be magnified. It is well when the soul feels its own inability adequately to glorify the

Lord, and therefore stirs up others to the gracious work; this is good both for the man himself and for his companions. No praise can excel that which lays us prostrate under a sense of our own nothingness, while divine grace like some topless Alp rises before our eyes and sinks us lower and lower in holy awe. *Let us exalt his name together.* Social, congregated worship is the outgrowth of one of the natural instincts of the new life. In heaven it is enjoyed to the full, and earth is like heaven where it abounds.

Verse 4. *I sought the Lord, and he heard me.* It must have been in a very confused manner that David prayed, and there must have been much of self sufficiency in his prayer, or he would not have resorted to methods of such dubious morality as pretending to be mad and behaving as a lunatic; yet his poor limping prayer had an acceptance and brought him succour: the more reason for then celebrating the abounding mercy of the Lord. We may seek God even when we have sinned. If sin could blockade the mercyseat it would be all over with us, but the mercy is that there are gifts even for the rebellious, and an advocate for men who sin. *And delivered me from all my fears.* God makes a perfect work of it. He clears away both our fears and their causes, all of them without exception. Glory be to his name, prayer sweeps the field, slays all the enemies and even buries their bones. Note the egoism of this verse and of those preceding it; we need not blush to speak of ourselves when in so doing we honestly aim at glorifying God, and not at exalting ourselves. Some are foolishly squeamish upon this point, but they should remember that when modesty robs God it is most immodest.

Verse 5. *They looked unto him, and were lightened.* The psalmist avows that his case was not at all peculiar, it was matched in the lives of all the faithful; they too, each one of them on looking to their Lord were brightened up, their faces began to shine, their spirits were uplifted. What a means of blessing one look at the Lord may be! There is life, light, liberty, love, everything in fact, in a look at the crucified One. Never did a sore heart look in vain to the good Physician; never a dying soul turned its darkening eye to the brazen serpent to find its virtue gone. *And their faces were not ashamed.* Their faces were covered with joy but not with blushes. He who trusts in God has no need to be ashamed of his confidence, time and eternity will both justify his reliance.

Verse 6. *This poor man cried.* Here he returns to his own case. He was poor indeed, and so utterly friendless that his life was in great jeopardy; but he cried in his heart to the protector of his people and found relief. His prayer was a cry, for brevity and bitterness, for earnestness and simplicity, for artlessness and grief; it was a poor man's cry, but it was none the less powerful with heaven, for *the Lord heard him*, and to be heard of God is to be delivered; and so it is added that the Lord *saved him out of all his troubles.* At once and altogether David was clean rid of all his woes. The Lord sweeps our griefs away as men destroy a hive of hornets, or as the winds clear away the mists. Prayer can clear us of troubles as easily as the Lord made riddance of the frogs and flies of Egypt when Moses

entreated him. This verse is the psalmist's own personal testimony: he being dead yet speaketh. Let the afflicted reader take heart and be of good courage.

Verse 7. *The angel of the Lord.* The covenant angel, the Lord Jesus, at the head of all the bands of heaven, surrounds with his army the dwellings of the saints. Like hosts entrenched so are the ministering spirits encamped around the Lord's chosen, to serve and succour, to defend and console them. *Encampeth round about them that fear him.* On every side the watch is kept by warriors of sleepless eyes, and the Captain of the host is one whose prowess none can resist. *And delivereth them.* We little know how many providential deliverances we owe to those unseen hands which are charged to bear us up lest we dash our foot against a stone.

Verse 8. *O taste and see.* Make a trial, an inward, experimental trial of the goodness of God. You cannot see except by tasting for yourself; but if you taste you shall see, for this, like Jonathan's honey, enlightens the eyes. *That the Lord is good.* You can only know this really and personally by experience. There is the banquet with its oxen and fatlings; its fat things full of marrow, and wine on the lees well refined; but their sweetness will be all unknown to you except you make the blessings of grace your own, by a living, inward, vital participation in them. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* Faith is the soul's taste; they who test the Lord by their confidence always find him good, and they become themselves blessed. The second clause of the verse, is the argument in support of the exhortation contained in the first sentence.

Verse 9. *O fear the Lord, ye his saints.* Pay to him humble childlike reverence, walk in his laws, have respect to his will, tremble to offend him, hasten to serve him. Fear not the wrath of men, neither be tempted to sin through the virulence of their threats; fear God and fear nothing else. *For there is no want to them that fear him.* Jehovah will not allow his faithful servants to starve. He may not give luxuries, but the promise binds him to supply necessaries, and he will not run back from his word. Many whims and wishes may remain unfulfilled, but real wants the Lord will supply. The fear of the Lord or true piety is not only the duty of those who avow themselves to be saints, that is, persons set apart and consecrated for holy duties, but it is also their path of safety and comfort. Godliness hath the promise of the life which now is. If we were to die like dogs, and there were no hereafter, yet were it well for our own happiness' sake to fear the Lord. Men seek a patron and hope to prosper; he prospers surely who hath the Lord of Hosts to be his friend and defender.

Verse 10. *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger.* They are fierce, cunning, strong, in all the vigour of youth, and yet they sometimes howl in their ravenous hunger, and even so crafty, designing, and oppressing men, with all their sagacity and unscrupulousness, often come to want; yet simple minded believers, who dare not act as the greedy lions of earth, are fed with food convenient for them. To trust God is better policy than the craftiest politicians can teach or practice. *But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* No really good thing shall be denied to

those whose first and main end in life is to seek the Lord. Men may call them fools, but the Lord will prove them wise. They shall win where the world's wiseacres lose their all, and God shall have the glory of it.

Verse 11. *Come, ye children.* Though a warrior and a king, the psalmist was not ashamed to teach children. Teachers of youth belong to the true peerage; their work is honourable, and their reward shall be glorious. Perhaps the boys and girls of Gath had made sport of David in his seeming madness, and if so, he here aims by teaching the rising race to undo the mischief which he had done aforetime. Children are the most hopeful persons to teach—wise men who wish to propagate their principles take care to win the ear of the young. *Hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* So far as they can be taught by word of mouth, or learned by the hearing of the ear, we are to communicate the faith and fear of God, inculcating upon the rising generation the principles and practices of piety. This verse may be the address of every Sabbath school teacher to his class, of every parent to his children. It is not without instruction in the art of teaching. We should be winning and attractive to the youngsters, bidding them "come," and not repelling them with harsh terms. We must get them away, apart from toys and sports, and try to occupy their minds with better pursuits; for we cannot well teach them while their minds are full of other things. We must drive at the main point always, and keep the fear of the Lord ever uppermost in our teachings, and in so doing we may discreetly cast our own personality into the scale by narrating our own experiences and convictions.

Verse 12. Life spent in happiness is the desire of all, and he who can give the young a receipt for leading a happy life deserves to be popular among them. Mere existence is not life; the art of living, truly, really, and joyfully living, it is not given to all men to know. To teach men how to live and how to die, is the aim of all useful religious instruction. The rewards of virtue are the baits with which the young are to be drawn to morality. While we teach piety to God we should also dwell much upon morality towards man.

Verse 13. *Keep thy tongue from evil.* Guard with careful diligence that dangerous member, the tongue, lest it utter evil, for that evil will recoil upon thee, and mar the enjoyment of thy life. Men cannot spit forth poison without feeling some of the venom burning their own flesh. *And thy lips from speaking guile.* Deceit must be very earnestly avoided by the man who desires happiness. A crafty schemer lives like a spy in the enemy's camp, in constant fear of exposure and execution. Clean and honest conversation, by keeping the conscience at ease, promotes happiness, but lying and wicked talk stuffs our pillow with thorns, and makes life a constant whirl of fear and shame. David had tried the tortuous policy, but he here denounces it, and begs others as they would live long and well to avoid with care the doubtful devices of guile.

Verse 14. *Depart from evil.* Go away from it. Not merely take your hands off, but yourself off. Live not near the pest house. Avoid the lion's lair, leave the viper's nest. Set a distance between yourself and

temptation. *And do good.* Be practical, active, energetic, persevering in good. Positive virtue promotes negative virtue; he who does good is sure to avoid evil. *Seek peace.* Not merely prefer it, but with zeal and care endeavour to promote it. Peace with God, with thine own heart, with thy fellow man, search after this as the merchantman after a precious pearl. Nothing can more effectually promote our own happiness than peace; strife awakens passions which eat into the heart with corroding power. Anger is murder to one's own self, as well as to its objects. *And pursue it.* Hunt after it, chase it with eager desire. It may soon be lost, indeed, nothing is harder to retain, but do your best, and if enmity should arise let it be no fault of yours. Follow after peace when it shuns you; be resolved not to be of a contentious spirit. The peace which you thus promote will be returned into your own bosom, and be a perennial spring of comfort to you.

Verse 15. *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.* He observes them with approval and tender consideration; they are so dear to him that he cannot take his eyes off them; he watches each one of them as carefully and intently as if there were only that one creature in the universe. *His ears are open unto their cry.* His eyes and ears are thus both turned by the Lord towards his saints; his whole mind is occupied about them: if slighted by all others they are not neglected by him. Their cry he hears at once, even as a mother is sure to hear her sick babe; the cry may be broken, plaintive, unhappy, feeble, unbelieving, yet the Father's quick ear catches each note of lament or appeal, and he is not slow to answer his children's voice.

Verse 16. *The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.* God is not indifferent to the deeds of sinners, but he sets his face against them, as we say, being determined that they shall have no countenance and support, but shall be thwarted and defeated. He is determinately resolved that the ungodly shall not prosper; he sets himself with all his might to overthrow them. *To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* He will stamp out their fires, their honour shall be turned into shame, their names forgotten or accursed. Utter destruction shall be the lot of all the ungodly.

Verse 17. *The righteous cry.* Like Israel in Egypt, they cry out under the heavy yoke of oppression, both of sin, temptation, care, and grief. *And the Lord heareth;* he is like the night watchman, who no sooner hears the alarm bell than he flies to relieve those who need him. *And delivereth them out of all their troubles.* No net of trouble can so hold us that the Lord cannot free us. Our afflictions may be numerous and complicated, but prayer can set us free from them all, for the Lord will show himself strong on our behalf.

Verse 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart.* Near in friendship to accept and console. Broken hearts think God far away, when he is really most near them; their eyes are holden so that they see not their best friend. Indeed, he is with them, and in them, but they know it not. They run hither and thither, seeking peace in their own works, or in experiences, or in proposals and resolutions, whereas the Lord is nigh them, and the simple act of faith will reveal him. *And saveth*

such as be of a contrite spirit. What a blessed token for good is a repentant, mourning heart! Just when the sinner condemns himself, the Lord graciously absolves him. If we chasten our own spirits the Lord will spare us. He never breaks with the rod of judgment those who are already sore with the rod of conviction. Salvation is linked with contrition.

Verse 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous.* Thus are they made like Jesus their covenant Head. Scripture does not flatter us like the story books with the idea that goodness will secure us from trouble; on the contrary, we are again and again warned to expect tribulation while we are in this body. Our afflictions come from all points of the compass, and are as many and as tormenting as the mosquitoes of the tropics. It is the earthly portion of the elect to find thorns and briars growing in their pathway, yea, to lie down among them, finding their rest broken and disturbed by sorrow. BUT, blessed *but*, how it takes the sting out of the previous sentence! *But the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* Through troops of ills Jehovah shall lead his redeemed scatheless and triumphant. There is an end to the believer's affliction, and a joyful end too. None of his trials can hurt so much as a hair of his head, neither can the furnace hold him for a moment after the Lord bids him come forth of it. Hard would be the lot of the righteous if this promise, like a bundle of camphire, were not bound up in it, but this sweetens all. The same Lord who sends the afflictions will also recall them when his design is accomplished, but he will never allow the fiercest of them to rend and devour his beloved.

Verse 20. *He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.* David had come off with kicks and cuffs, but no broken bones. No substantial injury occurs to the saints. Eternity will heal all their wounds. Their real self is safe; they may have flesh wounds, but no part of the essential fabric of their being shall be broken. This verse may refer to frequent providential protections vouchsafed to the saints; but as good men have had broken limbs as well as others, it cannot absolutely be applied to bodily preservations; but must, it seems to me, be spiritually applied to great injuries of soul, which are for ever prevented by divine love. Not a bone of the mystical body of Christ shall be broken, even as his corporeal frame was preserved intact. Divine love watches over every believer as it did over Jesus; no fatal injury shall happen to us, we shall neither be halt or maimed in the kingdom, but shall be presented after life's trials are over without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, being preserved in Christ Jesus, and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Verse 21. *Evil shall slay the wicked.* Their adversaries shall be killing; they are not medicine, but poison. Ungodly men only need rope enough and they will hang themselves; their own iniquities shall be their punishment. Hell itself is but evil fully developed, torturing those in whom it dwells. Oh! happy they who have fled to Jesus to find refuge from their former sins, such, and such only will escape. *And they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.* They hated the best of company, and they shall have none; they shall be forsaken, despoiled, wretched, despairing. God makes the viper poison itself. What desolation of heart do the damned feel, and how richly have they deserved it!

Verse 22. *The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants*—with price and with power, with blood and with water. All providential helps are a part of the redemption by power, hence the Lord is said still to redeem. All thus ransomed belong to him who bought them—this is the law of justice and the verdict of gratitude. Joyfully will we serve him who so graciously purchases us with his blood, and delivers us by his power. *And none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.* Faith is the mark of the ransomed, and wherever it is seen, though in the least and meanest of the saints, it ensures eternal salvation. Believer, thou shalt never be deserted, forsaken, given up to ruin. God, even thy God, is thy guardian and friend, and bliss is thine.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Title. *Abimelech* was king of Gath, the same with Achish, 1Sa 21:20: who either had two names, or this of Abimelech, as it should seem, was a common name to all the kings of the Philistines (see Ge 20:2 26:8); as Pharaoh was to the Egyptian kings and Caesar to the Roman emperors: the name signifies a *father king*, or *my father king*, or a *royal father*; as kings should be the fathers of their country: before him *David changed his behaviour*, his taste, sense, or reason; he imitated a madman.
John Gill.

Whole Psalm. (This Psalm is alphabetical.) The Alphabetical Psalms, the *psalmi abcedarii*, as the Latin fathers called them, are nine in number; and I cannot help thinking it is a pity that, except in the single instance of the hundred and nineteenth, no hint of their existence should have been suffered to appear in our authorised version. I will not take it upon me to affirm, with Ewald, that no version is faithful in which the acrostic is suppressed; but I do think that the existence of such a remarkable style of composition ought to be indicated in one way or another, and that some useful purposes are served by its being actually reproduced in the translation. No doubt there are difficulties in the way. The Hebrew alphabet differs widely from any of those now employed in Europe. Besides differences of a more fundamental kind, the Hebrew has only twenty-two letters, for our twenty-six; and of the twenty-two, a considerable number have no fellows in ours. An exact reproduction of a Hebrew acrostic in English version is therefore impossible. *William Binnie, D.D.*

Whole Psalm. Mr. Hapstone has endeavoured to imitate the alphabetical character of this Psalm in his metrical version. The letter answering to F is wanting, and the last stanza begins with the letter answering to R. One verse of his translation may suffice—

"At all times bless Jehovah's name will I;
His praise shall in my mouth be constantly:
Boast in Jehovah shall my soul henceforth;
Hear it, ye meek ones, and exult with mirth."

Verse 1. *I will bless the Lord at all times.* Mr. Bradford, martyr, speaking of Queen Mary, at whose

cruel mercy he then lay, said, If the queen be pleased to release me, I will thank her; if she will imprison me, I will thank her; if she will burn me, I will thank her, etc. So saith a believing soul: Let God do with me what he will, I will be thankful. *Samuel Clarks's "Mirror."*

Verse 1. Should the whole frame of nature be unhinged, and all outward friends and supporters prove false and deceitful, our worldly hopes and schemes be disappointed, and possessions torn from us, and the floods of sickness, poverty, and disgrace overwhelm our soul with an impetuous tide of trouble; the sincere lover of God, finding that none of these affects his portion and the object of his panting desires, retires from them all to God his refuge and hiding place, and there feels his Saviour incomparably better, and more than equivalent to what the whole of the universe can ever offer, or rob him of; and his tender mercies, unexhausted fulness, and great faithfulness, yield him consolation and rest; and enable him, what time he is afraid, to put his trust in him. Thus we find the holy psalmist expressing himself: *I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* *William Dunlop.*

Verse 1. S. Basil tells us that the praise of God, once rightly impressed as a seal on the mind, though it may not always be carried out into action, yet in real truth causes us perpetually to praise God. *J. M. Neal's Commentary.*

Verse 2. *My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.* Not like the boasting of the Pharisee, so hateful in the eyes of God, so offensive in the ears of the humble; for *the humble can hear this boasting and be glad*, which they would never do if it were not conformable to the rules of humility. Can any boasting be greater than to say, "I can do all things"? Yet in this boasting there is humility when I add, "In him that strengtheneth me." For though God likes not of boasting, yet he likes of this boasting, which arrogates nothing to ourselves, but ascribes all to him. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verses 2-6. There is somewhat very striking and pleasing in the sudden transitions, and the change of persons, that is observable in these few verses. "*My soul shall boast; ""The humble shall hear; ""I sought the Lord; ""They looked to him; ""This poor man cried.*" There is a force and elegance in the very unconnectedness of the expressions, which, had they been more closely tied by the proper particles, would have been in a great measure lost. Things thus separated from each other, and yet accelerated, discover, as Longinus observes, the earnestness and the vehemency of the inward working of the mind; and though it may seem to interrupt, or disturb the sentence, yet quickens and enforces it. *Samuel Chandler, D.D.*

Verse 3. Venema remarks that after the affair with Achish, we are told in 1Sa 22:1, "His brethren, and all his father's house went down to the cave Adullam unto him, "and these, together with those who were in debt, and discontented with Saul's government, formed a band of four hundred men. To these his friends and comrades, he relates the story of his escape, and bids them with united hearts and voices extol the Lord. *C. H. S.*

Verse 4. *I sought the Lord, and he heard me.* God expects to hear from you before you can expect to hear from him. If you restrain prayer, it is no wonder the mercy promised is retained. Meditation is like the lawyer's studying the case in order to his pleading at the bar; when, therefore, thou hast viewed the promise, and affected thy heart with the riches of it, then fly thee to the throne of grace, and spread it before the Lord. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 4. *He delivered me from all my fears.* To have delivered me from all my troubles had been a great favour, but a far greater to deliver me from all my fears; for where that would but have freed me from present evil, this secures me from evil to come; that now I enjoy not only tranquillity, but security, a privilege only of the godly. The wicked may be free from trouble, but can they be free from fear? No; God knows, though they be not in trouble like other men, yet they live in more fear than other men. Guiltiness of mind, or mind of the world, never suffers them to be secure: though they be free sometimes from the fit of an ague, yet they are never without a grudging; and (if I may use the expression of poets) though they feel not always the whip of Tysiphone, yet they feel always her terrors; and, seeing the Lord hath done this for me, hath delivered me from all my fears, have I not cause, just cause, to magnify him, and exalt his name? *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 5. *They looked unto him.* The more we can think upon our Lord, and the less upon ourselves, the better. Looking to him, as he is seated upon the right hand of the throne of God, will keep our heads, and especially our hearts, steady when going through the deep waters of affliction. Often have I thought of this when crossing the water opposite the old place of Langholm. I found, when I looked down on the water, I got dizzy; I therefore fixed my eyes upon a steady object on the other side, and got comfortably through. *David Smith, 1792-1867.*

Verse 6. *This poor man cried.* The reasons of *crying* are 1. Want cannot blush. The pinching necessity of the saints is not tied to the law of modesty. Hunger cannot be ashamed. "I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise," saith David Ps 55:2; and Hezekiah, "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove" Isa 38:14. "I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation" Job 30:28. 2. Though God hear prayer only as prayer offered in Christ, not because very fervent; yet fervour is a heavenly ingredient in prayer. An arrow drawn with full strength hath a speedier issue; therefore, the prayers of the saints are expressed by *crying* in Scripture. "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not" Ps 22:2. "At noon, will I pray, and cry aloud" Ps 55:17. "In my distress I cried to the Lord" Ps 18:6. "Unto thee have I cried, O Lord" Ps 88:13. "Out of the depths have I cried" Ps 130:1. "Out of the belly of hell cried I" Jon 2:2. "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock" Ps 28:1. Yea, it goeth to somewhat more than *crying*: "I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard" Job 19:7. "Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer" La 3:8. He who may teach us all to pray, sweet Jesus, "In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" Heb 5:7; he prayed with war shouts. 3. And these prayers are so prevalent,

that God answereth them: *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his fears* Ps 34:6. "My cry came before him, even into his ears" Ps 18:6. The cry addeth wings to the prayer, as a speedy post sent to court upon life and death: "Our fathers cried unto thee, and were delivered" Ps 22:5. "*The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth*" Ps 34:17. *Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 7. *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* I will not rub the questions, whether these angels can contract themselves, and whether they can subsist in a point, and so stand together the better in so great a number, neither will I trouble myself to examine whether they are in such and such a place in their *substance*, or only in their *virtue* and *operation*. But this the godly man may assure himself of, that whensoever he shall want their help, in spite of doors, and locks, and bars, he may have it in a moment's warning. For there is no impediment, either for want of power because they are spirits, or from want of good will, both because it is their duty, and because they bear an affection to him; not only rejoicing at his first conversion Lu 15:10, but, I dare confidently affirm, always disposed with abundance of cheerfulness to do anything for him. I cannot let pass some words I remember of Origen's to this purpose, as I have them from his interpreter. He brings in the angels speaking after this manner:—"If he (meaning the Son of God) went down, and went down into a body, and was clothed with flesh, and endured its infirmities and died for men, what do we stand still for? Come, let's all down from heaven together."

Zachary Bogan.

Verse 7. *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.* This is the first time that, in the psalter, we read of the ministrations of angels. But many fathers rather take this passage of the "Angel of the Great Counsel," and gloriously to him it applies. *J. M. Neale.*

Verse 7. *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, etc.* By whom may be meant, either the uncreated Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of God's presence, and of the covenant, the Captain of salvation, the Leader and Commander of the people; and whose salvation is as walls and bulwarks about them, or as an army surrounding them; or a created angel may be intended, even a single one, which is sufficient to guard a multitude of saints, since one could destroy at once such a vast number of enemies, as in 2Ki 19:35; or one may be put for more, since they are an innumerable company that are on the side of the Lord's people, and to whom they are joined; and these may be said to encamp about them, because they are an host or army (see Ge 32:1-2 Lu 2:13); and are the guardians of the saints, that stand up for them and protect them, as well as minister to them. *John Gill.*

Verse 7. *The angel of the Lord* is represented in his twofold character in this pair of Psalms, as an angel of mercy, and also as an angel of judgment, Ps 35:6. This pair of Psalms (the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth), may in this respect be compared with the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where the angel of the Lord is displayed as encamping about St. Peter, and delivering him, and also

as smiting the persecutor, Herod Agrippa. *Christopher Wordsworth, D.D.*

Verse 7. *Round about.* In illustration of this it may be observed, that according to D'Arvieux, it is the practice of the Arabs to pitch their tents in a circular form; the prince being in the middle, and the Arabs about him, but so as to leave a respectful distance between them. And Thevenot, describing a Turkish encampment near Cairo, having particularly; noticed the spaciousness, decorations, and conveniences of the Bashaw's tent, or pavilion, adds, "Round the pale of his tent, within a pistol shot, were above two hundred tents, pitched in such a manner that the doors of them all looked towards the Bashaw's tent; and it ever is so, that they may have their eye always upon their master's lodging, and be in readiness to assist him if he be attacked." *Richard Mant.*

Verse 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* Our senses help our understandings; we cannot by the most rational discourse perceive what the sweetness of honey is; *taste* it and you shall perceive it. "His fruit was sweet to my *taste*." Dwell in the light of the Lord, and let thy soul be always ravished with his love. Get out the marrow and the fatness that thy portion yields thee. Let fools learn by beholding thy face how dim their blazes are to the brightness of thy day. *Richard Alleine, in "Heaven Opened," 1665.*

Verse 8. *O taste and see, etc.* It is not enough for thee to see it afar off, and not have it, as Dives did; or to have it in thee, and not to taste it, as Samson's lion had great store of honey in him, but tasted no sweetness of it; but thou must as well have it as see it, and as well taste it as have it. *O taste and see, says he, "how sweet the Lord is; "for so indeed Christ giveth his church not only a sight but also "a taste" of his sweetness. A sight is where he saith thus: "We will rise up early, and go into the vineyard, and see whether the vine have budded forth the small grapes, and whether the pomegranates flourish; "there is a sight of the vine. A taste is where he says thus, "I will bring thee into the wine cellar, and cause thee to drink spice wine, and new wine of the pomegranates; "there is a taste of the wine. The church not only goes into the vineyard and sees the wine, but also goes into the wine cellar, and tastes the wine. Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 8. *Taste and see.* There are some things, especially in the depths of the religious life, which can only be understood by being experienced, and which even then are incapable of being adequately embodied in words. *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* The enjoyment must come before the illumination; or rather the enjoyment is the illumination. There are things that must be loved before we can know them to be worthy of our love; things to be believed before we can understand them to be worthy of belief. And even after this—after we are conscious of a distinct apprehension of some spiritual truth, we can only, perhaps, answer, if required to explain it, in the words of the philosopher to who the question was put, "What is God?" "I know, *if I am not asked.*" *Thomas Binney's "Sermons," 1869.*

Verse 8. *Taste and see.* Be unwilling that all the good gifts of God should be swallowed without taste,

or maliciously forgotten, but use your palate, know them, and consider them. *D. H. Mollerus.*

Verse 8. Heaven and earth are replete with the goodness of God. We omit to open our mouths and eyes, on which account the psalmist desires us to *taste and see.* *Agustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 8. The *taste and see* invite, as it were, to a sumptuous feast, which has long been ready; to a rich sight openly exposed to view. The imperatives are in reality not oratory but persuasive. *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 8. All that the believer can attain of spiritual consolation in this life is but a taste. *David Dickson.*

Verse 8.

O taste the Lord, and see how sweet He is,
The man that trusts in him lives still in bliss.

—*Sir John Davies, 1569-1626.*

Verses 8-10. All these verses are beautiful representations of the fulness, suitability, completeness, and all sufficiency of God in Christ to answer all the wants of his people. And is there not a vast elegance in the comparison taken from the hunger and rapacity of the lion, even the impetuosity of the young lion, to that of the patience and silent waiting of the faithful believer? A life of faith will find food in everything, because it is all founded in Christ. The young lions may, and will lack, because nothing will supply their voracious appetites but that which is carnal. *Robert Hawker.*

Verse 10. *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger,* The old lions will have it for them, if it be to be had. *But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* As they would feel no evil thing within, so they shall want no good thing without. He that freely opens the upper, will never wholly close the nether springs. There shall be no silver lacking in Benjamin's sack, while Joseph has it to throw in. Grace is not such a beggarly visitant, as will not pay its own way. When the best of beings is adored, the best of blessings are enjoyed. *William Secker.*

Verse 10. People are apt to fancy that a wild beast's life must be happy—in a brute's sense—and that the carnivorous and graminivorous creatures which have never come under the dominion of mankind are better off than the domesticated quadrupeds which buy their quieter and safer lives at the price of ministering to the luxuries or necessities of their human lords. But the contrary is the case: the career of a flesh eating animal must be wretched, even from the tiger's or leopard's point of view. They must often suffer pangs of long continued hunger, and when they find and kill food they frequently have to wage desperate war for the enjoyment of their victim. The cry of almost every wild beast is so melancholy and forlorn, that it impresses the traveller with sadness more even than with fear. If the opportunity occurs for watching them in the chase, they are seen to sneak and sniff about, far less like "kings of the forest," than poor, dejected, starving wretches, desperate upon the subject

of their next meal. They suffer horribly from diseases induced by foul diet and long abstinence; and very few are found without scars in their hide—the tokens of terrible combats. If they live to old age their lot is piteous: their teeth are worn down, their claws are blunt, and in this state numbers of them perish by starvation. Not one half of the wild animals die a natural death; and their life, so far as can be observed, is a series of stern privations, with desperate and bloody fights among themselves.
Clipping from "Daily Telegraph."

Verse 10. *They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* There shall be no want to such, and such shall want no good thing: so that he must be such an one to whom the promise is made; and he must also be sure that it is *good* for him which is promised. But oftentimes it is not good for a man to abound with earthly blessings; as strong drink is not good for weak brains. Yea, if anything be wanting to a good man, he may be sure it is not good for him; and then better that he doth want it, than that he did enjoy it; and what wise man will complain of the want of that, which if he had, would prove more gainful than hurtful to him? As a sword to a madman, a knife to a child, drink to them that have a fever or the dropsy. "No good thing will God withhold, "etc., and therefore, not wants themselves, which to many are also good, yea, very good things, as I could reckon up many. Want sanctified is a notable means to bring to repentance, to work in us amendment of life, it stirs up prayer, it weans from the love of the world, it keeps us always prepared for the spiritual combat, discovers whether we be true believers or hypocrites, prevents greater evils of sin and punishment to come; it makes us humble, conformable to Christ our Head, increaseth our faith, our joy, and thankfulness, our spiritual wisdom, and likewise our patience, as I have largely shown in another treatise. *Richard Young, in the "Poor's Advocate," 1653.*

Verse 10. I remember as I came through the country, that there was a poor widow woman, whose husband fell at Bothwell: the bloody soldiers came to plunder her house, telling her they would take all she had. "We will leave thee nothing, "said they, "either to put in thee, or on thee." "I care not," said she, "I will not want as long as God is in the heavens." That was a believer indeed. *Alexander Peden's Sermon, 1682.*

Verse 10. Take a survey of heaven and earth and all things therein, and whatsoever upon sure ground appears good, ask it confidently of Christ; his love will not deny it. If it were good for you that there were no sin, no devil, no affliction, no destruction, the love of Christ would instantly abolish these. Nay, if the possession of all the kingdoms of the world were absolutely good for any saint, the love of Christ would instantly crown him monarch of them. *David Clarkson.*

Verse 10. (*last clause*). Part of his last afternoon was spent by Columba, in transcribing the Psalms of David. Having come to that passage in the thirty-fourth Psalm, where it is said, *They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing*, he said, "I have come to the end of a page, and I will stop here, for the following Ps 34:11, "*Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord,*

"will better suit my successor to transcribe than me. I will leave it, therefore, to Baithen." As usual the bell was rung at midnight for prayers. Columba was the first to hasten to church. On entering it soon after, Dermid found him on his knees in prayer, but evidently dying. Raising him up in his arms, he supported his head on his bosom. The brethren now entered. When they saw Columba in this dying condition they wept aloud. Columba heard them. He opened his eyes and attempted to speak, but his voice failed. He lifted up his hands as if to bless them, immediately after which he breathed out his spirit. His countenance retained in death the expression it wore in life, so that it seemed as if he had only fallen asleep. *"Story of Columba and his successors, "in the Christian Treasury for 1848.*

Verse 11. *Come, ye children.* Venema in substance remarks that David in addressing his friends in the cave, called them his sons or children, because he was about to be their teacher, and they his disciples; and again, because they were young men in the flower of their age, and as sons, would be the builders up of his house; and still more, because as their leader to whose discipline and command they were subject, he had a right to address them as his children. *C. H. S.*

Verse 11. *Come, ye children,* etc. You know your earthly parents, aye, but labour to know your heavenly. You know the fathers of your flesh, aye, but strive to know the Father of your spirits. You are expert it may be in Horace's Odes, Virgil's Eclogues, Cicero's Orations; oh! but strive to get understanding in David's Psalms, Solomon's Proverbs, and the other plain books of Holy Writ. Manna was to be gathered in the morning. The orient pearl is generated of the morning dew; *aurora musis amica*, the morning is a friend to the muses. O *"remember thy Creator,* "know him in the morning of thy childhood. When God had created the heavens and the earth, the first thing he did was to adorn the world with light, and separate it from the darkness. Happy is that child on whom the light of saving knowledge begins to dawn early. God, in the law, required the firstborn, and the first fruits, so he doth still our first days, to be offered to him. They are wisdom's words, "They that seek me early shall find me." Pr 8:17. Where a rabbin observeth a (n is added to the verb more than usual, which in numbering goeth for fifty. With this note, that early seeking hath not only twenty, or thirty, but fifty, nay, indeed, an hundred fold recompense attending on it. *Nathaneal Hardy.*

Verse 11. *Come, ye children.* David in this latter part of the Psalm undertakes to teach children; though a man of war and anointed to be king, he did not think it below him: though now he had his head so full of cares, and his hands of business, yet he could find heart and time to give good counsel to young people from his own experience. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 11. Observe. I. What he expects from them, *Hearken unto me,* leave your play, lay by your toys, and hear what I have to say to you; not only give me the hearing, but observe and obey me. II. What he undertakes to teach them, *The fear of the Lord,* inclusive of all the duties of religion. David was a famous musician, a statesman, a soldier, but he doth not say to his children, I will teach you to play upon the harp, or to handle the sword or spear, or draw the bow, or I will teach you the maxims

of state policy, but I will teach you *the fear of the Lord*, which is better than all arts and sciences, better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. That is it which we should be solicitous both to learn ourselves, and to teach our children. *Matthew Henry*.

Verse 11. *I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* I shall introduce the *translation* and *paraphrase* from my old Psalter; and the rather because I believe there is a reference to that very improper and unholy method of teaching youth the system of heathen mythology before they are taught one sound lesson of true divinity, till at last their *minds* are *imbued* with *heathenism* and the vicious conduct of gods, goddesses, and heroes (here very properly called tyrants), becomes the model of their own; and they are as heathenish *without* as they are heathenish *within*. Translation. Cummes sones lere me: dred of Lard I sal you lere. Paraphrase. "Cummes, with trauth and luf: sones, qwam I gette in haly lere: beres me. With eres of hert. I sal lere you, nocht the fabylys of poets; na the storys of tryauntz; bot the dred of oure Larde, that wyl bring you til the felaghschippe of aungels; and thar in is lyfe." I need not paraphrase this paraphrase, as it is plain enough. *Adam Clarke*.

Verse 11. *The fear of the Lord.* The Master of Sentences dwells, from this verse, on the four kinds of fear: mundane, servile, initial, filial. *Mundane*, when we fear to commit sin, simply lest we should lose some worldly advantage or incur some worldly inconvenience. *Servile*, when we fear to commit sin simply because of hell torments due to it. *Initial*, when we fear to commit it, lest we should lose the happiness of heaven. *Filial*, when we fear, only, and entirely because we dread to offend that God whom we love with all our hearts. *I will teach.* Whence notice, that this fear is not a thing to be learnt all at once; it needs careful study and a good master. S. Chrysostom compares the Psalmist's school here with the resort of heathen students to the academy; and S. Ephraem, referring to this passage, calls the fear of God itself the school of the mind. As if he proclaimed, "says S. Lawrence Justiniani, "I will teach you, not the courses of the stars, not the nature of things, not the secrets of the heavens, but *the fear of the Lord.*" The knowledge of such matters, without fear, puffs up; but *the fear of the Lord, without any such knowledge, can save.*" "Here," says Cassiodorus, "is not fear to be feared, but to be loved. Human fear is full of bitterness; divine fear of sweetness: the one drives to slavery, the other allures to liberty; the one dreads the prison of Gehenna, the other opens the kingdom of heaven." *J. M. Neale*.

Verse 11. *The fear of the Lord.* Let this, therefore, good children, be your principal care and study: for what shall it avail you to be cunning in Tully, Virgil, Homer, and other profane writers, if you be unskilful in God's book? to have learned Greek and Latin, if you learn not withal the language of Canaan? to have your speech agreeable to the rules of Priscian, of Lily, if your lives and courses be not consonant to the rules and laws of Christianity? to have knowledge of the creatures when you are ignorant of the Creator? to have learned that whereby you may live a while here, and neglect that whereby you may live eternally hereafter? Learn to fear God, to serve God, and then God will bless

you; for "He will bless them that fear him, both small and great." Ps 115:13. *Thomas Gataker's "David's Instructor, "1637.*

Verse 12. It is no great matter to live long, or always, but to live happily. That loyal prayer, "Let the king live" (in every language) imports a prosperous state. When the psalmist saith, "Who is the man that would see life?" he explains himself presently after by "good days." *Vivere* among the Latins is sometimes as much as *valere*, to live is as much as to be well; and upon this account it is that, on the one hand, the Scripture calls the state of the damned an eternal death, because their life is only a continuance in misery; so on the other hand the state of the blessed is an eternal life, because it is a perpetual abode in felicity. *Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 12. The benefit of life is not in the length, but in the use of it. He sometimes lives the least that lives the longest. *Seneca.*

Verse 13. *Keep thy tongue from evil*, etc. Ficinus, after his tracts, *De sanitate tuenda*, of keeping good health; and another, *of recovering health*; and a third, *of prolonging life*; because all will not do, wisely addeth a fourth, *of laying hold on eternal life*; which cannot be done but by mortifying this earthly member, a loose and lewd tongue. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," saith the Judge himself. Mt 12:37. Compare Ge 49:21, with De 33:23, and it will appear that good words ingratiate with God and man. *John Trapp.*

Verse 13. *And thy lips from speaking guile.* Perhaps David is warning us that we speak no guile, reflects upon his own sin in changing his behaviour. They that truly repent of what they have done amiss, will warn others to take heed in doing likewise. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 14. *Depart from evil*, etc. This denotes that evil is near to men; it keeps close to them, and should be declined and shunned: and it regards all sorts of evil; evil men and their evil company; evil things, evil words and works, and all appearance of evil; and the fear of the Lord shows itself in a hatred of it, and a departure from it. Pr 8:13 16:6. *John Gill.*

Verse 14. *Depart from evil.* The other precepts are the duty of works, and they are four, where the precepts of words were but two; because we must be more in works than in words; and they are all affirmative, for it is against the nature of a work to be in the negative; for so working should be no better than idleness: the two former are general, as general as good and evil; that if we meet with anything that is evil, our part is to *depart*, for there is no demurring upon evil. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 14. *Do good.* Negative goodness is not sufficient to entitle us to heaven. There are some in the world whose religion runs all upon negatives; they are not drunkards, they are not swearers, and for this they do bless themselves. See how the Pharisee vapours Lu 18:11, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers," etc. Alas! the not being scandalous will no more make a Christian than a cypher will make a sum. We are bid, not only to *cease from evil*, but to *do good*. It will be a poor plea at last—Lord, I kept myself from being spotted with gross sin: I did no

hurt. But what good is there in thee? It is not enough for the servant of the vineyard that he doth no hurt there, he doth not break the trees, or destroy the hedges; if he doth not work in the vineyard he loseth his pay. It is not enough for us to say at the last day, we have done no hurt, we have lived in no gross sin; but what good have we done in the vineyard? Where is the grace we have gotten? If we cannot show this, we shall lose our pay, and miss of salvation. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 14. *Seek peace, and pursue it.* Yea, do well, and thou shalt not need to pursue it; peace will find thee without seeking. Augustine says, *Fiat justitia, et habebis pacem*—Live righteously, and live peaceably. Quietness shall find out righteousness wheresoever he lodgeth. But she abhorreth the house of evil. Peace will not dine where grace hath not first broken her fast. Let us embrace godliness, and "the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, shall preserve our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ." Php 4:7. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 14. *See peace and pursue it.* The most desirable things are not the easiest to be obtained. What is more lovely to the imagination than the tranquillity of peace? But this great blessing does not voluntarily present itself: it must be *sought*. Even when sought it often eludes the grasp: it flies away, and must be *pursued*.

1. The man of a peaceable carriage must be cautious not to give offence when needless, or, when it may innocently be spared.

2. Another part of the peaceable man's character is, not to take offence; especially in small matters, which are hardly worth a wise man's notice. 3. If any needless offence has been either given or taken, we must endeavour to put a stop to it as soon as may be. If a difference is already begun, stifle it in the birth, and suffer it not to proceed farther. *Condensed from Dr. Waterland's Sermon, in J. R. Pitman's Course of Sermons on the Psalms, 1846.*

Verse 15. *His ears are open unto their cry.* The word "open" is not in the original, but the meaning is that the ear of God is propense, and in a leaning kind of posture, towards the cries of the righteous; the word may here be taken emphatically, as many times in Scripture it is, for some worthy, choice, and excellent strain of righteousness. Those who are worthy and righteous indeed, the ear of God, I say, is propense, and leans and hangs towards them and their prayers, according to that of So 2:14, "Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice." There is a kind of naturalness and pleasantness between the ear of God and the prayers, and petitions, and cries of such a righteous man. Joh 15:7. *John Goodwin.*

Verse 15. *His ears are open unto their cry.* Hebrew, *Are to their cry*, or as St. Peter hath it, *His ears are into their prayers* 1Pe 3:12; to show that though their prayers are so faint and feeble that they cannot enter into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, yet that he will bow down and incline his ears *unto*, nay, *into* their prayers, their breathings. La 3:56. *John Trapp.*

Verses 15-17. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his *ears are open unto their cry.*

Strangers may howl, and we take little notice what they ail—it is a venture whether we relieve them or no; but if our children cry, being in great distress, we hasten to their help. Our relation to God may well strengthen our hope that our desires shall be heard. He that can cry, *Abba, Father*, may be confident of the success of his suit, and that God will deal with him as a son. *George Swinnock*.

Verse 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart.* God is *nigh unto them* (with reverence be it spoken), God takes so much complacency in the company of such, that he cannot endure to have them far from him; he must have them always under his eyes; as for these *broken* ones, he will be sure not to leave them long, nor go far from them, but will be ready at hand to set their bones, to bind up their wounds to keep them from festering. It may be he may put them to much pain before he brings the cure to perfection, but it is to prevent future aches. He is a foolish cruel surgeon, who, for fear of putting his patient to some pain, never searcheth the wound, but skins it over presently; and a wise man will not think him unmerciful that puts him to exquisite pain, so he may make a thorough cure of it. Thus God doth by his patients sometimes, when the nature of their distemper calls for it. But, however, he will be sure not to be out of the way when they want him most. It is possible that they may look upon themselves as forgotten by God, they may not know their Physician when he is by them, and they may take their Friend for an enemy; they may think God far off when he is near; but when their eyes are opened and their distemper is pretty well worn off, they will, with shame and thankfulness, acknowledge their error; nay, they do from their souls confess, that they do not deserve the least look of kindness from God, but to be counted strangers and enemies; but God will let them know that he loves to act like himself, that is, like a God of love, mercy, and goodness; and that they are the persons that he hath set his heart upon; he will have them in his bosom, never leave them nor forsake them; and though these contrite ones many times look upon themselves as lost, yet God will save them, and they shall sing a song of thankfulness amongst his delivered ones. *James Janeway*.

Verse 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them, etc.* Consider the ADVANTAGES of this broken heart; as I. A broken heart is acceptable and wellpleasing to God, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise." Ps 51:17. II. It makes up many defects in your service and duties, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." Ps 51:17. III. It makes the soul a fit receptacle for God to dwell in, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa 57:15. IV. It brings God near to men, "*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*" Ps 34:18. And V. It lays you open to Christ's sweet healing, "I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." Eze 34:16. And, oh, who would not be broken that they might find Christ's soft hand healing them, and find the proof of that sweet word, "For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal

thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord." Jer 30:17. Yea, VI. It puts you in the right road to heaven, where all your wounds and bruises will be cured; for there is a tree Re 22:2 the leaves whereof are for the healing of the nations; there is no complaining there of wounds or bruises, but all are perfectly healed. *John Spalding, in "Synaxis Sacra, or a Collection of Sermons, " etc., 1703.*

Verse 18. *"The Lord is nigh unto them, "etc.* We are apt to overlook men, in proportion as they are humbled beneath us; God regards them in that proportion. Vessels of honour are made of that clay which is "broken" into the smallest parts. *George Horne.*

Verse 18. *Broken heart...contrite spirit.* Oh, this is the misery of all miseries which ministers have most cause to complain of, that men are not fitted enough for Jesus Christ, they are not lost enough in themselves for a Saviour. "In thee the fatherless findeth mercy." Ho 14:3. Were we more hopeless, helpless, and fatherless, we should find more mercy from the hand of Jesus Christ. O that God would awaken and shake some sin sleeping soul this day! O that this doctrine thus opened might be as a thunderbolt to let some of you see the inside of yourselves! O poor sinner, thou hast an unsupportable burden of sin and guilt lying on thy soul, ready to press thee down to hell, and yet you feel it not; thou hast the wrath of God hanging over thy head by the twined thread of a short life, which it may be thou mayest not be free from one year, nay, perhaps not one month, but thou seest it not; if thou didst but see it, then thou wouldest cry out as he did in Bosworth field, "A horse! a horse! a kingdom for a horse!" So thou wouldest cry out, None but Christ! nothing but Christ! ten thousand worlds for Christ! *James Nalton, 1664.*

Verse 18. *A contrite spirit.* (xwr-yakd), *dakkeey ruach*, "the beaten out spirit." In both words the *hammer* is necessarily implied; in breaking to pieces the ore first, and then plating out the metal when it has been separated from the ore. This will call to the reader's remembrance Jer 23:29, "Is not my word like as a fire?" saith the Lord: and like a *hammer* that breaketh the *rock* in pieces? The *breaking to shivers*, and the *beating out* are metaphorical expressions: so are the *hammer* and the *rock*. What the large *hammer* struck on a rock by a powerful hand would do, so does the word of the Lord when struck on the sinner's heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. The *broken heart*, and the *contrite spirit*, are two essential characteristics of true repentance. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous,* etc. Be our troubles many in number, strange in nature, heavy in measure; yet God's mercies are more numerous, his wisdom more wondrous, his power more miraculous; he will deliver us out of all. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous,* etc. When David did behold his trouble, like the host of the Aramites 2Ki 6:16, he looked back unto God like Elisha, and spied one with him stronger than all against him. Therefore, respecting his afflictions he crieth, *Many are the troubles of the righteous;* respecting the promise he says, *The Lord delivereth him out of all.* Thus, by his own foot, David measures the condition of the righteous, and saith, *Many are the troubles of the righteous;* and

then, by his own cure, he showeth how they should be healed, saying, *The Lord will deliver him out of them all.* ...The lawyer can deliver his client but from strife, the physician can deliver his patient but from sickness, the master can deliver his servant but from bondage, but the Lord delivereth us from *all.* As when Moses came to deliver the Israelites, he would not leave a hoof behind him, so when the Lord cometh to deliver the righteous he will not leave a trouble behind him. He who saith, "I put away all thine iniquities," will also say, "I put away all thine infirmities." *Henry Smith.*

Verse 20. *He keepeth all his bones,* which were very many. Perhaps (saith Abenezra here), David had been scourged by the Philistines, but his bones were not broken, nor were our Saviour's. Joh 19:36. *John Trapp.*

Verse 20. *All his bones.* Muis observes, "It says not his *body*, for this he permits to be afflicted; but it signifies that the evils of the godly are light, and scarcely penetrate to the bone; "but Geier observes, "This is too subtle, rather the bone reminds us of the essential parts of the body, by whose injury the whole frame is endangered. It is a proverbial form of speech like that in Mt 10:30, 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered, ' expressing the remarkable defence afforded to the righteous." Genebrard says, "The bones are put by synecdoche for all the members." *From Poli Synopsis.*

Verse 20. The passover lamb, of which not a bone was broken, prefigured Jesus as one, "not a bone of whose body should be broken;" and yet, at the same time, it prefigured the complete keeping and safety of Christ's body, the church; as it is written, *He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.* *Andrew A. Bonar's Commentary on Leviticus.*

Verse 20. Christ's bones were in themselves breakable, but could not actually be broken by all the violence in the world, because God had fore decreed, *a bone of him shall not be broken.* So we confess God's children mortal; but all the power of devil or man may not, must not, cannot, kill them before their conversion, according to God's election of them to life, which must be fully accomplished. *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 20. Observe as a point of resemblance between this and the following Psalm, the mention of the bones here and in Ps 35:10. *C. Wordsworth.*

Verse 21. *Evil.* Afflictions though in the plural, prove not ruinous to the righteous, for the Lord delivers him out of them all, whereas *evil* in *the singular* slays the wicked, to signify the difference of God's economy towards righteous and wicked men. The former is permitted to fall into many pressures, the latter is not so frequently exercised with them, yet the many that befall the one do no hurt, but work good for him, whereas the few that befall the wicked, or perhaps the *one singular affliction* of his life is the utter ruin of him. *Henry Hammond.*

Verse 21. Conscience self the culprit tortures, gnawing him with pangs unknown; For that now amendment's season is for ever past and gone, And that late repentance findeth pardon none for all her moan. *S. Peter Damiano, 988-1072.*

Verse 21. *Shall be desolate.* In the margin it is, *shall be guilty.* And this is the proper meaning of the original word, (wmvay). They are guilty, and liable to punishment. Thus the word is frequently rendered in our version (see Le 4:13,22); and generally includes it in the idea of guilt, and the punishment incurred by it. *Samuel Chandler, D.D.*

Verse 22. The promises of God to his church, and his threatenings of sin recorded in the living book of his word, are not antiquate; no age shall ever superannuate them, or put them out of full force and virtue. What if good persons and good causes do suffer oppression? The poet is a divine in that case—

Informes hiemes reducit

Jupiter; idem

Summovet. Non si male nunc, et olim

Sic erit.

After foul weather comes fair; though it be ill with us now, it will not be always. What if enemies of religion and moths of commonwealth do flourish and prosper, and have all things at will, let it not trouble David and Job; both of them saw as fair a sunshine shut up in a dark cloud, and a world of foul weather following. *Edward Marbury.*

Verse 22. Satan cannot tempt longer than God shall give him leave; and he will never suffer thee to be tempted above measure, but will give a good issue unto the temptation. Thou art called to fight under the banner of Christ Jesus, and in the name of the Lord thou shalt be enabled to do valiantly and overcome. If Satan continue his assaults, "God's grace is sufficient for thee." 2Co 12:9. If thy strength be clean gone, God's power shall be magnified the more in thee, and he hath brought thee low that thou mayest not trust in thyself, but in the living Lord, and that the whole praise of the victory might be ascribed unto him. If thy strength did remain, it was not to be leaned unto; and now it is decayed and gone, there is no cause of fear, for the Lord will be thy stay. In the most difficult assaults and tedious encounters, we are exhorted to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Be of good courage, and God will grant thee an easy, a joyful victory. Satan's drift in tempting is to turmoil, dishearten, and perplex with fears, and drive into despair; and if thou take heart to rest quietly upon God's grace, and fly unto his name, thou shalt put him to flight, thou hast already got the day. Wait but awhile, and these dark mists and terrible storms shall be dispersed. By these temptations the Lord hath taught thee to see by weakness, and the malice of Satan; to deny thine own wisdom and prize his favour, lightly to esteem all things here below, and highly to value mercy reaching to the pardon of sin, and heavenly communion and fellowship with God. And if this bitter potion hath wrought so kindly for thy spiritual good, why shouldest thou be dismayed? Trust in the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thee. *The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate, John Ball.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Firm resolution, serious difficulties in carrying it out, helps for its performance, excellent consequences of so doing. Six questions.—*Who?* "I." *What?* "Will bless." *Whom?* "The Lord." *When?* "At all times." *How?* *Why?*

Verse 1. Direction for making a heaven below.

Verse 2. The commendable boaster and his gratified audience. We may boast of the Lord, in himself, his manifestations of himself, his relationship to us, our interest in him, our expectations from him, etc. The duty of believers to relate their experience for the benefit of others.

Verse 3. Invitation to united praise.

Verse 3. *Magnifying*—or making great the work of God, a noble exercise.

Verse 4. *Confessions of a ransomed soul.* Simple, honouring to God, exclude merit, and encourage others to seek also.

Verse 4. *Four stages,* "fears, ""sought, ""heard, ""delivered."

Verse 5. The power of a faith look.

Verse 6.

1. The poor man's heritage, "troubles."
2. The poor man's friend.
3. The poor man's cry.
4. The poor man's salvation.

Verse 6. The poor man's wealth.

The position of prayer in the economy of grace, or the natural history of mercy in the soul.

Verse 7. *Castra angelorum, salvatio bonorum.*

Verse 7. The ministry of angels. In what sense Jesus is "The angel of the Lord."

Verse 8. Experience the only true test of religious truth.

Verse 8. *Taste.* The sanctified palate, the *recherche* provision, the gratified verdict, the celestial host.

Verse 9. The blest estate of a God fearing man.

Verse 9. Fear expelling fear. *Similia similibus curantur.*

Verse 10. Lions lacking, but the children satisfied. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 65.

1. Description of a true Christian, "seek the Lord."
2. The promise set forth by a contract.
3. The promise fulfilled.

Verse 10. What is a good thing?

Verse 11. A royal teacher, his youthful disciples, his mode of instruction, "Come; "his choice subject.

Verse 11. Sunday school work.

Verses 12-14. How to make the best of both worlds.

Verse 13. Sins of the tongue—their mischief, their cause, and their cure.

Verse 14. (*first clause*). The relation between the negative and positive virtues.

Verse 14. (*second clause*). *The royal hunt*. The game, the difficulties of the chase, the hunters, their methods, and their rewards.

Verse 15. Our observant God. Eyes and ears both set on us.

Verse 16. The evil man checkmated in life, and forgotten in death.

Verse 17. *Afflictions and their threefold blessing*.

1. They make us pray.
2. They bring us the Lord's hearing ear.
3. They afford room for joyful experience of deliverance.

Verse 18. The nearness of God to broken hearts, and the certainty of their salvation.

Verse 19. Black and white, or bane and antidote. Special people, special trials, special deliverances, special faith as a duty.

Verse 20. The real safety of a believer when in great perils. His soul, his spiritual life, his faith, hope, love, etc.; his interest in Jesus, his adoption, justification, these all kept.

Verse 21. Wickedness, its own executioner, illustrated by scriptural cases, by history, by the lost in hell. Lessons from the solemn fact. The forlorn condition of a man of malicious spirit.

Verses 21-22. Who shall and who shall not be desolate.

Verse 22. *Redemption* in its various meanings; *faith* in its universal preservation; *the Lord* in his unrivalled glory in the work of grace.

Psalm 35

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. A Psalm of David. Here is all we know concerning this Psalm, but internal evidence seems to fix the date of its composition in those troublous times when Saul hunted David over hill and dale, and when those who fawned upon the cruel king, slandered the innocent object of his wrath, or it may be referred to the unquiet days of frequent insurrections in David's old age. The whole Psalm is the appeal to heaven of a bold heart and a clear conscience, irritated beyond measure by oppression and malice. Beyond a doubt David's Lord may be seen here by the spiritual eye.

DIVISION. The most natural mode of dividing this Psalm is to note its triple character. Its complaint,

prayer, and promise of praise are repeated with remarkable parallelism three times, even as our Lord in the Garden prayed three times, using the same words. The first portion occupies from Ps 35:1-10, the second from Ps 35:11-18, and the last from Ps 35:19-28; each section ending with a note of grateful song.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me. Plead against those who plead against me; strive with my strivers; contend with my contenders. If they urge their suit in the law court, Lord, meet them there, and beat them at their own weapons. Every saint of God shall have this privilege: the accuser of the brethren shall be met by the Advocate of the saints. *Fight against them that fight against me.* If my advisers try force as well as fraud, be a match for them; oppose thy strength to their strength. Jesus does this for all his beloved—for them he is both intercessor and champion; whatever aid they need they shall receive from him, and in whatever manner they are assaulted they shall be effectually defended. Let us not fail to leave our case into the Lord's hand. Vain is the help of man, but ever effectual is the interposition of heaven. What is here asked for as a boon, may be regarded as a promise to all the saints; in judgment they shall have a divine advocate, in warfare a divine protection.

Verse 2. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine *help*. In vivid metaphor the Lord is pictured as coming forth armed for battle, and interposing himself between his servant and his enemies. The greater and lesser protections of providence may be here intended by the two defensive weapons, and by the Lord's standing up is meant his active and zealous preservation of his servant in the perilous hour. This poetic imagery shows how the psalmist realised the existence and power of God; and thought of him as a real and actual personage, truly working for his afflicted.

Verse 3. Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that *persecute me*. Before the enemy comes to close quarters the Lord can push them off as with a long spear. To stave off trouble is no mean act of lovingkindness. As when some valiant warrior with his lance blocks up a defile, and keeps back a host until his weaker brethren have made good their escape, so does the Lord often hold the believer's foes at bay until the good man had taken breath, or clean fled from his foes. He often gives the foes of Zion some other work to do, and so gives rest to his church. What a glorious idea is this of Jehovah blocking the way of persecutors, holding them at the pike's end, and giving time for the hunted saint to elude the pursuit! *Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.* Besides holding off the enemy, the Lord can also calm the mind of his servant by express assurance from his own mouth, that he is, and shall be, safe under the Almighty wing. An inward persuasion of security in God is of all things the most precious in the furnace of persecution. One word from the Lord quiets all our fears.

Verse 4. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my *soul*. There is nothing malicious here, the slandered man simply craves for justice, and the petition is natural and justifiable. Guided by God's good spirit the psalmist foretells the everlasting confusion of all the haters of the righteous. Shameful disappointment shall be the portion of the enemies of the gospel, nor would the most tender hearted Christian have it otherwise: viewing sinners as men, we love them and seek their good, but regarding them as enemies of God, we cannot think of them with anything but detestation, and a loyal desire for the confusion of their devices. No loyal subject can wish well to rebels. Squeamish sentimentality may object to the strong language here used, but in their hearts all good men wish confusion to mischief makers.

Verse 6. Let their way be dark and slippery. What terrors are gathered Here! No light, no foothold, and a fierce avenger at their heels! What a doom is appointed for the enemies of God! They may rage and rave today, but how altered will be their plight ere long! *And let the angel of the Lord persecute them.* He will follow them hot foot, as we say, never turning aside, but like a trusty pursuivant serving the writ of vengeance upon them, and arresting them in the name of unflinching justice. Woe, woe, woe, unto those who touch the people of God; their destruction is both swift and sure.

Verse 7. In this verse the psalmist brings forward the gravamen of his charge against the servants of the devil. *For without cause*—without my having injured, assailed, or provoked them; out of their own spontaneous malice *have they hid for me their net in a pit*, even as men hunt for their game with cunning and deception. Innocent persons have often been ruined by traps set for them, into which they have fallen as guilelessly as beasts which stumble into concealed pits, and are taken as in a net. It is no little thing to be able to feel that the enmity which assails us is undeserved—not caused by any wilful offence on our part. Twice does David assert in one verse that his adversaries plotted against him *without cause*. Net making and pit digging require time and labour, and both of these the wicked will expend cheerfully if they may but overthrow the people of God. Fair warfare belongs to honourable men, but the assailants of God's church prefer mean, ungenerous schemes, and so prove their nature and their origin. We must all of us be on our guard, for gins and pitfalls are still the favourite weapons of the powers of evil.

Verse 8. Let destruction come upon him at unawares. This tremendous imprecation is frequently fulfilled. God's judgments are often sudden and signal. Death enters the persecutor's house without pausing to knock at the door. The thunderbolt of judgment leaps from its hiding place, and in one crash the wicked are broken for ever. *And let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.* There is a *lex talionis* with God which often works most wonderfully. Men set traps and catch their own fingers. They throw up stones, and they fall upon their own heads. How often Satan outwits himself, and burns his fingers with his own coals! This will doubtless be one of the

aggravations of hell, that men will torment themselves with what was once the fond devices of their rebellious minds. They curse and are cursed; they kick the pricks and tear themselves; they pour forth floods of fire, and it burns within and without.

Verse 9. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord. Thus rescued, David ascribes all the honour to the Judge of the right; to his own valorous arm he offers no sacrifice of boasting. He turns away from his adversaries to his God, and finds a deep unbroken joy in Jehovah, and in that joy his spirit revels. *It shall rejoice in his salvation.* We do not triumph in the destruction of others, but in the salvation given to us of God. Prayer heard should always suggest praise. It were well if we were more demonstrative in our holy rejoicing. We rob God by suppressing grateful emotions.

Verse 10. As the tongue were not enough to bless God with, David makes every limb vocal—*All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?* His whole anatomy he would make resonant with gratitude. Those bones which were to have been broken by my enemies shall now praise God; every one of them shall bring its tribute, ascribing unrivalled excellence to Jehovah the Saviour of his people. Even if worn to skin and bone, yet my very skeleton shall magnify the Lord, *which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him.* God is the champion, the true knight errant of all oppressed ones. Where there is so much condescension, justice, kindness, power, and compassion, the loftiest songs should be rendered. Come, dear reader, have you not been delivered from sin, Satan, and death, and will not you bless the Redeemer? You were poor and weak, but in due time Christ sought you, and set you free. O magnify the Lord today, and speak well of his name.

Verse 11. False witnesses did rise up. This is the old device of the ungodly, and we must not wonder if it be used against us as against our Master. To please Saul, there were always men to be found mean enough to impeach David. *They laid to my charge things that I knew not.* He had not even a thought of sedition; he was loyal even to excess; yet they accused him of conspiring against the Lord's anointed. He was not only innocent, but ignorant of the fault alleged. It is well when our hands are so clean that no trace of dirt is upon them.

Verse 12. They rewarded me evil for good. This is devilish; but men have learned the lesson well of the old Destroyer, and practise it most perfectly. *To the spoiling of my soul.* They robbed him of comfort, and even would have taken his life had it not been for special rescues from the hand of God. The wicked would strip the righteous naked to their very soul: they know no pity. There are only such limits to human malice as God himself may see fit to place.

Verse 13. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was *sackcloth*. David had been a man of sympathy; he had mourned when Saul was in ill health, putting on the weeds of sorrow for him as though he were a near and dear friend. His heart went into mourning for his sick master. *Humbled my soul with fasting.* He prayed for his enemy, and made the sick man's case his own, pleading and

confessing as if his own personal sin had brought on the evil. This showed a noble spirit in David, and greatly aggravated the baseness of those who now so cruelly persecuted him. *And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.* Prayer is never lost: if it bless not those for whom intercession is made, it shall bless the intercessors. Clouds do not always descend in showers upon the same spot from which the vapours ascended, but they come down somewhere; and even so do supplications in some place or other yield their showers of mercy. If our dove find no rest for the sole of her foot among our enemies, it shall fly into our bosoms and bring an olive branch of peace in its mouth. How sharp is the contrast all through this Psalm between the righteous and his enemies! We must be earnest to keep the line of demarcation broad and clear.

Verse 14. I behaved myself as though he has been my friend or *brother*: I waited upon him assiduously, comforted him affectionately, and sympathised with him deeply. This may refer to those days when David played on the harp, and chased away the evil spirit from Saul. *I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.* He bowed his head as mourners do. The strongest natural grief was such as he felt when they were in trouble. The mother usually wins the deepest love, and her loss is most keenly felt: such was David's grief. How few professors in these days have such bowels of compassion; and yet under the gospel there should be far more tender love than under the law. Had we more hearty love to manhood, and care for its innumerable ills, we might be far more useful; certainly we should be infinitely more Christ like. "He prayeth best that loveth best."

Verse 15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced. In my halting they were delighted. My lameness was sport to them. Danger was near, and they sang songs over my expected defeat. How glad are the wicked to see a good man limp! "Now, "say they, "he will meet with his downfall." *And gathered themselves together,* like kites and vultures around a dying sheep. They found a common joy in my ruin, and a recreation in my sorrow, and therefore met together to keep the feast. They laid their heads together to devise, and their tongues to deceive. *Yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me.* Those who deserved horsewhipping, fellows the soles of whose feet were needing the bastinado, came together to plot, and held hole and corner meetings. Like curs around a sick lion, the mean wretches taunted and insulted one whose name had been their terror. The very cripples hobbled out to join the malicious crew. How unanimous are the powers of evil; how heartily do men serve the devil; and none decline his service because they are not endowed with great abilities! *I knew it not.* It was all done behind my back. What a fluster the world may be in, and the cause of it all may not even know that he has given offence. *They did tear me, and ceased not.* It is such dainty work to tear to pieces a good man's character, that when slanderers have their hand in they are loath to leave off. A pack of dogs tearing their prey is nothing compared with a set of malicious gossips mauling the reputation of a worthy man. That lovers of the gospel are not at this time rent and torn as in the old days of Mary, is to be attributed to the providence of God rather than

to the gentleness of men.

Verse 16. With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me *with their teeth*. Like professional buffoons who grin around the banquet to make sport, so they made a business of jeering at the good man; not, however, out of mirth, but from violent, insatiable hatred. Like cake scoffers, or men who will jeer for a bit of bread, these hireling miscreants persecuted David in order to get a bellyful for themselves from Saul's table: having moreover an inward grudge against the son of Jesse because he was a better man than themselves. Very forcibly might our Lord have used the words of these verses! Let us not forget to see the Despised and Rejected of men here painted to the life. Calvary and the ribald crew around the cross seem brought before our eyes.

Verse 17. Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Why be a mere spectator? Why so neglectful of thy servant? Art thou indifferent? Carest thou not that we perish? We may thus reason with the Lord. He permits us this familiarity. There is a time for our salvation, but to our impatience it often seems to be very slow in coming; yet wisdom has ordained the hour, and nothing shall delay it. *Rescue my soul from their destructions*. From their many devices; their multiplied assaults, be pleased to set me free. ["My darling,"] my lovely, only, precious soul, do thou rescue ["from the lions."] His enemies were fierce, cunning, and strong as young lions; God only could deliver him from their jaws, to God he therefore addresses himself. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 159.

Verse 20. *"For they speak not peace."* They love it not; how can they speak it? They are such troublemakers themselves that they cannot judge others to be peaceable. Out of the mouth comes what is in the heart. Riotous men charge others with sedition. *"They devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land."* David would fain have been an orderly citizen, but they laboured to make him a rebel. He could do nothing aright, all his dealings were misrepresented. This is an old trick of the enemy to brand good men with S.S. on their cheeks, as sowers of sedition, though they have ever been a harmless race, like sheep among wolves. When mischief is meant, mischief is soon made. Unscrupulous partisans could even charge Jesus with seeking to overturn Cæsar, much more will they thus accuse his household. At this very hour, those who stand up for the crown rights of King Jesus are called enemies of the church, favourers of Popery, friends of Atheists, levellers, red republicans, and it were hard to say what besides. Billingsgate and Babylon are in league. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 160.

Verse 21. *"Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me."* As if they would swallow him. Uttering great lies which needed wide mouths. They set no bounds to their infamous charges, but poured out wholesale abuse, trusting that if all did not stick, some of it would. *"And said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it."* Glad to find out a fault or a misfortune, or to swear they had seen evil where there was none.

Malice has but one eye; it is blind to all virtue in its enemy. Eyes can generally see what hearts wish. A man with a mote in his eye sees a spot in the sun. How like a man is to an ass when he brays over another's misfortunes! how like to a devil when he laughs a hyæna-laugh over a good man's slip! Malice is folly, and when it holds a festival its tones and gestures far exceed all the freaks and mummeries of the lord of misrule. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Pages 160, 161.

Verse 22. *"This thou hast seen, O Lord."* Here is comfort. Our heavenly Father knows all our sorrow. Omniscience is the saint's candle which never goes out. A father will not long endure to see his child abused. Shall not God avenge his own elect? *"Keep not silence."* Rebuke thine enemies and mine, O Lord. A word will do it. Clear my character, comfort my heart. *"O Lord, be not far from me."* Walk the furnace with me. Stand in the pillory at my side. The sweet presence of God is the divine cordial of the persecuted; his painful absence would be their seepest misery. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 23. *"Stir up thyself."* Be upon thy mettle. Prove that thou art no indifferent witness to all this infamy. *"Awake to my judgement."* Take the sceptre and summon the great assize; vindicate justice, avenge oppression. Do not tarry as men do who sleep. *"Even unto my cause, my God and my Lord."* He claims a nearness to his God, he holds him with both hands; he leaves his case with the righteous Judge. He begs that the suit may be brought on, heard, tried, and verdict given. Well is it for a man when his conscience is so clear that he dares to make such an appeal. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 24. The appeal is here repeated; the plaintiff feels that the joy of his accusers will be shortlived as soon as impartial justice rules. The oppressors' wrong, the proud man's contumely, the fool's grimace—all, all will cease when the righteous Lord sits down upon the judgment seat. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 25. *"Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up."* Disappoint them of their prey when their mouths are ready to swallow it. Saints are too dear a morsel for the powers of evil; God will not give his sheep over to the wolfish jaws of persecutors. Just when they are tuning their pipes to celebrate their victory, they shall be made to laugh on the other side of their mouths. They are all too sure, and too boastful; they reckon without their host: little do they dream of the end which will be put to their scheming. Their bird shall be flown, and they themselves shall be in the trap. The prayer of this text is a promise. Even before the lips of the wicked can frame a speech of exultation, they shall be disappointed; their heart-speech shall be forestalled, their wishes frustrated, their knavish tricks exposed. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 26. Here is the eternal result of all the laborious and crafty devices of the Lord's enemies. God will make little of them, though they "*magnified themselves;*" he will shame them for shaming his people, bring them to confusion for making confusion, pull off their fine apparel and give them a beggardly suit of dishonour, and turn all their rejoicing into weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Truly, the saints can afford to wait. Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 27. "*Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause.*" Even those who could not render him active aid, but in their hearts favoured him, David would have the Lord reward most abundantly. Men of tender heart set great store by the good wishes and prayers of the Lord's people. Jesus also prizes those whose hearts are with his cause. The day is coming when shouts of victory shall be raised by all who are on Christ's side, for the battle will turn, and the foes of truth shall be routed. "*Yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified.*" He would have their gladness contributory to the divine glory; they are not to shout to David's praise, but for the honour of Jehovah. Such acclamations may fitly be continued throughout time and eternity. "*Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*" They recognised David as the Lord's servant, and saw with pleasure the Lord's favour to him. We can have no nobler title than "servant of God," and no greater reward than for our Master to delight in our prosperity. What true prosperity may be we are not always best able to judge. We must leave that in Jesus' hand; he will not fail to rule all things for our highest good. "For by his saints it stands confessed, That what he does is always best." Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 161.

Verse 28. Unceasing praise is here vowed to the just and gracious God. From morning till evening the grateful tongue would talk and sing, and glorify the Lord. O for such a resolve carried out by us all! Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 162.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. Bonar entitles this Psalm, "*The awful utterance of the Righteous One regarding those that hate him without cause,*" and he makes the following remarks thereupon:—"Throughout the endless day of eternity the Lord Jesus shall himself speak the Father's `praise, 'and shall put marked emphasis on his `righteousness'—that righteousness which shall have been exhibited, both in the doom of those who hated the offered Redeemer, and in the salvation of those who received him. There is nothing in all this wherein his own may not fully join, especially on that day when their views of justice shall be far clearer and fuller than now. On that day we shall be able to understand how Samuel could hew Agag in pieces, and the godly hosts of Israel slay utterly in Canaan man and woman and child, at God's command. We shall be able, not only fully agree in the doom, `Let them

be confounded, 'etc., but even to sing, 'Amen, Hallelujah, ' over the smoke of torment. Re 19:1-2. We should in some measure now be able to see every verse of this Psalm in the spirit in which *the Judge* speaks it, we feeling ourselves his assessors in judging the world. 1Co 6:2. We shall, at all events, be able to use it on that day when what is written here shall be all accomplished." *Andrew A. Bonar*.

Verse 1. Plead my cause, O God, with them that strive with me. 1. Doth the world condemn thee for thy zeal in the service of God? Reproachfully scorn thee for thy care to maintain good works? not blush to traduce thee with imputations of preciseness, conceited singularity, pharisaical hypocrisy? Oh, but if thy conscience condemn thee not all this while, if that be rectified by the sacred word of God, if thou aim at his glory in pursuing thine own salvation, and side not with the disturbers of the church, go on, good Christian, in the practice of piety, discourage not thyself in thy laudable endeavours, but recount with comfort that the Lord is thy judge 1Co 4:4, with a *scio cui crediderim*, "I know whom I have believed." 2Ti 1:12.

2. Art thou wrongfully adjudged in the erroneous courts of men? are truth and righteousness gone aside from their proper places? Is equity neglected, and poverty overlaid? Well, have patience awhile, cheer up thy fainting spirits, there is a God that beholdeth the innocency of thy cause, unto whom thou hast liberty to make thy last appeal: *Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.* Or,

3. Art thou otherwise injured by the hands of malicious men? and doth a penurious estate disable thee to sue for amends? Doth a *Nimrod* oppress thee? A *Laban* defraud thee? A covetous landlord gripe thee? Well, yet take not the matter into thine own hands by attempting unlawful courses; presume not to be judge in thine own cause, for default of a present redress; but often remember what the apostle taught his Thessalonians: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you." *Isaac Craven's Sermon at Paul's Cross*, 1630.

Verse 1. Plead, etc. More literally, *litigate*, O Lord, with them that litigate against me, contend against them that contend with me; *i.e.*, avenge me of mine adversaries. *Daniel Cresswell, D.D., F.R.S., in "The Psalms of David according to the Book of Common Prayer: with Critical and Explanatory Notes,"* 1843.

Verse 2. Shield and buckler. The word rendered *shield* is in the Hebrew text (Ngm), *magen*, which was a short buckler intended merely for defence. The word rendered *buckler* is (hnu) *tsinnah*; it was double the weight of the *magen*, and was carried by the infantry; the *magen*, being lighter and more manageable, was used by the calvary. The *tsinnah* answered to the *scutum*, and the *magen* to the *clypeus*, among the Romans. The word *tsinnah*, means that kind of shield from the middle of which there arose a large boss, surmounted by a dagger, and which was highly useful both as a defensive and an offensive weapon in ancient warfare. *James Anderson, note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 3. Draw out the spear, and stop the way. The spear in the days of Saul and David was a

favourite weapon. (See 1Ch 11:1-47). A valiant man bravely defending a narrow pass might singly with his lance keep back a pursuing host, and give time for his friends to escape. Very remarkable were the feats of valour of this sort performed in Oriental warfare. David would have his God become his heroic defender, making his enemies pause. *C. H. S.*

Verse 3. Draw out; or, as the Hebrew phrase is, *empty*, that is, *unsheath*; the like is of the *sword*. Ex 15:9 Le 26:33. *Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 3. Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Observe, 1. That salvation may be made sure to a man. David would never pray for that which could not be. Nor would Peter charge us with a duty which stood not in possibility to be performed. 2Pe 1:10. "Make your election sure." And to stop the bawling throats of all cavilling adversaries, Paul directly proves it: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2Co 13:5. We may then know that Christ is in us. If Christ be in us, we are in Christ; if we be in Christ, we cannot be condemned, for Ro 8:1, "There is no damnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." But I leave this point that it may be sure, as granted; and come to ourselves, that we may make it sure. The Papists deny this, and teach the contrary, that salvation cannot be made sure; much good do it them, with their sorry and heartless doctrine! If they make that impossible to any which God hath made easy for many, "into their secret let not my soul come." Ge 49:6. Observe, 2. That the best saints have desired to make their salvation sure. David that knew it, yet entreats to know it more. "I know thou favourest me" Ps 41:11; yet here, still, *dic animae*, "*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*" A man can never be too sure of his going to heaven. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 3. Say unto my soul. God may speak with *his own voice*; and thus he gave assurance to Abraham, "Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Ge 15:

1. If God speak comfort, let hell roar horror.

2. He may speak by *his works*: actual mercies to us demonstrate that we are in his favour, and shall not be condemned. "By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me."

3. He may speak by *his Son*. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Mt 11:28.

4. He may speak by *his Scripture*; this is God's epistle to us, and his letters patent, wherein are granted to us all the privileges of salvation. A universal *si quis*; "Whosoever believes, and is baptised, shall be saved."

5. He may speak by *his ministers*, to whom he hath given "the ministry of reconciliation." 2Co 5:19.

6. He doth speak this by *his Spirit*: he "sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Ga 4:6. By all these voices God says to his elect, *I am your salvation. ...My.* There is no vexation to

the vexation of the soul; so no consolation to the consolation of the soul. ...Let this teach us to make much of this *My*. Luther says there is great divinity in pronouns. The assurance that God will save some is a faith incident to devils. The very reprobates may believe that there is a book of election; but God never told them that their names were written there. The hungry beggar at the feast house gate smells good cheer, but the master doth not say, "This is provided for thee." It is small comfort to the harbourless wretch to pass through a goodly city, and see many glorious buildings, when he cannot say, *Haec mea domus*, I have a place here. The beauty of that excellent city Jerusalem, built with sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, and such precious stones, the foundation and walls whereof are perfect gold Re 21:1-27, affords a soul no comfort, unless he can say, *Mea civitas*, I have a mansion in it. The all sufficient merits of Christ do thee no good, unless, *tua pars et portio*, he be thy Saviour. Happy soul that can say with the psalmist, "O Lord, thou art my portion!" Let us all have oil in our lamps, lest if be then to buy, beg, or borrow, we be shut out of doors like the fools, not worthy of entrance. Pray, *Lord, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation*. ...Who? What? To whom? When? WHO? *The Lord!* To the Lord David prays. He hath made a good choice, for there is salvation in none other. "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." Ho 13:9. The world fails, the flesh fails, the devil kills. Only the Lord saves. WHAT? Salvation. A special good thing; every man's desire. I will give thee a lordship, saith God to Esau. I will give thee a kingdom, saith God to Saul. I will give thee an apostleship, saith God to Judas. But, I will be thy salvation, he says to David, and to none but saints. TO WHOM? *My salvation*. Not others only, but "*thine*." A man and a Christian are two creatures. He may be a man that hath reason and outward blessings; he is only a Christian that hath faith, and part in the salvation of Christ. God is plentiful salvation, but it is not ordinary to find a *cui*—to whom. Much of heaven is lost for lack of a hand to apprehend it. WHEN? In the present, "*I am*." *Sum, non sufficit quod ero*. It is comfort to Israel in captivity that God says, *Ero tua redemptio*, I will redeem thee; but the assurance that quiets the conscience is this, *I am thy salvation*. As God said to Abraham, "Fear not, I am with thee." Deferred hope faints the heart. Whatsoever God forbears to assure us of, oh, pray we him not to delay this, "Lord, say to our soul, *I am thy salvation*." *Condensed from Thomas Adams*.

Verse 4. Let them be confounded and put to shame. Here David begins his imprecations, which yet, saith Theodoret, he doth not utter as cursing, but as prophesying rather. If we shall at any time take upon us thus to imprecate (as we may in some cases), we must see to it, first, that our cause be good; secondly, that we do it not out of private revenge, but merely for the glory of God; thirdly, that we utter not a syllable this way, but by the guidance of God's good Spirit. *John Trapp. Verses 4-8, 26.* How are we to account for such prayers for vengeance? We find them chiefly in four Psalms, the seventh, thirty-fifth, sixty-ninth, and one hundred and ninth, and the imprecations in these form a terrible climax. In the last no less than thirty anathemas have been counted. Are these the mere

outbursts of passionate and unsanctified feeling, or are they the legitimate expression of a righteous indignation? Are they to be excused as being animated by the "spirit of Elias"? a spirit not unholy indeed, but far removed from the meekness and gentleness of Christ; or are they the stereotyped forms in which the spirit of devotion may utter itself? Are they Jewish only, or may they be Christian also? An uninstructed fastidiousness, as it is well known, has made many persons recoil from reading these Psalms at all. Many have found their lips falter when they have been called to join in using them in the congregation, and have either uttered them with bated breath and doubting heart, or have interpreted them in a sense widely at variance with the letter. Some have tried to reconcile them with a more enlightened conscience, by regarding such words not as the expression of a wish, but as the utterance of a prediction; but the Hebrew optative which is distinct enough from the simple future, absolutely forbids this expedient. Others again would see in them expressions which may lawfully be used in the soul's wrestling against spiritual enemies. And finally, some would defend them as utterances of righteous zeal for God's honour, and remind us that if we do not sympathise with such zeal, it may be not because our religion is more pure, but because our hearts are colder.

Now the real source of the difficulty lies in our not observing and bearing in mind the essential difference between the Old Testament and the New. The older dispensation was in every sense a sterner one than the new. The spirit of Elias, though not an evil spirit, was not the spirit of Christ. "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Lu 9:56. And through him his disciples are made partakers of the same spirit. But this was not the spirit of the older economy. The Jewish nation had been trained in a sterner school. It had been steeled and hardened by the discipline which had pledged it to a war of extermination with idolaters; and however necessary such a discipline might be, it would not tend to foster the gentler virtues; it is conceivable how even a righteous man, under it, feeling it to be his bounden duty to root out evil wherever he saw it, and identifying, as he did, his own enemies with the enemies of Jehovah, might use language which to us appears unnecessarily vindictive. To men so trained and taught, what we call "religious toleration," was a thing not only wrong, but absolutely inconceivable. It may be quite true that we find revenge forbidden as directly in the Old Testament as in the New, as, for instance, in Le 19:18, "Thou shalt not avenge," etc., though even there is a limitation, "against the children of thy people." And it may be no less true that we find instances of imprecation in the New; as when St. Paul says 2Ti 4:14, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works," or when he exclaims Ac 23:3, "God will smite thee, thou whited wall;" or, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."

But even these expressions are very different from the varied, deliberate, carefully constructed, detailed anathemas of the Psalms. And our Lord's denunciations, to which Hengstenberg refers, are in no way parallel. They are not curses upon individuals, but in fact solemn utterances of the great

truth, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But after all, whatever may be said of particular passages, the general tone which runs through the two covenants, is unquestionably different. To deny this is not to honour Moses, but to dishonour Christ. Mt 5:43 19:8. On the other hand, we must not forget that these imprecations are not the passionate longings for personal revenge. The singer undoubtedly sees in his enemies the enemies of God and his church. They that are not with him are against God. And because the zeal of God's house even consumes him, he prays that all the doers of iniquity may be rooted out. The indignation therefore is righteous, though it may appear to us wrongly directed, or excessive in its utterance. Once more, the very fact that a dark cloud hid God's judgment in the world to come from the view of the Old Testament saints, may be alleged in excuse of this their desire to see him take vengeance on his enemies here. How deeply this problem of God's righteousness exercised their minds is abundantly evident from numerous places in the Psalms. They longed to see that righteousness manifested. It could be manifested, they thought, only in the evident exaltation of the righteous, and the evident destruction of the wicked here. Hence, with their eye always fixed on temporal recompense, they could even wish and pray for the destruction of the ungodly. The awful things of the world to come were to a great extent hid from their eyes. Could they have seen these, then surely their prayer would have been not, "Let the angel of the Lord persecute them," "Blot them out of thy book;" but rather with him who hung upon the cross; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verses 4, 8, 26. David was about as devoid of vindictiveness as any public character who can well be named. His conduct in relation to Saul, from first to last displayed a singularly noble spirit, far removed from anything like the lust of vengeance; and the meekness with which he endured the bitter reproaches of Shimei, bore witness to the same spirit after his accession to the throne. ...When David's whole career is intelligently and fairly reviewed, it leaves on the mind the impression of a man possessed of as meek and placable a temper as was ever associated with so great strength of will, and such strong passions. Even in the heats of sudden resentment, he was not apt to be hurried into deeds of revenge. Such being the case, it would certainly have been a strange and unaccountable thing if he had shown himself less the master of his own spirit in poems composed in seasons of retirement and communion with God, especially since these very poems express a keen sense of the heinousness of the sin that has been laid to his charge. He can affirm regarding his implacable enemies, "As for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." Ps 35:13-14. "O Lord, my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy): let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth." Ps 7:3-5. Surely one ought to think

twice before putting on the imprecations an interpretation which would make them utterly incongruous with these appeals, uttered almost in the same breath. *William Binnie, D.D.*

Verse 5. As chaff. Literally, "As the thistle down." *John Morison.*

Verse 6. Let their way be dark and slippery. A horrible way! Darkness alone who feareth not? A slippery way alone who avoids not? In a dark and slippery way, how shalt thou go? where set foot? These two ills are the great punishments of men: darkness, ignorance; a slippery way, luxury. *Let their way be darkness and slipping; and let the angel of the Lord persecute them,* that they be not able to stand. For anyone in a dark and slippery way, when he seeth that if he move his foot he will fall, and there is no light before his feet, haply resolves to wait until light come; but here is the angel of the Lord persecuting them. *Augustine.*

Verse 6. Slippery. Margin, as in Hebrew, *slipperiness*. This is a circumstance which adds increased terror to the image. It is not only a *dark* road, but a road made slippery by rains; a road where they are in danger every moment of sliding down a precipice where they will be destroyed. *Albert Barnes.*

Verse 7. They hid for me their net in a pit. As if David had said that they had dug a pit, and covered and hid its mouth with a net, that I might pass upon it and fall into it. *Kimchi.*

Verse 8. Let destruction come upon him at unawares. Or a *storm*, such as is caused in the Eastern countries by a south wind, very sudden, violent, and destructive. *John Gill.*

Verse 8. Let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very *destruction let him fall*. By giving Ahithophel rope enough, the Lord preserved David from perishing. Who will not admire that Goliath should be slain with his own sword, and that proud Haman should hold Mordecai's stirrup, and be the herald of his honour? The wicked shall be undone by their own doings; all the arrows that they shoot at the righteous shall fall upon their own pates. Maxentius built a false bridge to drown Constantine, but was drowned himself. Henry the Third of France was stabbed in the very same chamber where he had helped to contrive the cruel massacre of the French Protestants. And his brother, Charles the Ninth, who delighted in the blood of the saints, had blood given him to drink, for he was worthy. It is usual with God to take persecutors in the snares and pits that they have laid for his people, many thousands in this nation have experienced; and though Rome and her confederates are this day laying snares and traps and digging pits for the righteous, who will rather burn than bow to their Baal, yet do but wait and weep, and weep and wait a little, and you shall see that the Lord will take them in the very snares and pits that they have laid and digged for his people. *Condensed from Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 8. Let the net that he hath hid catch himself. Thou fool, who opposeth thy counsels to those of the Most High. He who devises evil for another, falls at last into his own pit, and the most cunning finds himself caught by what he had prepared for another. But virtue without guile, erect like the lofty palm, rises with greater vigour when it is oppressed. *Pietro Metastasio, 1698-1782.*

Verse 9. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord, etc. While some ascribe to fortune, and others to their own skill, the praise of their deliverance from danger, and few, if any, yield the whole praise of it to God, David here, declares that he will not forget the favour which God had bestowed upon him. My soul, says he, shall rejoice, not in a deliverance of the author of which it is ignorant, but in the salvation of God. To place the matter in a still stronger light, he assigns to his very bones the office of declaring the divine glory. As if not content that his tongue should be employed in this, he applies all the members of his body to the work of setting forth the praises of God. The style of speaking which he employs is hyperbolic, but in this way he shows unfeignedly that his love to God was so strong that he desired to spend his sinews and bones in declaring the reality and truth of his devotion. *John Calvin.*

Verse 10. All my bones, etc. These words contain the most vivid description of the highest delight which by the whole soul and body should be experienced and openly manifested. He mentions his soul Ps 35:9 and all his bones as about to take part in the joy, to indicate that he most heartily and with his whole body was about to rejoice, and that the joy which he would manifest would not be of an ordinary character, but of the highest order, so that each several bone should sing forth the praises of God. *Herman Venema, 1697-1787.*

Verse 10. All my bones. In the Scriptures emotions are generally ascribed to the viscera, the bones are usually regarded as passive; in this place and Ps 51:8, and in these two places only, exulting joy is attributed to the bones. Ordinary experience shows us that the intestines have sympathy with our passionate excitements, but we have no consciousness of the bones becoming sympathetically sensitive. The expression therefore is highly poetical, and indicates that the joy intended would be far beyond ordinary and common delight; it would be so profound that even the most callous part of the human frame would partake of it. Doubtless the poetry has a basis of truth in it, for though we may not perceive it, there is most assuredly a true and real sympathy with our mental states in every particle of bone and muscle, as well as in those tender organs which are more apparently affected. *C. H. S. Thoughts suggested by a passage in "Biblical Psychology," by Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 10. All my bones. That is, whatsoever strength and vigour is in me shall be spent in celebrating thy praises. Or, although I have nothing left me but skin and bones so poor am I grown, yet I will not be wanting to the work. *John Trapp.*

Verse 10. My bones are riving through my skin, and yet all my bones are praising him. "I said, I am cast out of thy sight, but I will look again towards thy holy temple." *Thomas Halyburton. 1674-1711.*

Verse 11. They laid to my charge things that I knew not. You will say, Why does God permit wicked people to lay to the charge of the godly such things as they are clear of: God if he pleased could prevent it, and stop the mouths of the wicked, that they should not be able to speak against his children? Answer—As all things work for the best to them that love God, so this works for the good of

God's people. God doth permit it for the good of his people, and thus he frustrates the hopes of the wicked: they intend evil against the godly, and God disposes of it for good. As Joseph said to his brethren, "You intended evil against me, and God disposed of it for good;" so we may say to such as falsely slander God's people, You intended evil against the people of God, but God disposes of it for good. There is fivefold good that God brings out of it to his people. *First*, God doth by this means humble them, and brings them to examine what is amiss: so that though they be clear of that crime laid to their charge, yet they will then examine whether there be nothing else amiss betwixt God and them; they will search their hearts, and walk more humbly, and cleave more close to the Lord.

Secondly, God doth by this means bring them oftener upon their knees, to seek unto him, to plead their cause, and to clear their innocency. How oft did the prophet speak unto God when the wicked did falsely accuse him; how did he make his moan at the throne of grace unto God, beseeching him to plead his cause, and to keep him close in his way, that the wicked might not rejoice at his downfall! So when God's people see that it is that which the wicked would have, that which is their joy, to see the godly fall into such and such a sin; then the godly will pray more earnestly with David, Lord, lead me in a right path because of my observers; then they will be earnest with God to keep them from falling into that sin that the wicked desire they might fall into; and this is a second good that comes of it.

Thirdly, God doth use the reproach of the wicked as a preventing medicine against that crime which the wicked lay to their charge. The godly have unrenewed nature as well as renewed, and if God should leave them never so little to themselves, they are not their own keepers, they might fall into that sin which the wicked lay to their charge: and every godly man and woman may say when they are falsely accused, It is God's mercy that I did not fall into that sin they lay to my charge. God doth use wicked people's tongues as a warning against such a sin, that when they see how the wicked joy at a brat of their own hatching, then they consider, if the wicked thus joy without a cause, what would they do if they had just cause? Well, by the help of God this shall be a warning to me for ever to watch against that sin: for the time to come I will pray more against that particular sin than I have done, and watch more against that sin than I have done; through God's help they shall never have occasion to rejoice over me in that kind. Truly, I verily believe many a child of God can say by experience, I never should have prayed and watched against such a sin so much, had not God used the tongues of the wicked as preventing physic: I know not my own heart, but that I might have fallen into such and such a sin had not God by this means hedged up my way with thorns; and this is the third good comes of it.

Fourthly, God doth by this means exercise the graces of his people by letting them undergo bad report as well as good report: he tries whether they will cleave close to him in all conditions, as Ps 94:15-17.

Fifthly, God doth by this means teach them how to judge of others when they are falsely accused. For the time to come they will not receive a false report against their neighbour; they will know the truth of a thing before they believe it, and they know how to comfort others in the like condition; and thus God disposes of it for good, and thus God makes the wicked the servant of his people in that very thing which the wicked think to wrong them most in; for he uses the wicked as the rod and wisp, to scour off the rust of their graces and to correct their security; and when the rod hath done its office then it is thrown into the fire; and thus you see how God disposes of the wicked's false accusations of his people for good. *Zephaniah Smyth's Sermon, "The Malignant's Plot," 1647.*

Verse 12. They rewarded me evil for good. For the good David did in killing Goliath, and slaying his ten thousands of Philistines, and thereby saving his king and country, Saul and his courtiers envied him, and sought to slay him: so our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the good he did to the Jews, by healing their bodies of diseases, and preaching the gospel to them for the benefit of their souls, was rewarded with reproaches and persecutions, and at last with the shameful death of the cross; and in like manner are his people used, but this is an evil that shall not go unpunished: see Pr 17:13. *John Gill.*

Verse 12. To the spoiling of my soul. They robbed not his body of goods but his soul of consolation. They bereaved his soul (that is the word), like a widow who loses her children in whom she delighted and found succour. They were not content with injuring his estate, but they were for ruining the man himself by their undeserved malice, they attacked him in name and reputation, which were as dear to him as his sons and daughters, or even as his soul. It is evermore an injury to the soul to be attacked with slander, it puts a man into a warring attitude, endangers his peace of mind, imperils his enjoyment of quiet contemplation, and tends to interrupt his communion with God. Thus the spiritual nature is despoiled and suffers bereavement. *C. H. S.*

Verse 13. My prayer returned into, or was directed to, my bosom. Of the many interpretations that are given of this passage, that appears to me the most probable which derives it from the posture of the worshipper; who standing with his head inclined downward toward his bosom, turned away his attention from all external objects, and uttered his mournful and earnest requests, as if they were directed to his own bosom. Such a posture of devotion is in use both among Jews and Mohammedans. *Koeler in Repertor. Lit. Orient.; and Reland de Relig. Mohammedica, quoted by Walford in loc.*

Verse 13. (*last clause*). We may read it thus: *Let my prayer return into my bosom*; that is, I wished no worse to them than to myself: let me receive of God such good as I prayed for them. See Ps 79:12. *Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 14. For his mother. On account of the plurality of wives in an Eastern household, the sons are usually far more attached to their mother than their father. Their father they share with a numerous

band of half brothers, who are envious of them, or of whom they are jealous, but their mother is all their own, with her they are brought up in childhood; she takes their part in youth, in the numerous battles of the harem; and on their part when they are grown up, they love her intensely, and hence their mourning at her decease is of the bitterest kind. *C. H. S.*

Verse 14. His mother. Mahomet was once asked what relation had the strongest claim upon our affection and respect; when he instantly replied, "The mother, the mother, the mother."

Verse 14. (last clause). *Bewailleth his mother: mourneth at her funeral.* In this case the affections are most strong. Therefore the priests were permitted to mourn for such. Le 21:1-3. *Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced. etc. Do not glory in your neighbour's ruins. The firefly leaps and dances in the fire, and so do many wicked men rejoice in the sufferings of others. Such as rejoice in the sufferings of others are sick of the devil's disease; but from that disease the Lord deliver all your souls. It is sad to insult over those whom God hath humbled; it is high wickedness to triumph over those to whom God hath given a cup of astonishment to drink. Such as make the desolations of their neighbours to be the matter either of their secret repast, or open exultation, such may fear that the very dregs of divine wrath are reserved for them. It is bad playing upon the harp because others have been put to hang their harps upon the willows. We must not pray with him in the tragedy, that it may rain calamities; nor with Clemens' Gnostic, Give me calamities that I may glory in them. There cannot be a greater evidence of a wicked heart, than for a man to be merry because others are in misery. "He that is glad at calamities (that is, at the calamities of others) shall not be unpunished" Pr 17:5. If God be God, such as congratulate our miseries instead of condoling them, shall be sure to be punished with the worst of punishments; for such do not only sin against the law of grace, but also against the very law of nature; the law of nature teaching men to sympathise with those that are in misery, and not to rejoice over them because of their miseries. O sirs, do not make other's mourning your music, do not make other's tears your wine; as you would not be made drunk at last with the wine of astonishment. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, etc. Marvellous prophecy of the cross! second only, if indeed second, to that in the twenty-second Psalm. Still closer to the history if we take the Vulgate: *the scourges were gathered together upon me.* Even so, O Lord Jesus, the ploughers ploughed upon thy back, and made long furrows: precious furrows for us, where are sown patience for the present life, and glory in the next; where are sown hope that maketh not ashamed, and love that many waters cannot quench. "*The very objects.*" Even those worst of objects, who said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are; who had set the poor sinner before the Lord, with their "Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned." "*Making mouths at me.*" And is it not wonderful that, well knowing the prophecy, yet the chief priests and scribes should have so fulfilled it, as that it should be written concerning them, "They that passed by mocked him, wagging their heads." *Lewis de*

Grenada, 1504-1588.

Verse 15. In mine adversity they rejoiced. Now, as men often relent at seeing the misfortunes of their enemies, so that they cease to hate or persecute those who are already miserably wretched, it was an evidence of the very cruel and fierce spirit by which David's former friends were actuated against him, when, upon seeing him cast down and afflicted, they were rather by this incited furiously and insolently to assail him. *John Calvin.*

Verse 15. The abjects. *The very abjects* (Prayer Book Version). The Hebrew word *Nechim*, thus translated, comes from a verb signifying *to be smitten*. Hence, in the Septuagint it is rendered *scourges*. But it may also be rendered, with Jerome, *smitters*, and may mean *smiting with the tongue*. Compare Jer 18:18. Another of its meanings is, according to Buxtorf, the *wry legged, the lame*; and so it is used in 2Sa 4:4 9:3 whence the epithet of *Necho* was given to one of the Pharaohs who halted in his gait. Our translators seem to have understood the word in this last sense, as a term of contempt. *Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 15. David, having showed how compassionate he was to his enemies in their affliction Ps 35:14, he presently shows Ps 35:15, how uncompassionate, or barbarously cruel rather, his enemies were to him in his. *Abjects* are vile persons, men smitten in their estates and credits; yea, often as slaves or ill servants smitten with cudgels or whips. So a learned translator renders the Psalm, *The smitten gathered against me*; that is, vile men who deserve to be beaten and cudgelled. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 16. With hypocritical mockers in feasts. Some cannot be merry, but it must be with Scripture; if they want a little diversion, the saints must be the subject of their discourse! they can vent their profane jests upon the word of God; this is their pastime over their cups upon the ale bench. How ready they are with their contumelious reflections; they have learnt their father's dialect, they are accusers of the brethren, their speech betrays them to be Hellians. You know that in ordinary, we can tell what countryman a person is by his speech, every country having almost a peculiar idiom; so it is here, these scoffers at religion by speaking the language of hell, let us understand whence they are. They have, it may be, a little wit, which they set off with a sort of an air in rhetorical raillery, and oh, how quick and sharp when they are upon this subject! These scoffing Ishmaelites are seated in the devil's chair, somewhat above their brethren in iniquity, as most deserving the place; and there is less ground to hope that such persons will be savingly wrought upon who arrive to such a height is sin as to make a mock of it, and to sport with holiness, than of others. Persons are got a great way towards hell when they mock at what is serious, and that with delight. This the Lord will visit for in his due time; for he knows who they are that so dishonour him by reproaching them that are his. *Oliver Heywood.*

Verse 16. Hypocritical mockers in feasts. (gwam ygal ypnhb) Very difficult. The word (gwum), in 1Ki

17:12, the only other passage where it occurs, means "a cake." Hence (*gwam ygal*) is interpreted by Gesenius and others to mean, hangers on at the table of the rich (literally "cake mockers"), whose business it was, by witticisms and buffoonery to make entertainment for the guests, and who got their dinner in return, like the *qwisokolakez*, *knisololakes*, and the Medieval *Lat. buccellarii*. Then the words would mean, "Amongst the most profane." *J. J. Stewart Perowne*. (Would not our word *loafers* be somewhat analogous to these cake eaters of antiquity!) *C. H. S.*

Verse 16. Hypocritical mockers. David aggravates the sin of those jeering companions who made him their table talk, and could not taste their cheer except seasoned with some salt jest quibbled out at him, with this, that they were *hypocritical mockers*; they did it slyly, and wrapped up their scoffs, it is like in such language as might make some think, who did not well observe them, that they applauded him. There is a way of commending which some have learned to use when they mean to cast the greatest scorn upon those they hate bitterly, and these hypocritical mockers deserve the chair to be given them from all other scorers. *William Gurnall*.

Verse 16. Mockers in feasts. If it were known at a feast that there was any one present or absent, whom the host disliked, it was customary for the guests to "make fun of them, "and use sarcastic language respecting them. These are the *hypocritical mockers in feasts*. *John Gadsby*. **Verse 17.** Satan no sooner spies our wanderings, but he presently runs with a complaint to God, filing bills against us in the star-chamber of heaven, where the matter would go hard with us, but for the Great Lord Chancellor of peace, our Advocate Jesus Christ. As God keeps all our tears in a bottle, and registereth the very groans of our holy passion in a book, so Satan keeps a record of our sins, and solicits justice against us. Were God like man, subject to passions, or incensible by the suggestions of the common barrator, woe were us. But he will hear one son of truth before ten thousand fathers of lying. No matter what the plaintiff libelleth, when the judge acquitteth. We have forfeited our estates by treason, and the busy devil begs us; but there is one that steps in, and pleads a former grant, and that both by promise and purchase. ["Lord, rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions."] Lord Jesus, challenge thy own; let not Satan enter upon by force or fraud, what thou hast bought with thine own blood. [Thomas Adams.]

Verse 17. "*My darling*." In Poole's Synopsis the critics explain this name for the soul, as my only one, my solitary one, desolate, deserted, and destitute of human hope. Such is the soul under sore affliction. See Psalm 22:21. ["From the lions."] Daniel in the den was literally where David was spiritually. Shut in amongst fierce, cruel, and angry creatures, and himself defenceless, having no weapon but prayer, no helper but the Lord. The people of God may be exposed to the lions of hell, and their roarings may grievously affright them; but the soul which is their "darling" is also God's dear one, and therefore they shall be rescued. [C. H. S.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 171.

Verse 19. *"Wink with the eye."* Showing pleasure in their eyes because of my evil. [Francis Vatablus,] 1545

Verse 19. *"Wink the eye."* This was a sign which malicious persons made to each other when the object of their malice was gained, scornfully twisting their eyes together. The Hebrew word here has no sufficiently expressive substitute in English. [Benjamin Weiss.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 171.

Verse 21. *"Our eye hath seen."* [Eye] for [eyes], unless we would say that all the wicked are so conjoined, that they may seem to have but one eye, heart, head. [John Trapp.]

Verse 21. Yet, O ye saints, divulge not these things to wicked men; whisper them softly one to another, with fear and trembling, lest some profane wretch or other overhear you, and take that for encouragement that was only meant for caution. What is more common than for the vilest sinners to plead for their excuse, or warrant rather, the foul miscarriages of God's dearest saints? Thus the drunkard looks upon holy Noah as a pot-companion, whereby he discovers his nakedness in a worse sense than ever Cham did; and thus the unclean sensualist quotes David, and calls him in to be the patron of his debauchery. Certainly, if their be any grief that can overcast the perfect joys of the saints in heaven, it is that their names and examples should, to the great dishonour of God, be produced by wicked and sinful men, to countenance their grossest sins and wickednesses. But let such know, that God hath set up these in his church to be monuments of his mercy, to declare to humble and penitent sinners how great sins he can pardon; yet if any hereupon embolden themselves in sin, instead of being set up as monuments of mercy, God will set them up as pillars of salt. [Ezekiel Hopkins (Bishop).]

Verse 21. He who rejoices in another's fall rejoices in the devil's victory. [Ambrose, quoted in Nichol's Proverbs.]

Verses 21, 22. They gape and draw their mouthes in scornful wise. And crie, fie, fie, wee sawe it with our eyes. But thou their deed, (O Lord!) dost also see; Then bee not silent soe, nor farr from mee.[Sir John P Davies.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 172.

Verse 23. *"My God and my Lord."* The cry of Thomas when he saw the wounds of Jesus. If he did not count our Lord to be divine, neither does David here ascribe Deity to Jehovah, for there is no difference except in the order of the words and the tongue in which they were spoken, the meaning is identical. What words they are, with their two eyes seeing Jehovah in two aspects yet as one, grasping him with two hands in the double "my" to one heart for the word is but one, bowing before him on both knees to worship him in lowliest reverence. Well might Nouet, in his exposition of the words as used by Thomas, exclaim, "Oh, sweet word, I will say it all my life long; I will say it in the hour of death; I will say it in eternity." [C. H. S.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles

Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 172.

Verse 24. *"O Lord my God."* O Jehovah my God; here is another precious word. He takes Jehovah to be his God, in opposition to those who make idols, or riches, or their own lusts their God. He claims a full possession of all that is in the great I AM. Even though he views him as a judge he lays the hand of faith upon his God, and flinches not even before the blaze of his righteousness. It is a noble word, a grand utterance of faith; he who can pronounce that word "my" from his inmost soul in such a connection may well laugh to scorn all his enemies. [C. H. S.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 172.

Verse 25. *"Let them not say we have swallowed him up."* And even if they could, like Jonah's whale;e, they would soon be sickened of their feast. A living child of God were more easily swallowed than digested by the malice of hell. [C. H. S.] Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 172.

Verses 4-8, 26. How are we to account for such prayers for vengeance? We find them chiefly in four Psalms, the seventh, thirty-fifth, sixty-ninth, and one-hundred and ninth, and the imprecations in these form a terrible climax. In the last no less than thirty anathemas have been counted. Are these the mere outbursts of passionate and unsanctified feeling, or are they the legitimate expression of a righteous indignation? Are they to be excused as being animated by the "spirit of Elias"? a spirit not unholy indeed, but far removed from the meekness and gentleness of Christ; or are they the stereotyped forms in which the spirit of devotion may utter itself? Are they Jewish only, or may they be Christian also? An uninstructed fastidiousness, as it is well known, has made many persons recoil from reading these Psalms at all. Many have found their lips falter when they have been called to join in using them in the congregation, and have either uttered them with bated breath and doubting heart, or have interpreted them in a sense widely at variance with the letter. Some have tried to reconcile them with a more enlightened conscience, by regarding such words not as the expression of a wish, but as the utterance of a prediction; but the Hebrew optative which is distinct enough from the simple future, absolutely forbids this expedient. Others again would see in them expressions which may lawfully be used in the soul's wrestling against spiritual enemies. And finally, some would defend them as utterances of righteous zeal for God's honour, and remind us that if we do not sympathise with such zeal, it may be not because our religion is more pure, but because our hearts are colder. Now the real source of the difficulty lies in our not observing and bearing in mind the essential difference between the Old Testament and the New. The older dispensation was in every sense a sterner one than the new. The spirit of Elias, though not an evil spirit, was not the spirit of Christ. "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:56. And through him his disciples are made partakers of the same spirit. But this was not the spirit of the older economy. The Jewish nation had been trained in a sterner school. It had been steeled and hardened

by the discipline which had pledged it to a war of extermination with idolaters; and however necessary such a discipline might be, it would not tend to foster the gentler virtues; it is conceivable how even a righteous man, under it, feeling it to be his bounden duty to root out evil wherever he saw it, and identifying, as he did, his own enemies with the enemies of Jehovah, might use language which to us appears unnecessarily vindictive. To men so trained and taught, what we call "religious toleration," was a thing not only wrong, but absolutely inconceivable. It may be quite true that we find revenge forbidden as directly in the Old Testament as in the New, as, for instance, in Leviticus 19:18, "Thou shalt not avenge," etc., though even there is a limitation, "against the children of thy people." And it may be no less true that we find instances of imprecation in the New; as when St. Paul says (2 Timothy 4:14), "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works," or when he exclaims (Acts 23:3), "God will smite thee, thou whited wall;" or, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." But even these expressions are very different from the varied, deliberate, carefully constructed, detailed anathemas of the Psalms. And our Lord's denunciations, to which Hengstenberg refers, are in no way parallel. They are not curses upon individuals, but in fact solemn utterances of the great truth, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But after all, whatever may be said of particular passages, the general tone which runs through the two covenants, is unquestionably different. To deny this is not to honour Moses, but to dishonour Christ. Matthew 5:43; 19:8. On the other hand, we must not forget that these imprecations are not the passionate longings for personal revenge. The singer undoubtedly sees in his enemies the enemies of God and his church. They that are not with him are against God. And because the zeal of God's house even consumes him, he prays that all the doers of iniquity may be rooted out. The indignation therefore is righteous, though it may appear to us wrongly directed, or excessive in its utterance. Once more, the very fact that a dark cloud hid God's judgment in the world to come from the view of the Old Testament saints, may be alleged in excuse of this their desire to see him take vengeance on his enemies here. How deeply this problem of God's righteousness exercised their minds is abundantly evident from numerous places in the Psalms. They longed to see that righteousness manifested. It could be manifested, they thought, only in the evident exaltation of the righteous, and the evident destruction of the wicked here. Hence, with their eye always fixed on temporal recompense, they could even wish and pray for the destruction of the ungodly. The awful things of the world to come were to a great extent hid from their eyes. Could they have seen these, then surely their prayer would have been not, "Let the angel of the Lord persecute them," "Blot them out of thy book;" but rather with him who hung upon the cross; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." [*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*]

Verses 4, 8, 26. David was about as devoid of vindictiveness as any public character who can well be named. His conduct in relation to Saul, from first to last displayed a singularly noble spirit, far

removed from anything like the lust of vengeance; and the meekness with which he endured the bitter reproaches of Shimei, bore witness to the same spirit after his accession to the throne. . . . When David's whole career is intelligently and fairly reviewed, it leaves on the mind the impression of a man possessed of as meek and placable a temper as was ever associated with so great strength of will, and such strong passions. Even in the heats of sudden resentment, he was not apt to be hurried into deeds of revenge. Such being the case, it would certainly have been a strange and unaccountable thing if he had shown himself less the master of his own spirit in poems composed in seasons of retirement and communion with God, especially since these very poems express a keen sense of the heinousness of the sin that has been laid to his charge. He can affirm regarding his implacable enemies, "As for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." Psalm 35:13, 14. "O Lord, my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy): let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth." Psalm 7:3 - 5. Surely one ought to think twice before putting on the imprecations an interpretation which would make them utterly incongruous with these appeals, uttered almost in the same breath. [*William Binnie, D.D.*] Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Pages 164 - 166.

Verse 27. See how the hearts of the saints have been drawn out against their persecutors. Prayers are the arms that in times of persecution the saints have still had recourse to. The Romans being in great distress were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temple of their gods to fight with their enemies, and so they overcame them: so when the people of God have been hard put to it by reason of afflictions and persecutions, the weapons that they have fled to have been prayers and tears, and with these they have overcome their persecutors. [*Thomas Brooks.*] Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Pages 172, 173.

Verse 28. "*My tongue shall speak of thy righteousnesses and of thy praise all the day long.*" See now I have made a discourse something longer; ye are wearied. Who endureth to praise God all the day long? I will suggest a remedy whereby thou mayest praise God all the day long if thou wilt. Whatever thou dost, do well, and thou hast praised God. When thou singest a hymn, thou praisest God, but what doth thy tongue, unless thy heart also praise him? Hast thou ceased from singing hymns, and departed that thou mayest refresh thyself? Be not drunken, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou go away to sleep? Rise not to do evil, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou transact business? Do no wrong, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou till thy field? Raise not strife, and thou hast praised

God. In the innocency of thy works prepare thyself to praise God all the day long. [*Augustine.*]
Reference: The Treasury of David, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 173.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. Jesus our Advocate and Champion; our friend in the courts of heaven and the battles of earth.

Verse 2. Jesus armed as the defender of the faithful.

Verse 3. Enemies kept at arm's length. How the Lord does this, and the blessedness of it to us.

Verse 3. (*last clause*). Full assurance. An assurance positive, personal, spiritual, present, divine, complete, coming by a word from God.

Verse 3. (*last clause*). Heaven made sure. *Thomas Adams' Sermon.*

Verse 4. The everlasting confusion of the devil.

Verse 5. Let them be as chaff before the wind. They were swift enough to attack, let them be as swift to flee. Let their own fears and the alarms of their consciences unman them so that the least breeze of trouble shall carry them hither and thither. Ungodly men are worthless in character, and light in their behaviour, being destitute of solidity and fixedness; it is but just that those that make themselves chaff should be treated as such. When this imprecation is fulfilled in graceless men, they will find it an awful thing to be for ever without rest, without peace of mind, or stay of soul, hurried from fear to fear, and from misery to misery. *And let the angel of the Lord chase them.* Fallen angels shall haunt them, good angels shall afflict them. To be pursued by avenging spirits will be the lot of those who delight in persecution. Observe the whole scene as the psalmist sketches it: the furious foe is first held at bay, then turned back, then driven to headlong flight, and chased by fiery messengers from whom there is no escape, while his pathway becomes dark and dangerous, and his destruction overwhelming.

Verse 6. The horrible pilgrimage of the ungodly.

Verse 6. The trinity of dangers in the pathway of the wicked, their way dark with ignorance, and slippery with temptation, while behind them is the avenger.

Verse 8. Destruction at unawares, an awful topic.

Verse 9. Joy in God and in his salvation.

Verse 10. A matchless God, and his matchless grace—these are the themes. An experienced heart, thoroughly quickened—this is the songster; and from this cometh matchless music. The music of a shattered harp.

Verse 11. The meanness, cruelty, sinfulness, and commonness of slander.

Verse 12. How a soul may be robbed.

Verse 13. Christian sympathy even for the froward.

Verse 13. (*last clause*). Personal benefit of intercessory prayer.

Verses 13-14. Compassion to the sick. *C. Simeon*.

Verse 15. The shameful conspiracy of men against our Lord Jesus at his passion.

Verse 17. *The limit of divine endurance*. Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 173.

Verse 18. "*I will give thee thanks in the great congregation*." Notable deliverances must be recorded, and their fame emblazoned. All the saints should be informed of the Lord's goodness. The theme is worthy of the largest assembly, the experience of a believer is a subject fit for an assembled universe to hear of. Most men publish their griefs, good men should proclaim their mercies. ["I will praise thee among much people."] Among friends and foes will I glorify the God of my salvation. Praise—personal praise, public praise, perpetual praise—should be the daily revenue of the King of heaven. Thus, for the second time, David's prayer ends in praise, as indeed all prayers should. Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 159.

Verse 18. *The duty, blessedness, and seasonableness of public praise*. Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 173.

Verse 19. He earnestly prays that as they have no cause for their enmity, they may have no cause for triumph either in his folly, sin, or overthrow. ["Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause."] The winking of the eye was the low-bred sign of congratulation at the ruin of their victim, and it may also have been one of their scornful gestures as they gazed upon him whom they despised. To cause hatred is the mark of the wicked, to suffer it causelessly is the lot of the righteous. God is the natural Protector of all who are wronged, and he is the enemy of all oppressors. Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 160.

Verse 22. Omniscience pleaded, a word sought for, presence requested, action entreated, affiance urged as a claim. Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 173.

Verse 25. The ungodly man's delight, and the righteous, man's refuge. Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 173.

Verse 26. The convict dress of the wicked - ["clothed with shame,"] etc. Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 173.

Verse 27 (*last clause*). What is that prosperity in which the Lord hath pleasure? Reference: *The Treasury of David*, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Published by Guardian Press, 1976, Vol. II, Page 173.

Verse 28. A blessed theme, a fitting tongue, an endless speech.

Psalm 36

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. To the Chief Musician, He who had the leadership of the Temple service was charged with the use of this song in public worship. What is everybody's business is never done. It was well to have one person specially to attend to the service of song in the house of the Lord. Of David the servant of the Lord. This would seem to indicate that the Psalm peculiarly befits one who esteems it an honour to be called Jehovah's servant. It is THE SONG OF HAPPY SERVICE; such a one as all may join in who bear the easy yoke of Jesus. The wicked are contrasted with the righteous, and the great Lord of devout men is heartily extolled; thus obedience to so good a Master is indirectly insisted on, and rebellion against him is plainly condemned.

DIVISION. From Ps 36:1-4 David describes the rebellious; in Ps 36:5-9 he extols the various attributes of the Lord; in Ps 36:10-11 he addresses the Lord in prayer, and in the last verse his faith sees in vision the overthrow of all the workers of iniquity.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *The transgression of the wicked.* His daring and wanton sin; his breaking the bounds of law and justice. *Saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.* Men's sins have a voice to godly ears. They are the outer index of an inner evil. It is clear that men who dare to sin constantly and presumptuously cannot respect the great Judge of all. Despite the professions of unrighteous men, when we see their unhallowed actions our heart is driven to the conclusion that they have no religion whatever. Unholiness is clear evidence of ungodliness. Wickedness is the fruit of an atheistic root. This may be made clear to the candid head by cogent reasoning, but it is clear already and intuitively to the pious heart. If God be everywhere, and I fear him, how can I dare to break his laws in his very presence? He must be a desperate traitor who will rebel in the monarch's own halls. Whatever theoretical opinions bad men may avow, they can only be classed with atheists, since they are such practically. Those eyes which have no fear of God before them now, shall have the terrors of hell before them for ever.

Verse 2. *For.* Here is the argument to prove the proposition laid down in the former verse. David here runs over the process of reasoning by which he had become convinced that wicked men have no proper idea of God or respect for him. God fearing men see their sins and bewail them, where the reverse is the case we may be sure there is no fear of God. *He flattereth himself in his own eyes.* He

counts himself a fine fellow, worthy of great respect. He quiets his conscience, and so deceives his own judgment as to reckon himself a pattern of excellence; if not for morality, yet for having sense enough not to be enslaved by rules which are bonds to others. He is the free thinker, the man of strong mind, the hater of cant, the philosopher; and the servants of God are, in his esteem, mean spirited and narrow minded. Of all flatteries this is the most absurd and dangerous. Even the silliest bird will not set traps for itself; the most pettifogging attorney will not cheat himself. To smooth over one's own conduct to one's conscience (which is the meaning of the Hebrew) is to smooth one's own path to hell. The descent to eternal ruin is easy enough, without making a glissade of it, as self flatters do. *Until his iniquity be found to be hateful.* At length he is found out and detested, despite his self conceit. Rottenness smells sooner or later too strong to be concealed. There is a time when the leprosy cannot be hidden. At last the old house can no longer be propped up, and falls about the tenant's ears: so there is a limit to a man's self gratulation; he is found out amid general scorn, and can no longer keep up the farce which he played so well. If this happens not in this life, the hand of death will let light in upon the coveted character, and expose the sinner to shame and contempt. The self flattering process plainly proves the atheism of sinners, since the bare reflection that God sees them would render such self flatteries extremely difficult, if not impossible. Belief in God, like light reveals, and then our sin and evil are perceived; but wicked men are in the dark, for they cannot see what is so clearly within them and around them that it stares them in the face.

Verse 3. *The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit.* This pair of hell dogs generally hunt together, and what one does not catch the other will; if iniquity cannot win by oppression, deceit will gain by chicanery. When the heart is so corrupt as to flatter itself, the tongue follows suit. The open sepulchre of the throat reveals the foulness of the inner nature. God fearing men make a conscience of their words, and if they sin through infirmity they do not invent excuses, or go about to boast of their wickedness: but because wicked men think little of evil and artful speeches, we may be clear that God rules not in their souls. The original by declaring that the words of the wicked are falsehood and deceit is peculiarly strong; as if they were not only false in quality, but actual falseness itself. *He hath left off to be wise, and to do good.* From the good way he has altogether gone aside. Men who fear God proceed from strength to strength in the right path, but godless men soon forsake what little good they once knew. How could men apostatise if they had respect unto the supreme Judge? Is it not because they grow more and more forgetful of God, that in due season they relinquish even that hypocritical reverence of him which in former days they maintained in order to flatter their souls?

Verse 4. *He deviseth mischief upon his bed.* His place of rest becomes the place for plotting. His bed is a hot bed for poisonous weeds. God fearing men meditate upon God and his service; but when men turn all their thoughts and inventive faculties towards evil, their godlessness is proved to a demonstration. He hath the devil for his bed fellow who lies abed and schemes how to sin. God is far

from him. *He setteth himself in a way that is not good.* When he gets up he resolutely and persistently pursues the mischief which he planned. The worst of ways he prefers for his walking, for he has taught his heart to love filthiness, having accustomed himself to revel in it in imagination. *He abhorreth not evil.* So far from having a contempt and abhorrence for evil, he even rejoices in it, and patronises it. He never hates a wrong thing because it is wrong, but he meditates on it, defends it, and practises it. What a portrait of a graceless man these few verses afford us! His jauntiness of conscience, his licentiousness of speech, his intentness upon wrong doing, his deliberate and continued preference of iniquity, and withal his atheistic heart, are all photographed to the life. Lord, save us from being such.

Verses 5-9. From the baseness of the wicked the psalmist turns his contemplation to the glory of God. Contrasts are impressive.

Verse 5. *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens.* Like the ethereal blue, it encompasses the whole earth, smiling upon universal nature, acting as a canopy for all the creatures of earth, surmounting the loftiest peaks of human provocations, and rising high above the mists of mortal transgression. Clear sky is evermore above, and mercy calmly smiles above the din and smoke of this poor world. Darkness and clouds are but of earth's lower atmospheres: the heavens are evermore serene, and bright with innumerable stars. Divine mercy abides in its vastness of expanse, and matchless patience, all unaltered by the rebellions of man. When we can measure the heavens, then shall we bound the mercy of the Lord. Towards his own servants especially, in the salvation of the Lord Jesus, he has displayed grace higher than the heaven of heavens, and wider than the universe. O that there atheist could but see this, how earnestly would he long to become a servant of Jehovah! *Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.* Far, far above all comprehension is the truth and faithfulness of God. He never fails, nor forgets, nor falters, nor forfeits his word. Afflictions are like clouds, but the divine truthfulness is all around them. While we are under the cloud we are in the region of God's faithfulness; when we mount above it we shall not need such an assurance. To every word of threat, or promise, prophecy or covenant, the Lord has exactly adhered, for he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent.

Verse 6. *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains.* Firm and unmoved, lofty and sublime. As winds and hurricanes shake not an Alp, so the righteousness of God is never in any degree affected by circumstances; he is always just. Who can bribe the Judge of all the earth, or who can, by threatening, compel him to pervert judgment? Not even to save his elect would the Lord suffer his righteousness to be set aside. No awe inspired by mountain scenery can equal that which fills the soul when it beholds the Son of God slain as a victim to vindicate the justice of the Inflexible Lawgiver. Right across the path of every unholy man who dreams of heaven stand the towering Andes of divine righteousness, which no unregenerate sinner can ever climb. Among great

mountains lie slumbering avalanches, and there the young lightnings try their callow wings until the storm rushes down again from the awful peaks; so against the great day of the Lord's wrath the Lord has laid up in the mountains of his righteousness dreadful ammunition of war with which to overwhelm his adversaries. *Thy judgments are a great deep.* God's dealings with men are not to be fathomed by every boaster who demands to see a why for every wherefore. The Lord is not to be questioned by us as to why this and why that. He has reasons, but he does not choose to submit them to our foolish consideration. Far and wide, terrible and irresistible like the ocean are the providential dispensations of God: at one time they appear as peaceful as the unrippled sea of glass; at another tossed with tempest and whirlwind, but evermore most glorious and full of mystery. Who shall discover the springs of the sea? He who shall do this may hope to comprehend the providence of the Eternal.

"Undiscovered sea!

Into thy dark, unknown, mysterious caves,
And secret haunts unfathomably deep,
Beneath all visible retired, none went
And came again to tell the wonders there."

Yet as the deep mirrors the sky, so the mercy of the Lord is to be seen reflected in all the arrangements of his government on earth, and over the profound depth the covenant rainbow casts its arch of comfort, for the Lord is faithful in all that he doeth. *O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.* All the myriads of creatures, rational and irrational, are fed by Jehovah's hand. The countless beasts, the innumerable birds, the inconceivable abundance of fishes, the all but infinite armies of insects, all owe their continuance of life to the unceasing outgoings of the divine power. What a view of God this presents to us! What a debased creature must he be who sees no trace of such a God, and feels no awe of him!

Verse 7. *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God.* Here we enter into the Holy of Holies. Benevolence, and mercy, and justice, are everywhere, but the excellence of that mercy only those have known whose faith has lifted the veil and passed into the brighter presence of the Lord; these behold the excellency of the Lord's mercy. The word translated *excellent* may be rendered "precious; "no gem or pearl can ever equal in value a sense of the Lord's love. This is such a brilliant as angels wear. King's regalia are a beggarly collection of worthless pebbles when compared with the tender mercies of Jehovah. David could not estimate it, and therefore, after putting a note of admiration, he left our hearts and imagination, and, better still, our experience, to fill up the rest. He writes *how excellent!* because he cannot tell us the half of it. *Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.* The best of reasons for the best of courses. The figure is very beautiful. The Lord overshadows his people as a hen protects her brood, or as an eagle covers its young; and we

as the little ones run under the blessed shelter and feel at rest. To cower down under the wings of God is so sweet. Although the enemy be far too strong for us, we have no fear, for we nestle under the Lord's wing. O that more of Adam's race knew the excellency of the heavenly shelter! It made Jesus weep to see how they refused it: our tears may well lament the same evil.

Verse 8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.* Those who learn to put their trust in God shall be received into his house, and shall share in the provision laid up therein. The dwelling place of the Lord is not confined to any place, and hence reside where we may, we may regard our dwelling, if we be believers, as one room in the Lord's great house; and we shall, both in providence and grace, find a soul contenting store supplied to us as the result of living by faith in nearness to the Lord. If we regard the assembly of the saints as being peculiarly the house of God, believers shall, indeed, find in sacred worship the richest spiritual food. Happy is the soul that can drink in the sumptuous dainties of the gospel—nothing can so completely fill the soul. *And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* As they have the fruits of Eden to feed on, so shall they have the river of Paradise to drink from. God's everlasting love bears to us a constant and ample comfort, of which grace makes us to drink by faith, and then our pleasure is of the richest kind. The Lord not only brings us to this river, but makes us drink: herein we see the condescension of divine love. Heaven will, in the fullest sense, fulfil these words; but they who trust in the Lord enjoy the antepast even here. The happiness given to the faithful is that of God himself; purified spirits joy with the same joy as the Lord himself. "That my joy may be in you, that your joy may be full."

Verse 9. *For with thee is the fountain of life.* This verse is made of simple words, but like the first chapter of John's Gospel, it is very deep. From the Lord, as from an independent self sufficient spring, all creature life proceeds, by him is sustained, through him alone can it be perfected. Life is in the creature, but the fountain of it is only in the Creator. Of spiritual life, this is true in the most emphatic sense; "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, ""and we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God." *In thy light shall we see light.* Light is the glory of life. Life in the dark is misery, and rather death than life. The Lord alone can give natural, intellectual, and spiritual life; he alone can make life bright and lustrous. In spiritual things the knowledge of God sheds a light on all other subjects. We need no candle to see the sun, we see it by its own radiance, and then see everything else by the same lustre. We never see Jesus by the light of self, but self in the light of Jesus. No inward intelligence of ours leads us to receive the Spirit's light, but the rather, it often helps to quench the sacred beam; purely and only by his own illumination, the Holy Ghost lights up the dark recesses of our heart's ungodliness. Vain are they who look to learning and human wit, one ray from the throne of God is better than the noonday splendour of created wisdom. Lord, give me the sun, and let those who will delight in the wax candles of superstition and the phosphorescence of corrupt philosophy. Faith derives both light and life from God, and hence she neither dies nor darkens.

Verse 10. *O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee.* We ask no more than a continuance of the past mercy. Lord, extend this grace of thine to all the days of all who have been taught to know thy faithful love, thy tenderness, thine immutability and omnipotence. As they have been taught of the Lord to know the Lord, so go on to instruct them and perfect them. This prayer is the heart of the believer asking precisely that which the heart of his God is prepared to grant. It is well when the petition is but the reflection of the promise. *And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.* As thou hast never failed the righteous, so abide thou in the same manner their defender and avenger. The worst thing to be feared by the man of God is to be forsaken of heaven, hence this prayer; but the fear is groundless, hence the peace which faith brings to us. Learn from this verse, that although a continuance of mercy is guaranteed in the covenant, we are yet to make it a matter of prayer. For this good thing will the Lord be enquired of.

Verse 11. *Let not the foot of pride come against me.* The general prayer is here turned into a particular and personal one for himself. Pride is the devil's sin. Good men may well be afraid of proud men, for the serpent's seed will never cease to bite the heel of the godly. Fain would proud scoffers spurn the saints or trample them under foot: against their malice prayer lifts up her voice. No foot shall come upon us, no hand shall prevail against us, while Jehovah is on our side. *Let not the hand of the wicked remove me.* Suffer me not to be driven about as a fugitive, nor torn from my place like an uprooted tree. Violence with both hand and foot, with means fair and means foul, strove to overthrow the psalmist, but he resorts to his great Patron, and sings a song of triumph in anticipation of the defeat of his foes.

Verse 12. *There are the workers of iniquity fallen.* Faith sees them scattered on the plain. There! before our very eyes sin, death, and hell, lie prostrate. Behold the vanquished foes! *They are cast down.* Providence and grace have dashed them from their vantage ground. Jesus has already thrown all the foes of his people upon their faces, and in due time all sinners shall find it so. *And shall not be able to rise.* The defeat of the ungodly and of the powers of evil is final, total, irretrievable. Glory be to God, however high the powers of darkness may carry it at this present, the time hastens on when God shall defend the right, and give to evil such a fall as shall for ever crush the hopes of hell; while those who trust in the Lord shall eternally praise him and rejoice in his holy name.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

TITLE. To the Chief Musician, has given rise to many conjectures. In the Septuagint the Hebrew word is translated, eiz to telos, to the end; a meaning so utterly vague as to defy all reasonable conjecture. ...The meaning of the term appears to be this: the Psalms in which it occurs were given in charge by their inspired authors to the Chief Musician overseeing some specific band of music, whether harps, psalteries, or wind instruments. *John Jebb, A.M., in "A Literal Translation of the Book*

of Psalms," 1846.

Title. The servant of the Lord. David only uses this title here and in Psalm eighteen. In both he describes the dealings of God both with the righteous and the wicked, and it is most fit that at the very outset he should take his place with the servants of the Lord. *C. H. S.*

Whole Psalm. *First Part.* A character of a wicked man Ps 36:1. 1. He calls evil good Ps 36:2. 2. He continues in it. 3. He is an hypocrite Ps 36:3. 4. He is obstinate. 5. He is studious in wickedness Ps 36:4. *Second part.* God's patience and mercy Ps 36:5-6. 1. To all, even all creatures. 2. But particularly to his people, which he admires. Upon which the faithful (1) trust, (2) are satisfied Ps 36:7-8. *Third part.* He prays that this effect may light, 1. On God's people Ps 36:10. 2. On himself Ps 36:11. 3. His acclamation upon it Ps 36:12. *William Nicholson (Bishop), 1662.*

Verse 1. In this Psalm we have a description of sin, especially as it appears in those who have openly broken God's bands. The introduction is very striking; *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.* How could the *transgression of the wicked* speak within the *heart* of him who in the inscription of the Psalm declares himself to be *the servant of JEHOVAH*? These words are generally understood as signifying that the outward conduct of the sinner, as often as he thought of it, naturally suggested this conclusion to his mind, that he was destitute of all fear of God. But they may perhaps admit of another meaning, equally agreeable to the literal reading; *wickedness, saith of the wicked, within my heart,* etc. According to this view, the psalmist meant that notwithstanding the external pretences of the wicked, and all their attempts to cover their iniquity, he was certain that they had no real sense of the presence of God, that they secretly renounced his authority. How was he assured of this? By a comparison of their conduct with the dictates of the heart. He could not indeed look into their hearts, but he could look into his own, and *there* he found corruption so strong, that were it not for the fear of God that was implanted within him, he would be as bad as they. *John Jamieson.*

Verse 1. It is not the imperfection or shortcoming in the fear of God, but the being destitute of it altogether, that proveth a wicked man: *There is no fear of God before his eyes.* *David Dickson.*

Verse 1. (*last clause*). *Not having the fear of God before his eyes,* has become inwoven into proceedings in criminal courts. When a man has no fear of God, he is prepared for any crime. Total depravity is not too strong a term to describe human wickedness. The sinner has *no fear of God.* Where that is wanting, how can there be any piety? And if there is no piety, there must be total want of right affections, and that is the very essence of depravity. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1. Durst any mock God with flourishes and formalities in religion, if they feared him? Durst any provoke God to his face by real and open wickedness, if they feared him? Durst any sin with the judgments of God fresh bleeding before their eyes, if they feared the Lord and his wrath? Durst they sin with heaps of precious mercy before their eyes, if they feared the Lord and his goodness? Durst

any flatter either others or themselves with hopes of impunity in their sin, if they feared the Lord and his truth? Durst any slight their own promises, professions, protestations, oaths, or design the entangling of others by them, rather than the binding of themselves, did they fear the Lord and his faithfulness, even the Lord who keepeth covenant and promise for ever? All these and many more transgressions of the wicked (all these ways of transgression are found among the wicked, it were well if none of them were found among those who have a name of godliness; I say, all these transgressions of the wicked) say, *There is no fear of God before their eyes.* Joseph Caryl.

Verse 1. The *wicked* man has no regard to the oracles of God: he had one in his own heart, which dictates nothing but rebellion. Zachary Mudge.

Verse 2. *For he flattereth himself in his own eyes.* The matter which this self flattery especially concerns is sin, as appears from the following clause. He deceives himself as to its nature and consequences, its evil and aggravations, and he continues to do so *until his iniquity be found to be hateful*; till it be fully discovered, and appear in its magnitude and atrocious circumstances both to himself and others, by some awful divine judgment, such as that mentioned in the last verse of the Psalm: "*There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.*" He adduces this self deceit and continuance in it, as illustrating the truth of that judgment he had formed of the state of such a person: *There is no fear of God before his eyes: for he flattereth himself in his own eyes.* And surely the proof is incontrovertible. For a man under the bondage of sin would never *flatter himself in his own eyes*, were it not that God is not before them. The reason why he thinks so well of himself is, that *God is not in all his thoughts.* He hath cast off all fear about himself because he hath no fear of God. John Jamieson.

Verse 2. *He flattereth himself.* 1. Some flatter themselves with a secret hope, that there is no such thing as *another world.* 2. Some flatter themselves that *death* is a great way off, and that they shall hereafter have much opportunity to seek salvation. 3. Some flatter themselves that they lead *moral* and orderly lives, and therefore think that they shall not be damned. 4. Some make the *advantages* under which they live an occasion of self flattery. They flatter themselves that they live in a place where the gospel is powerfully preached, and among a religious people, where many have been converted; and they think it will be much easier for them to be saved on that account. 5. Some flatter themselves with their own *intentions.* They intend to give themselves liberty for a while longer, and *then* to reform. 6. There are some who flatter themselves that they *do*, and have *done*, a great deal for their salvation, and therefore hope they shall obtain it; when indeed they neither do what they ought to do, nor what they might do even in their present state of unregeneracy; nor are they in any likely way to be converted. 7. Some hope by their strivings to obtain salvation of *themselves.* They have a secret imagination that they shall, by degrees, work in themselves sorrow and repentance of sin, and love towards God and Jesus Christ. Their striving is not so much an earnest seeking to God,

as a striving to do themselves that which is the work of God. 8. Some sinners flatter themselves that they are *already* converted. They sit down and rest in a false hope, persuading themselves that all their sins are pardoned; that God loves them; that they shall go to heaven when they die; and that they need trouble themselves no more. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Re 3:17. *Condensed from Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 2. *In his own eyes.* He had not God before his eyes in holy awe, therefore he puts himself there in unholy admiration. He who makes little of God makes much of himself. They who forget adoration fall into adulation. The eyes must see something, and if they admire not God, they will flatter self. *C. H. S.*

Verse 2. *Until his iniquity be found to be hateful;* that is, until he finds by experience that it is a more dreadful thing to sin against God, and break his holy commands, than he imagined. *Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 2. *Hateful.* Odious to himself, others, and to God. *Gilbert Genebrard, 1537-1597.*

Verse 3. *He hath left off.* That little light he once had, he hath lost, and cast off such good practices as once in hypocrisy he performed; neither will he learn to do better. *John Trapp.*

Verse 3. *(last clause).* Apostasy from God is really an undoing of all the good which we have done. It is a wicked repentance quite contrary to the grace of repentance; as that is a repentance from dead works, so this is a repentance from works of a better sort: *He hath left off to be wise, and to do good.* It is a perversion to evil after a seeming conversion from it. *Timothy Cruso.*

Verses 3-4.

Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock
Number the midnight watches, on his bed
Devising mischief more; and early rose,
And made most hellish meals of good men's names.
From door to door you might have seen him speed,
Or placed amid a group of gaping fools.
Peace fled the neighbourhood in which he made
His haunts; and, like a moral pestilence,
Before his breath the healthy shoots and blooms
Of social joy and happiness decayed.
Fools only in his company were seen,
And those forsaken of God, and to themselves
Given up. The prudent shunned him and his house
As one who had a deadly moral plague.

—Robert Pollock, 1799-1827.

Verse 4. *He deviseth mischief upon his bed.* As the man that fears God communes with his heart upon his bed, that he may not sin, no, not in his heart; so the man that fears not God, devises how he may plot and perform sin willingly. *David Dickson.*

Verse 4. *Upon his bed.* Most diligently does Ayguan follow up the scriptural expressions concerning a bed, and tell us that there are six different beds of wickedness—that of luxury, that of avarice, of ambition, of greediness, of torpor, and of cruelty, and he illustrates them all by examples from Scripture. *J. M. Neale.*

Verse 4. *He setteth himself in a way that is not good.* To wait to sin is to sin deliberately, yea, to wait to sin resolvedly. That sin is exceedingly sinfully committed which we set and prepare ourselves to commit. David, describing a wicked man, saith, *He setteth himself in a way that is not good;* that is, in an evil way: he doth not only fall into sin (that may be the case of a good man), but he takes or chooseth an evil way, and then sets or settles himself in it, resolving not to leave it, no, nor to be beaten out of it. Sin may be said to wait for a godly man, that is, Satan waits and watches his season to tempt him unto sin; but a godly man doth not wait nor watch to sin. It is bad enough to be overtaken with sin, or with a fault (as the apostle speaks, Ga 6:1); but to be taken with sin, and so to wait for a season to take our fill of it, is as bad as bad can be. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4. *He setteth himself in a way that is not good.* Proud sinners have strongest conceit that they go right, at least in the way of their choice. Satan blindeth them so, that they mistake both the end and the way: in their count they are running to heaven, when they are posting to hell: he serveth them kindly with fresh post horses. Sometimes he mounts them on drunkenness, and when they have run a stage on that beastliness, he can mount them on lechery. Again, he can refresh them with avarice; and if they be weary of that slow jade, he setteth them on lofty ambition, and to make them more spirited he can horse them on restless contention. Every one seeth not Satan's enquiry: there is no complexion or disposition, but he hath a fit horse for it, and that of itself. Every man's predominant is a beast of Satan's saddling and providing to carry men to hell. The way is one, the post master is one, he is to be found at every stage, mounting his gallants, their horses are all of one kind though not of one colour. Happy is the man whom God dismounts in that evil way, and more happy is he who taketh with that stay, and turneth his course to heaven. *William Struther.*

Verse 4. *He abhorreth not.* i.e., is far enough from rejecting any instrument, however sinful, for attaining his purposes. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 5. *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens.* David considering the thoughts and deeds of impious men, and the mercy of God towards them, utters this exclamation. When men are so impudently, who does not admire the divine longsuffering! *Sebastian Munster, 1489-1552.*

Verses 5-7. This Psalm doth fitly set forth unto us the estate and condition of these times, wherein

wickedness increaseth: and so in the former part of the Psalm is a discovery of wickedness, verse 3. And what should we do when there is such wickedness in the earth? In the fifth verse, *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.* God is gathering up all goodness, mercy, and peace from man to himself; and though there is cruelty, mischief, and wickedness in the world, in the earth, yet there is mercy, truth, and faithfulness in the clouds; and it's good that wisdom, goodness, truth, and righteousness leave the world, and cleave to God, that so we may follow it; and that what goodness, mercy, truth, and faithfulness we formerly enjoyed in man, we may enjoy it in God. And when wickedness increaseth, righteousness increaseth likewise: *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains:* when the world tears and breaks itself in pieces, then is the righteousness of God a great mountain. *Thy judgments are a great deep;* when the whole world is become one sea of confusion, then are the judgments of the Lord a great deep, where not only man, but beasts may rest safely. *Thou preservest man and beast.* And though this time is a time of growing and spreading wickedness in man, yet it is a time of sweetest admiration and love in God; and when men that sin do cry out, O woeful man! they that enjoy God, cry out, O happy man! And though men that live in the earth cry out, O miserable! what times are here? men that live in heaven cry out, *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God!* The Lord makes all things naked and bare, that we only may have him to be our safety. *William Sedgwick (1600-1668). In "The Excellency of the love of God," a sermon in a volume, entitled "Some Flashes of Lightnings of the Son of Man," 1648.*

Verses 5-9.

Thy mercie Lord doth to the HEAVENS extend,
Thy faithfulness doth to the CLOUDS ascend;
Thy justice stedfast as a MOUNTAINE is,
Thy JUDGEMENTS deepe as is the great Abisse;
Thy noble mercies saue all liueinge thinges,
The sonnes of men creepe underneath thy winges:
With thy great plenty they are fedd at will,
And of thy pleasure's streame they drinke their fill;
For euen the well of life remaines with thee,
And in thy glorious light wee light shall see.

—*Sir John Davies.*

Verse 6. *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains.* Literally *mountains of God*, which men have not planted, and which men cannot move. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 6. *Thy judgments are a great deep.* Men's sins are a great deep, and Satan's ways are called a depth; but God's judgments, his ways in the wheels, are the greatest deep of all, they are unsearchable. *William Greenhill.*

Verse 7. *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God!* etc. The expressions here which denote the abundance of divine blessings upon the righteous man, seems to be taken from the temple, from whence they were to issue. Under the covert of the temple, the wings of the cherubim, they were to be sheltered. The richness of the sacrifices, the streams of oil, wine, odours, etc., and the light of the golden candlestick, are all plainly referred to. *Samuel Burder.*

Verse 7. *Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.* The word signifies to fly, to betake one's self to a place of safety: as the chickens in danger to be seized on, fly under the wings of the hen. "Under whose wings thou art come to trust." Ru 2:12. The helpless bird pursued by the kite, in danger to be devoured, runs under the shadow of the dam. Thus it is with a sinner at the first working of faith, he apprehends himself pursued by wrath and judgment; he knows if they seize on him he must perish without remedy. Oh, the sad condition of such a soul! Oh, but he sees Christ spreading his wings ready to secure perishing sinners; he hears him inviting in the gospel to come under his shadow! Oh, how sweet is that voice to him (however, while senseless he rejected it)! He hears, obeys, and runs to Christ for shelter, and so he is safe. *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.* *David Clarkson.*

Verse 7. *Thy wings.* A common figure in the Psalms, taken more immediately, in my opinion, from the wings of the cherubim overshadowing the mercyseat which covered the ark; but more remotely from the birds, which defend their young from the solar rays by overshadowing them with their wings. *Francis Hare (Bishop), 1740.*

Verse 7.

In lonesome cell, guarded and strong I lie,
Bound by Christ's love, his truth to testify,
Though walls be thick the door no hand unclose,
God is my strength, my solace, and repose.

In a letter of Jeronius Segerson, written in the prison at Antwerp to his wife, named Lysken, who likewise lay a prisoner there, 1551.

Verse 9. *For with thee is the fountain of life.* These are some of the most wonderful words in the Old Testament. Their fulness of meaning no commentary can ever exhaust. They are, in fact, the kernel and the anticipation of much of the profoundest teaching of S. John. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 9. *In thy light shall we see light.* The object and matter of our eternal happiness is called *light*. It will not be a dazzling and confounding light as was the brightness of Moses' face at his coming down from the mount; the people could not behold him: it will not be an astonishing light, as that in the mount at our Lord's transfiguration; the disciples fell to the ground, their weak eyes could not behold those glimpses of glory that shined through the vail of flesh. But the light in our heaven of

happiness will be a *strengthening and comforting light*; it will strengthen and confirm the eyes of our understanding to behold it. Then shall we be enabled as the young eagles, to behold the Sun of Righteousness in his brightness and glory. It was said by the Lord to Moses, "None can see my face and live." Ex 33:20. That glorious sight which Daniel saw took strength from him. Da 10:8. The object being without him, drew out all his spirits to behold and admire it and so weakened him; but in heaven our God, whom we shall see and know, will be within us to strengthen us; then shall we live because we see his face. It will be also a *comforting light*, like the light of the morning to the wearied watchman, who longed after it in the nighttime. *William Colville.*

Verse 9. *In thy light shall we see light.* It is but a kind of dim twilight comparatively, which we enjoy here in this world. While we are hid in this prison house we can see but little; but our Father's house above is full of light; "*Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun,*" etc. Mt 13:43. If the Day star be risen in your hearts, live in the pleasant and cheerful expectation of perfect day. For we can ascend but a little way into the mysteries of the kingdom, as long as we are upon the footstool; and we shall know vastly and inconceivably more in the first moment after we come to heaven, than we are capable of attaining here throughout all our days. *Timothy Cruso.*

Verse 9. *In thy light shall we see light.* The light of nature is like a spark, the light of the gospel a lamp, the light of grace a star, but the light of glory the sun itself. The higher our ascent the greater our light; God dwelleth "in the light which no man can approach unto." 1Ti 6:16—no man, while he carries mortality and sin about him; but when those two corrupt and incapable qualities shall be put off, then shall we be brought to that light. We are now glad of the sun and stars over our heads, to give us light: what light and delight shall that be when these are under our feet! That light must needs go as far beyond their light as they now go beyond us. But alas! they are only able to discourse of that light, that do enjoy it, to whom that eternal day is risen; not we that live in the humble shade of mortality and natural dimness. I leave it therefore to your meditations: it is a glorious light which we do well often to consider, considering to admire, admiring to love, loving to desire, desiring to seek, and finding to enjoy for ever. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 9. *In thy light shall we see light.* There is a great boast of light in the world, and there is some ground for it in natural things; but, as of old the world by wisdom knew not God, so of late. If ever we know God, it must be through the medium of his word. This I take to be the meaning of the passage. The term *light* in the last clause means the true knowledge of God; and, in the first, the true medium of attaining it, namely, divine revelation. The sum seems to amount to this: the word of God is the grand medium by which we can attain a true and saving knowledge of God. What the sun and stars are to the regions of matter, that revelation is to the mental region. Ge 1:13,17. ...There are many things of which you may entertain no doubt, concerning which there may be no manner of dispute; yet, make a point of seeing them in God's light. Many content themselves with seeing them in the

light in which great and good men have placed them; but, though angels, they are not the true light: they all view things partially. If what they say be true, yet, if we receive it merely on their representation, our faith will stand in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. 1Co 2:5. That knowledge or faith which has not God's word for its ground will not stand in the day of trial. *Andrew Fuller.*

Verse 9. In this communion of God what can we want? Why, God shall be all and in all unto us; he shall be beauty for the eye, music for the ear, honey for the taste, the full content and satisfaction of our desires, and that immediately from himself. True it is God is all in all in this world, "In him we live, and move, and have our being; " but here he works by means of secondary causes; here he gives wine to make the heart glad, and oil, etc.; but there all intervening means between God and us is removed: *with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light;* not in the light of the sun, or the light of a candle; there is no need of them Re 22:5; but "in *thy light*," the light of God himself; yea, the whole life of glory, together with all the concomitants of it, flows from him as the sole and original fountain of it. Oh, how sweet must that happiness be that is so derived! *Edmund Pinchbeck, B.D., in "The Fountain of Life:" a Funeral Sermon, 1652.*

Verse 9. Whatsoever can be found in the creature, even when God blesseth the use thereof to his own children, is but a drop from the ocean, is but a little water out of the well, in comparison of what a believer will see and feel to be in God reconciled through Christ, for *with thee is the fountain of life.* *David Dickson.*

Verse 10. *Continue thy lovingkindness.* When God begins once to let out mercy to his servants, he stints not presently, but proceeds. ...When Rachel had her first son, she called his name Joseph, which signifieth adding, or increase; for she said, "The Lord shall add to me another son." Ge 30:24. Now God hath begun to show kindness, he shall not only give me this, but he shall give me another son also. When the Lord hath bestowed one mercy on you, you may name it Joseph, increase, addition, for God will bestow another upon you. Abraham had many mercies from God, one after another; and Moses, a multitude of mercies; he converses with God face to face; he hears God speak; he has God's presence to go along with him; yea, he sees all God's goodness and glory to pass before him. When mercies come forth, God will not presently shut the door of mercy again.

Continue thy lovingkindness. The Hebrew is, draw forth, or draw out thy lovingkindness: a metaphor either taken from vessels of wine, which being set abroach once, yield not only one cup, but many cups; so when God setteth abroach the wine of his mercy, he will not fill your cup once, but twice and seven times: or, taken from a mother, who hath her breasts full of milk, draws them out for her child, not once, but often; the child shall have the breast many times in the day, and many times in the night, so when God begins to show mercy to you, he will draw out his breasts of consolation, and will bestow mercy after mercy upon you; or, from a line which is extended, for so God being in a way of

mercy, will extend the line of mercy, and measure out mercy after mercy for you. *William Greenhill.*

Verse 10. The true mark of a godly man standeth in the conjunction of faith in God, with sincere study of obedience to him, for, *He is the man that knoweth God*, and is upright in heart. *David Dickson.*

Verse 11. *Foot...Hand.* Both foot and hand are named because both used in waging war. *Simeon de Muis.*

Verse 12. *There are the workers of iniquity fallen.* This is said as if the psalmist pointed, when he said it, to a particular place with his finger; and the same mode of expression occurs in Ps 14:5; or, it may be rendered, *then (i.e., when the just are satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house, being rewarded for sincerely worshipping thee in it), shall they fall, all that work wickedness; they shall be cast down, and shall not be able to rise*, as is the case with persons who have been thrown with violence upon the hard ground. *Daniel Cresswell.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. What is the fear of God? How does it operate? What is the effect of its absence? What should we learn from seeing such evil results? Or the atheism underlying transgression.

Verse 2. The arts, motives, assistances, results, and punishments of self flattery, and the discovery which concludes it.

Verse 2. Self flatteries. *Jonathan Edwards' Sermon.*

Verse 2. On the deceitfulness of the heart, with regard to the commission of sin. *Two Sermons, in Jamieson's "Sermons on the Heart."*

Verse 3. Bad words. Two out of many kinds.

Verse 3. (*second clause*). The relation between true wisdom and practical goodness.

Verse 4. Diligence in doing evil, a mark of deep depravity. *W.S. Plumer.*

Verse 4. The abuse of retirement to wicked purposes, a sure characteristic of an habitual sinner. *N. Marshall.*

Verse 4. The sinner on his bed, in his conduct, in his heart; and to this, in his death, and in his doom.

Verse 4. (*second clause*). Ways which are not good.

Verse 4. (*last clause*). Neutrality condemned.

Verses 5-6. Four glorious similes of the mercy, faithfulness, and providence of God. The preacher has here a wealth of poetic imagery never surpassed.

Verse 6. God's word and works mysterious. *C. Simeon.*

Verse 6. (*second clause*). God's judgments are—

1. Often unfathomable—we cannot discover the foundation or cause, and spring of them.
2. They are safe sailing. Ships never strike on rocks out in the great deeps.
3. They conceal great treasure.

4. They work much good—the great deep, though ignorance thinks it to be all waste, a salt and barren wilderness, is one of the greatest blessings to this round world.

5. They become a highway of communion with God. The sea is today the great highway of the world.

Verse 6. (*last clause*). Kindness of God to the lower animals, as well as man.

Verse 7. The object, reasons, nature, and experience of faith.

Verses 7-8. Admiration! Confidence! Expectation! Realisation!

Verse 8. (*first clause*). *The provisions of the Lord's house.* What they are, their excellence and abundance, and for whom provided.

Verse 8. (*second clause*). *The heavenly Hiddekel*—Its source, its flood, the happy drinkers, how they came to drink.

Verse 9. (*first clause*). LIFE, natural, mental, spiritual, proceeds from God, is sustained, restored, purified, and perfected by him. In him it dwells with permanency, from him it flows freely, with freshness, abundance, and purity; to him it should be consecrated.

Verse 9. (*second clause*). LIGHT, what it is to see it. *Divine* light, what it is; how it is the medium by which we see other light. The experience here described, and the duty here hinted at.

Verse 10.

1. *The character of the righteous*—he knows God, and is upright in heart.

2. *His privilege*—lovingkindness and righteousness.

3. *His prayer*, continue, etc.

Verse 10. The need of daily supplies of grace.

Verse 12. A view of the overthrow of evil powers, principles, and men.

Psalm 37

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

TITLE. Of David. There is but this word to denote the authorship; whether it was a song or a meditation we are not told. It was written by David in his old age Ps 37:25, and is the more valuable as the record of so varied an experience.

SUBJECT. The great riddle of the prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the righteous, which has perplexed so many, is here dealt with in the light of the future; and fretfulness and repining are most impressively forbidden. It is a Psalm in which the Lord hushes most sweetly the too common repinings of his people, and calms their minds as to his present dealings with his own chosen flock, and the wolves by whom they are surrounded. It contains eight great precepts, is twice illustrated by

autobiographical statements, and *abounds in remarkable contrasts*.

DIVISION. The Psalm can scarcely be divided into considerable sections. It resembles a chapter of the book of Proverbs, most of the verses being complete in themselves. It is an alphabetical Psalm: in somewhat broken order, the first letters of the verses follow the Hebrew alphabet. This may have been not only a poetical invention, but a help to memory. The reader is requested to read the Psalm through without comment before he turns to our exposition.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. The Psalm opens with the first precept. It is alas! too common for believers in their hours of adversity to think themselves harshly dealt with when they see persons utterly destitute of religion and honesty, rejoicing in abundant prosperity. Much needed is the command, *Fret not thyself because of evildoers*. To fret is to worry, to have the heartburn, to fume, to become vexed. Nature is very apt to kindle a fire of jealousy when it sees lawbreakers riding on horses, and obedient subjects walking in the mire: it is a lesson learned only in the school of grace, when one comes to view the most paradoxical providences with the devout complacency of one who is sure that the Lord is righteous in all his acts. It seems hard to carnal judgments that the best meat should go to the dogs, while loving children pine for want of it. *Neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity*. The same advice under another shape. When one is poor, despised, and in deep trial, our old Adam naturally becomes envious of the rich and great; and when we are conscious that we have been more righteous than they, the devil is sure to be at hand with blasphemous reasonings. Stormy weather may curdle even the cream of humanity. Evil men instead of being envied, are to be viewed with horror and aversion; yet their loaded tables, and gilded trappings, are too apt to fascinate our poor half opened eyes. Who envies the fat bullock the ribbons and garlands which decorate him as he is led to the shambles? Yet the case is a parallel one; for ungodly rich men are but as beasts fattened for the slaughter.

Verse 2. *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass*. The scythe of death is sharpening. Green grows the grass, but quick comes the scythe. The destruction of the ungodly will be speedy, sudden, sure, overwhelming, irretrievable. The grass cannot resist or escape the mower. *And wither as the green herb*. The beauty of the herb dries up at once in the heat of the sun, and so all the glory of the wicked shall disappear at the hour of death. Death kills the ungodly man like grass, and wrath withers him like hay; he dies, and his name rots. How complete an end is made of the man whose boasts had no end! Is it worth while to waste ourselves in fretting about the insect of an hour, an ephemeral which in the same day is born and dies? Within believers there is a living and incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever; why should they envy mere flesh, and the glory of it, which are but as grass, and the flower thereof?

Verse 3. *Trust in the Lord.* Here is the second precept, and one appropriate to the occasion. Faith cures fretting. Sight is cross-eyed, and views things only as they seem, hence her envy: faith has clearer optics to behold things as they really are, hence her peace. *And do good.* True faith is actively obedient. Doing good is a fine remedy for fretting. There is a joy in holy activity which drives away the rust of discontent. *So shalt thou dwell in the land.* In "the land" which floweth with milk and honey; the Canaan of the covenant. Thou shalt not wander in the wilderness of murmuring, but abide in the promised land of content and rest. "We which have believed do enter into rest." Very much of our outward depends upon the inward: where there is heaven in the heart there will be heaven in the house. *And verily thou shalt be fed, or shepherded.* To integrity and faith necessities are guaranteed. The good shepherd will exercise his pastoral care over all believers. In truth they shall be fed, and fed on truth. The promise of God shall be their perpetual banquet; they shall neither lack in spirituals nor in temporals. Some read this as an exhortation, "*Feed on truth;*" certainly this is good cheer, and banishes for ever the hungry heart burnings of envy.

Verse 4. There is an ascent in this third precept. He who was first bidden not to fret, was then commanded actively to trust, and now is told with holy desire to delight in God. *Delight thyself also in the Lord.* Make Jehovah the joy and rejoicing of thy spirit. Bad men delight in carnal objects; do not envy them if they are allowed to take their fill in such vain idols; look thou to thy better delight, and fill thyself to the full with thy more sublime portion. In a certain sense imitate the wicked; they delight in their portion—take care to delight in yours, and so far from envying you will pity them. There is no room for fretting if we remember that God is ours, but there is every incentive to sacred enjoyment of the most elevated and ecstatic kind. Every name, attribute, word, or deed of Jehovah, should be delightful to us, and in meditating thereon our soul should be as glad as is the epicure who feeds delicately with a profound relish for his dainties. *And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.* A pleasant duty is here rewarded with another pleasure. Men who delight in God desire or ask for nothing but what will please God; hence it is safe to give them *carte blanche*. Their will is subdued to God's will, and now they may have what they will. Our innermost desires are here meant, not our casual wishes; there are many things which nature might desire which grace would never permit us to ask for; these deep, prayerful, *asking* desires are those to which the promise is made.

Verse 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord.* Roll the whole burden of life upon the Lord. Leave with Jehovah not thy present fretfulness merely, but all thy cares; in fact, submit the whole tenor of thy way to him. Cast away anxiety, resign thy will, submit thy judgment, leave all with the God of all. What a medicine is this for expelling envy! What a high attainment does this fourth precept indicate! How blessed must he be who lives every day in obedience to it! *Trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.* Our destiny shall be joyfully accomplished if we confidently entrust all to our Lord. We may serenely sing—

"Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be;
O lead me by thine own right hand,
Choose out the path for me."
"Smooth let it be or rough,
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it matters not,
It leads me to thy rest."
"I dare not choose my lot,
I would not if I might;
But choose Thou for me, O my God,
So shall I walk aright."
"Take thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill;
As ever best to thee may seem,
Choose thou my good and ill."

The ploughman sows and harrows, and then leaves the harvest to God. What can he do else? He cannot cover the heavens with clouds, or command the rain, or bring forth the sun or create the dew. He does well to leave the whole matter with God; and so to all of us it is truest wisdom, having obediently trusted in God, to leave results in his hands, and expect a blessed issue.

Verse 6. *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.* In the matter of personal reputation we may especially be content to be quiet, and leave our vindication with the Judge of all the earth. The more we fret in this case the worse for us. Our strength is to sit still. The Lord will clear the slandered. If we look to his honour, he will see to ours. It is wonderful how, when faith learns to endure calumny with composure, the filth does not defile her, but falls off like snowballs from a wall of granite. Even in the worst cases, where a good name is for awhile darkened, Providence will send a clearing like the dawning light, which shall increase until the man once censured shall be universally admired. *And thy judgment as the noonday.* No shade of reproach shall remain. The man shall be in his meridian of splendour. The darkness of his sorrow and his ill repute shall both flee away.

Verse 7. *Rest in the Lord.* This fifth is a most divine precept, and requires much grace to carry it out. To hush the spirit, to be silent before the Lord, to wait in holy patience the time for clearing up the difficulties of Providence—that is what every gracious heart should aim at. "Aaron held his peace:" "I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." A silent tongue in many cases not only shows a wise head, but a holy heart. *And wait patiently for him.* Time is nothing to him; let it be nothing to thee. God is worth waiting for. "He never is before his time, he never is too late." In a story we wait for the end to

clear up the plot; we ought not to prejudge the great drama of life, but stay till the closing scene, and see to what a finish the whole arrives. *Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.* There is no good, but much evil, in worrying your heart about the present success of graceless plotters: be not enticed into premature judgments—they dishonour God, they weary yourself. Determine, let the wicked succeed as they may, that you will treat the matter with indifference, and never allow a question to be raised as to the righteousness and goodness of the Lord. What if wicked devices succeed and your own plans are defeated! there is more of the love of God in your defeats than in the successes of the wicked.

Verse 8. *Cease from anger and forsake wrath.* Especially anger against the arrangements of Providence, and jealousies of the temporary pleasures of those who are so soon to be banished from all comfort. Anger anywhere is madness, here it is aggravated insanity. Yet since anger will try to keep us company, we must resolutely forsake it. *Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.* By no reasonings and under no circumstances be led into such a course. Fretfulness lies upon the verge of great sin. Many who have indulged a murmuring disposition have at last come to sin, in order to gain their fancied rights. Beware of carping at others, study to be yourself found in the right way; and as you would dread outward sin, tremble at inward repining.

Verse 9. *For evil doers shall be cut off.* Their death shall be a penal judgment; not a gentle removal to a better state, but an execution in which the axe of justice will be used. *But those that wait upon the Lord*—those who in patient faith expect their portion in another life—*they shall inherit the earth.* Even in this life they have the most of real enjoyment, and in the ages to come theirs shall be the glory and the triumph. Passion, according to Bunyan's parable, has his good things first, and they are soon over; Patience has his good things last, and they last for ever.

Verse 10. *For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be.* When bad men reach to greatness, the judgments of God frequently sweep them away; their riches melt, their power decays, their happiness turns to wretchedness; they themselves cease any longer to be numbered with the living. The shortness of life makes us see that the glitter of the wicked great is not true gold. O wherefore, tried believer, dost thou envy one who in a little while will lie lower than the dust? *Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.* His house shall be empty, his chair of office vacant, his estate without an owner; he shall be utterly blotted out, perhaps cut off by his own debauchery, or brought to a deathbed of penury by his own extravagance. Gone like a passing cloud—forgotten as a dream—where are his boastings and hectorings, and where the pomp which made poor mortals think the sinner blest?

Verse 11. *But the meek shall inherit the earth.* Above all others they shall enjoy life. Even if they suffer, their consolations shall overtop their tribulations. By inheriting the land is meant obtaining covenant privileges and the salvation of God. Such as are truly humble shall take their lot with the

rest of the heirs of grace, to whom all good things come by a sacred birthright. *And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.* Peace they love and peace they shall have. If they find not abundance of gold, abundance of peace will serve their turn far better. Others find joy in strife, and thence arises their misery in due time, but peace leads on to peace, and the more a man loves it the more shall it come to him. In the halcyon period of the latter days, when universal peace shall make glad the earth, the full prophetic meaning of words like these will be made plain.

Verses 12-15. Here is the portrait of a proud oppressor armed to the teeth.

Verse 12. *The wicked plotteth against the just.* Why can he not let the good man alone? Because there is enmity between the serpent's seed and the seed of the woman. Why not attack him fairly? Why plot and scheme? Because it is according to the serpent's nature to be very subtle. Plain sailing does not suit those who are on board of "The Apollyon." *And gnashed upon him with his teeth.* The wicked show by their gestures what they would do if they could; if they cannot gnaw they will gnash; if they may not bite they will at least bark. This is precisely what the graceless world did with "that just One," the Prince of Peace. Yet he took no vengeance upon them, but like a silent lamb received injuries in patience.

Verse 13. *The Lord shall laugh at him.* The godly man needs not trouble himself, but leave well deserved vengeance to be dealt out by the Lord, who will utterly deride the malice of the good man's enemies. Let the proud scorner gnash his teeth and foam at the mouth; he has one to deal with who will look down upon him and his ravings with serene contempt. *For he seeth that his day is coming.* The evil man does not see how close his destruction is upon his heels; he boasts of crushing others when the foot of justice is already uplifted to trample him as the mire of the streets. Sinners, in the hand of an angry God, and yet plotting against his children! Poor souls, thus to run upon the point of Jehovah's spear.

Verse 14. *The wicked have drawn out the sword.* They hold their weapon out of its sheath, and watch for a time to use it. *And have bent their bow.* One weapon is not enough, they carry another ready for action. They carry so strong a bow that they have trodden upon it to bend it—they will lose nothing for want of force or readiness. *To cast down the poor and needy.* These are their game, the objects of their accursed malice. These cowards attack not their equals, but seek out those excellent ones who, from the gentleness of their spirits and the poverty of their estates, are not able to defend themselves. Note how our meek and lowly Lord was beset by cruel foes, armed with all manner of weapons to slay him. *And to slay such as be of upright conversation.* Nothing short of the overthrow and death of the just will content the wicked. The sincere and straightforward are hated by the crafty schemers who delight in unrighteousness. See, then, the enemies of the godly doubly armed, and learn how true were our Lord's words, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth

you."

Verse 15. *Their sword shall enter into their own heart.* Like Haman they shall be hanged upon the gallows built by themselves for Mordecai. Hundreds of times has this been the case. Saul, who sought to slay David, fell on his own sword; and the bow, his favourite weapon, the use of which he taught the children of Israel, was not able to deliver him on Gilboa. *And their bows shall be broken.* Their inventions of evil shall be rendered useless. Malice outwits itself. It drinks the poisoned cup which it mixed for another, and burns itself in the fire which it kindled for its neighbour. Why need we fret at the prosperity of the wicked when they are so industriously ruining themselves while they fancy they are injuring the saints? The next nine verses mainly describe the character and blessedness of the godly, and the light is brought out with a few black touches descriptive of the wicked and their doom.

Verse 16. *A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.* This is a fine proverb. The little of one good man is contrasted with the riches of many wicked, and so the expression is rendered the more forcible. There is more happiness in the godly dinner of herbs than in the stalled ox of profane rioters. In the original there is an allusion to the noise of a multitude, as if to hint at the turmoil and hurly burly of riotous wealth, and to contrast it with the quiet of the humbler portion of the godly. We would sooner hunger with John than feast with Herod; better feed on scant fare with the prophets in Obadiah's cave than riot with the priests of Baal. A man's happiness consists not in the heaps of gold which he has in store. Content finds *multum in parvo*, while for a wicked heart the whole world is too little.

Verse 17. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken.* Their power to do mischief shall be effectually taken away, for the arms which they lifted up against God shall be crushed even to the bone. God often makes implacable men incapable men. What is a more contemptible sight than toothless malice, armless malevolence! *But the Lord upholdeth the righteous.* Their cause and course shall be safe, for they are in good keeping. The sword of two edges smites the wicked and defends the just.

Verse 18. *The Lord knoweth the days of the upright.* His foreknowledge made him laugh at the proud, but in the case of the upright he sees a brighter future, and treats them as heirs of salvation. Ever is this our comfort, that all events are known to our God, and that nothing in our future can take him at unawares. No arrow can pierce us by accident, no danger smite us by stealth; neither in time nor eternity can any unforeseen ill occur to us. Futurity shall be but a continual development of the good things which the Lord has laid up in store for us. *And their inheritance shall be for ever.* Their inheritance fades not away. It is entailed, so that none can deprive them of it, and preserved, so that none shall destroy it. Eternity is the peculiar attribute of the believer's portion: what they have on earth is safe enough, but what they shall have in heaven is theirs without end.

Verse 19. *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time.* Calamities will come, but deliverances will

come also. As the righteous never reckoned upon immunity from trouble, they will not be disappointed when they are called to take their share of it, but the rather they will cast themselves anew upon their God, and prove again his faithfulness and love. God is not a friend in the sunshine only, he is a friend indeed and a friend in need. *And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.* Their barrel of meal and cruse of oil shall last out the day of distress, and if ravens do not bring them bread and meat, the supply of their needs shall come in some other way, for their bread shall be given them. Our Lord stayed himself upon this when he hungered in the wilderness, and by faith he repelled the tempter; we too may be enabled not to fret ourselves in any wise to do evil by the same consideration. If God's providence is our inheritance, we need not worry about the price of wheat. Mildew, and smut, and bent, are all in the Lord's hands. Unbelief cannot save a single ear from being blasted, but faith, if it do not preserve the crop, can do what is better, namely, preserve our joy in the Lord.

Verse 20. *But the wicked shall perish.* Whatever phantom light may mock their present, their future is black with dark, substantial night. Judgment has been given against them, they are but reserved for execution. Let them flaunt their scarlet and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day; the sword of Damocles is above their heads, and if their wits were a little more awake, their mirth would turn to misery. *The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs.* As the sacrificial fat was all consumed upon the altar, so shall the ungodly utterly vanish from the place of their honour and pride. How can it be otherwise? If the stubble dares to contend with the flame, to what end can it hope to come? *They shall consume.* As dry wood, as heaps of leaves, as burning coals, they shall soon be gone, and gone altogether, for *into smoke shall they consume away.* *Sic transit gloria mundi.* A puff is the end of all their puffing. Their fuming ends in smoke. They made themselves fat, and perished in their own grease. Consumers of the good they tried to be, and consumed they shall be.

Verse 21. *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.* Partly because he will not, but mainly because he cannot. Want follows upon waste, and debt remains undischarged. Often are the wicked thus impoverished in this life. Their wanton extravagance brings them down to the usurer's door and to the bankrupt's suit. *But the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth,* Mercy has given to him, and therefore he gives in mercy. He is generous and prosperous. He is not a borrower, but a giver. So far as the good man can do it, he lends an ear to the requests of need, and instead of being impoverished by what he imparts, he grows richer, and is able to do more. He does not give to encourage idleness, but in real mercy, which supposes real need. The text suggests to us how much better it generally is to give than to lend. Generally, lending comes to giving in the end, and it is as well to anticipate the fact, and by a little liberality forestall the inevitable. If these two sentences describe the wicked and the righteous, the writer of these lines has reason to know that in and about the city of London the wicked are very numerous.

Verse 22. *For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth.* God's benediction is true wealth after all. True happiness, such as the covenant secures to all the chosen of heaven, lies wrapped up in the divine favour. *And they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.* His frown is death; nay, more, It is hell.

Verse 23. *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.* All his course of life is graciously ordained, and in lovingkindness all is fixed, settled, and maintained. No reckless fate, no fickle chance rules us; our every step is the subject of divine decree. *He delighteth in his way.* As parents are pleased with the tottering footsteps of their babes. All that concerns a saint is interesting to his heavenly Father. God loves to view the holy strivings of a soul pressing forward to the skies. In the trials and the joys of the faithful, Jesus has fellowship with them, and delights to be their sympathising companion.

Verse 24. *Though he fall.* Disasters and reverses may lay him low; he may, like Job, be stripped of everything; like Joseph, be put in prison; like Jonah, be cast into the deep. *He shall not be utterly cast down.* He shall not be altogether prostrate. He shall be brought on his knees, but not on his face; or, if laid prone for a moment, he shall be up again ere long. No saint shall fall finally or fatally. Sorrow may bring us to the earth, and death may bring us to the grave, but lower we cannot sink, and out of the lowest of all we shall arise to the highest of all. *For the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* Condescendingly, with his own hand, God upholds his saints; he does not leave them to mere delegated agency, he affords personal assistance. Even in our falls the Lord gives a measure of sustaining. Where grace does not keep from going down, it shall save from keeping down. Job had double wealth at last, Joseph reigned over Egypt, Jonah was safely landed. It is not that the saints are strong, or wise, or meritorious, that therefore they rise after every fall, but because God is their helper, and therefore none can prevail against them.

Verse 25. This was David's observation, *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* It is not *my* observation just as it stands, for I have relieved the children of undoubtedly good men, who have appealed to me as common mendicants. But this does not cast a doubt upon the observation of David. He lived under a dispensation more outward, and more of this world than the present rule of personal faith. Never are the righteous forsaken; that is a rule without exception. Seldom indeed do their seed beg bread; and although it does occasionally occur, through dissipation, idleness, or some other causes on the part of their sons, yet doubtless it is so rare a thing that there are many alive who never saw it. Go into the union house and see how few are the children of godly parents; enter the gaol and see how much rarer still is the case. Poor minister's sons often become rich. I am not old, but I have seen families of the poor godly become rich, and have seen the Lord reward the faithfulness of the father in the success of the son, so that I have often thought that the best way to endow one's seed with wealth is to become poor for Christ's sake. In the Indian mission of the "Baptist Missionary Society, "this is abundantly

illustrated.

Verse 26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth.* The righteous are constantly under generous impulses; they do not prosper through parsimony, but through bounty. Like the bounteous giver of all good, of whom they are the beloved sons, they delight in doing good. How stingy covetous professors can hope for salvation is a marvel to those who read such verses as this in the Bible. *And his seed is blessed.* God pays back with interest in the next generation. Where the children of the righteous are not godly, there must be some reason for it in parental neglect, or *some* other guilty cause. The friend of the father is the friend of the family. The God of Abraham is the God of Isaac and of Jacob.

Verses 27-29. Here we have the seventh precept, which takes a negative and positive form, and is the quintessence of the entire Psalm

Verse 27. *Depart from evil, and do good.* We must not envy the doers of evil, but depart altogether from their spirit and example. As Lot left Sodom without casting a look behind, so must we leave sin. No truce or parley is to be held with sin, we must turn away from it without hesitation, and set ourselves practically to work in the opposite direction. He who neglects to do good will soon fall into evil. *And dwell for evermore.* Obtain an abiding and quiet inheritance. Short lived are the gains and pleasures of evil, but eternal are the rewards of grace.

Verse 28. *For the Lord loveth judgment.* The awarding of honour to whom honour is due is God's delight, especially when the upright man has been traduced by his fellow men. It must be a divine pleasure to right wrongs, and to defeat the machinations of the unjust. The great Arbiter of human destinies is sure to deal out righteous measure both to rich and poor, to good and evil, for such judgment is his delight. *And forsaketh not his saints.* This would not be right, and, therefore, shall never be done. God is as faithful to the objects of his love as he is just towards all mankind. *They are preserved for ever.* By covenant engagements their security is fixed, and by suretyship fulfilments that safety is accomplished; come what may, the saints are preserved in Christ Jesus, and because he lives, they shall live also. A king will not lose his jewels, nor will Jehovah lose his people. As the manna in the golden pot, which else had melted, was preserved in the ark of the covenant beneath the mercyseat, so shall the faithful be preserved in the covenant by the power of Jesus their propitiation. *But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.* Like the house of Jeroboam and Ahab, of which not a dog was left. Honour and wealth ill gotten seldom reach the third generation; the curse grows ripe before many years have passed, and falls upon the evil house. Among the legacies of wicked men the surest entail is a judgment on their family.

Verse 29. *The righteous shall inherit the land.* As heirs with Jesus Christ, the Canaan above, which is the antitype of "the land, " shall be theirs with all covenant blessing. *And dwell therein for ever.* Tenures differ, but none can match the holding which believers have of heaven. Paradise is theirs for ever by inheritance, and they shall live for ever to enjoy it. Who would not be a saint on such terms?

Who would fret concerning the fleeting treasures of the godless?

Verse 30. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom.* Where the whole Psalm is dedicated to a description of the different fates of the just and the wicked, it was meet to give a test by which they could be known. A man's tongue is no ill index of his character. The mouth betrays the heart. Good men, as a rule, speak that which is to edifying, sound speech, religious conversation, consistent with the divine illumination which they have received. Righteousness is wisdom in action, hence all good men are practically wise men, and well may the speech be wise. *His tongue talketh of judgment.* He advocates justice, gives an honest verdict on things and men, and he foretells that God's judgments will come upon the wicked, as in the former days. His talk is neither foolish nor ribald, neither vapid nor profane. Our conversation is of far more consequence than some men imagine.

Verse 31. *The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.* The best thing in the best place, producing the best results. Well might the man's talk be so admirable when his heart was so well stored. To love holiness, to have the motives and desires sanctified, to be in one's inmost nature obedient to the Lord—this is the surest method of making the whole run of our life efficient for its great ends, and even for securing the details of it, our *steps* from any serious mistake. To keep the even tenor of one's way, in such times as these, is given only to those whose hearts are sound towards God, who can, as in the text, call God their God. Policy slips and trips, it twists and tacks, and after all is worsted in the long run, but sincerity plods on its plain pathway and reaches the goal.

Verse 32. *The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.* If it were not for the laws of the land, we should soon see a massacre of the righteous. Jesus was watched by his enemies, who were thirsting for his blood: his disciples must not look for favour where their Master found hatred and death.

Verse 33. *The Lord will not leave him in his hand.* God often appears to deliver his servants, and when he does not do so in this life as to their bodies, he gives their souls such joy and peace that they triumphantly rise beyond their tormentors' power. We may be in the enemy's hand for awhile, as Job was, but we cannot be left there. *Nor condemn him when he is judged.* Time shall reverse the verdict of haste, or else eternity shall clear away the condemnation of time. In due season just men will be justified. Temporary injustices are tolerated, in the order of Providence, for purposes most wise; but the bitter shall not always be called sweet, nor light for ever be traduced as darkness; the right shall appear in due season; the fictitious and pretentious shall be unmasked, and the real and true shall be revealed. If we have done faithfully, we may appeal from the petty sessions of society to the solemn assize of the great day.

Verse 34. *Wait on the Lord.* We have here the eighth precept, and it is a lofty eminence to attain to. Tarry the Lord's leisure. Wait in obedience as a servant, in hope as an heir, in expectation as a believer. This little word "wait" is easy to say, but hard to carry out, yet faith must do it. *And keep his*

way. Continue in the narrow path; let no haste for riches or ease cause unholy action. Let your motto be, "On, on, on." Never flag, or dream of turning aside. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." *And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land.* Thou shalt have all of earthly good which is really good, and of heavenly good there shall be no stint. Exaltation shall be the lot of the excellent. *When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.* A sight how terrible and how instructive! What a rebuke for fretfulness! what an incentive to gratitude! My soul, be still, as you foresee the end, the awful end of the Lord's enemies.

Verse 35. A second time David turns to his diary, and this time in poetic imagery tells us of what he had observed. It were well if we too took notes of divine providences. *I have seen the wicked in great power.* The man was terrible to others, ruling with much authority, and carrying things with a high hand, a Caesar in might, a Croesus in wealth. *And spreading himself like a green bay tree.* Adding house to house and field to field, rising higher and higher in the state. He seemed to be ever verdant like a laurel, he grew as a tree in its own native soil, from which it had never been transplanted. No particular tree is here meant, a spreading beech or a wide expanding oak may serve us to realize the picture; it is a thing of earth, whose roots are in the clay; its honours are fading leaves; and though its shadow dwarfs the plants which are condemned to pine beneath it, yet it is itself a dying thing as the feller's axe shall prove. In the noble tree, which claims to be king of the forest, behold the grandeur of the ungodly today; wait awhile and wonder at the change, as the timber is carried away, and the very root torn from the ground.

Verse 36. *Yet he passed away.* Tree and man both gone, the son of man as surely as the child of the forest. What clean sweeps death makes! *And, lo, he was not.* To the surprise of all men the great man was gone, his estates sold, his business bankrupt, his house alienated, his name forgotten, and all in a few months. *Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.* Moved by curiosity, if we enquire for the ungodly, they have left no trace; like birds of ill omen none desire to remember them. Some of the humblest of the godly are immortalized, their names are imperishably fragrant in the church, while of the ablest of infidels and blasphemers hardly their names are remembered beyond a few years. Men who were in everybody's mouths but yesterday are forgotten tomorrow, for only virtue is immortal.

Verse 37. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.* After having watched with surprise the downfall of the wicked, give your attention to the sincerely godly man, and observe the blessed contrast. Good men are men of mark, and are worth our study. Upright men are marvels of grace, and worth beholding. *For the end of that man is peace.* The man of peace has an end of peace. Peace without end comes in the end to the man of God. His way may be rough, but it leads home. With believers it may rain in the morning, thunder at midday, and pour in torrents in the afternoon, but it must clear up ere the sun goes down. War may last till our last hour, but then we shall hear the last of it.

Verse 38. *But the transgressors shall be destroyed together.* A common ruin awaits those who are joined in common rebellion. *The end of the wicked shall be cut off.* Their time shall be shortened, their happiness shall be ended, their hopes for ever blasted, their execution hastened on. Their present is shortened by their sins; they shall not live out half their days. They have no future worth having, while the righteous count their future as their true heritage.

Verse 39. *But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.* Sound doctrine this. The very marrow of the gospel of free grace. By salvation is meant deliverance of every kind; not only *the* salvation which finally lands us in glory, but all the minor rescues of the way; these are all to be ascribed unto the Lord, and to him alone. Let him have glory from those to whom he grants salvation. *He is their strength in the time of trouble.* While trouble overthrows the wicked, it only drives the righteous to their strong Helper, who rejoices to uphold them.

Verse 40. *And the Lord shall help them.* In all future time Jehovah will stand up for his chosen. Our Great Ally will bring up his forces in the heat of the battle. *He shall deliver them from the wicked.* As he rescued Daniel from the lions, so will he preserve his beloved from their enemies; they need not therefore fret, nor be discouraged. *And save them, because they trust in him.* Faith shall ensure their safety of the elect. It is the mark of the sheep by which they shall be separated from the goats. Not their merit, but their believing, shall distinguish them. Who would not try the walk of faith? Whoever truly believes in God will be no longer fretful against the apparent irregularities of this present life, but will rest assured that what is mysterious is nevertheless just, and what seems hard, is, beyond a doubt, ordered in mercy. So the Psalm ends with a note which is the death knell of the unhallowed disquietude with which the Psalm commenced. Happy they who can thus sing themselves out of ill frames into gracious conditions.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. The righteous are preserved in Christ with a special preservation, and in a peculiar safety. In the thirty-seventh Psalm this point is excellently and largely handled, both by direct proof, and by answer to all the usual objections against their safety. That they shall be preserved is affirmed, Ps 37:3,17,23,25,32. The objections answered are many.

Objection 1. Wicked men flourish. *Solution.* A righteous man should never grieve at that, for "they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." Ps 37:2.

Objection 2. Righteous men are in distress. *Solution*—Ps 37:6. The night of their adversity will be turned into the light of prosperity; and as surely as they can believe when it is night that it shall be day, so surely may they be persuaded when crosses are upon them, that comfort and deliverance shall come.

Objection 3. But there are great plots laid against the righteous, and they are pursued with great

malice, and their intended ruin is come almost to the very issue. *Solution*—Ps 37:12-15. The Lord sees all the plots of wicked men, and laughs at their spiteful and foolish malice; while they are busy to destroy the righteous, and hope to have a day against them, "The Lord seeth that their own day is coming upon them, even a day of destruction, a day of great judgment and eternal misery; "their bow shall be broken, and the sword that they have drawn shall enter into their own heart.

Objection 4. But the just have but small means. *Solution*—Ps 37:16-17. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous."

Objection 5. Heavy times are like to befall them. *Solution*—Ps 37:19. "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall have enough."

Objection 6. But the wicked wax fatter and fatter, and they prevail in vexing the righteous. *Solution*—Ps 37:20. Indeed the wicked are fat, but it is but "the fat of lambs, "their prosperity shall soon melt; and as they be like smoke in vexing the godly, so shall they be like smoke in vanishing away.

Objection 7. But the righteous do fall. *Solution*—Ps 37:24. Though he do fall, yet he falls not finally, nor totally, for he "is not utterly cast down; "and besides, there is an upholding providence of God in all the falls of the righteous.

Objection 8. We see some wicked men that do not so fall into adversity, but rather are in prosperity to their dying days. *Solution*—Ps 37:28. Though they do, yet, "their seed shall be cut off."

Objection 9. But some wicked men are strong yet, and in their seed spread also. *Solution*—Ps 37:35-36. Note also that these "spreading bay trees" many times "soon pass away; "and they and their houses are sometimes "utterly cut off."

Objection 10. But upright men are under many and long crosses. *Solution*—Ps 37:37. Yet "his end is peace."

Objection 11. But nobody stands for the godly when they come into question. *Solution*—Ps 37:39-40. "Their salvation is of the Lord; "he is their strength, he will help them and deliver them, etc.

But if we would be thus delivered, observe: 1. That we must not unthankfully fret at God's providence Ps 37:1. 2. We must "trust in the Lord and do good" Ps 37:3. 3. We must "delight ourselves in the Lord, "and not place our contentment on earthly things Ps 37:4. 4. We must "commit our ways to God" Ps 37:5. 5. We must get patience and humble affections Ps 37:7-11. 6. We must be of upright conversation Ps 37:14. 7. We must be merciful Ps 37:25-26. 8. We must "speak righteous things, "and get "the law into our hearts" Ps 37:30-31. 9. We must "keep our way, "and "wait on God" and not use ill means. *Nicolas Byfield*.

Whole Psalm. This Psalm may well be styled, The good man's cordial in bad times; a sovereign plaister for the plague of discontent; or, a choice antidote against the poison of impatience. *Nathaniel*

Hardy, in a Funeral Sermon, 1649.

Whole Psalm. This Psalm very much reminds one in its construction of the sententious and pithy conciseness of the Book of Proverbs. It does not contain any prayer, nor any direct allusion to David's own circumstances of persecution or distress. It is rather the utterance of sound practical wisdom and godliness from the lips of experience and age, such as we might suppose an elder of the church, or a father of a family, to let fall as he sat with his household gathered around him, and listening to his earnest and affectionate admonitions. *Barton Bouchier.*

Whole Psalm. The present Psalm is one of the alphabetical Psalms, it is called "*Providentiae speculum*," by Tertullian; "*Potio contra murmur*," by Isidore; "*Vestis piorum*," by Luther. *Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1. *Fret*, or, inflame not, burn not thyself with anger or grief. *John Diodati.*

Verse 1. *Neither be thou envious*, etc. Queen Elizabeth envied the milkmaid when she was in prison; but if she had known what a glorious reign she should have had afterwards for forty-four years, she would not have envied her. And as little needeth a godly man, though in misery, to envy a wicked man in the ruff of all his prosperity and jollity, considering what he hath in hand, much more what he hath in hope. *John Trapp.*

Verse 1. Would it not be accounted folly in a man that is heir to many thousands per annum that he should envy a stage player, clothed in the habit of a king, and yet not heir to one foot of land? who, though he have the form, respect, and apparel of a king or nobleman, yet he is, at the same time, a very beggar, and worth nothing? Thus, wicked men, though they are arrayed gorgeously, and fare deliciously, wanting nothing, and having more that heart can wish, yet they are but only possessors: the godly Christian is the heir. What good doth all their prosperity do them? It does but hasten their ruin, not their reward. The ox that is the labouring ox is the longer lived than the ox that is in the pasture; the very putting of him there doth but hasten his slaughter; and when God puts the wicked men into fat pastures, into places of honour and power, it is but to hasten their ruin. Let no man, therefore, fret himself because of evil doers, nor be envious at the prosperity of the wicked; for the candle of the wicked shall be put into everlasting darkness; they shall soon be cut off, and wither as a green herb. *Ludovic de Carbone, quoted by John Spencer.*

Verse 2. *Cut down like the grass*, with a scythe, and even at one blow. *Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 2. *Wither*. O bitter word, which will make the ears of them that hear it to tingle! O sentence intolerable, which deprives sinners of all good things, and bringeth them to all woe! The Lord sometime accursed the fig tree, and immediately, not only the leaves, but also the body and root were wholly withered: even so, that fearful curse of the last day shall be no less effectual; for on whomsoever it falleth is shall so scorch them, and shall so make them destitute of God's grace, that they shall never more be able to do, to speak, think, or to hope for any good thing. *Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 2. *Green herb.* We cannot gather riper fruit of patience from any tree than is found upon the low shrubs of man's short life; for if that fretting canker of *envy at the prosperity of the wicked* have overrun thy mind, a malady from which the saints have no shelter to be freed, out of this apothecary's shop take antidote; either thy time is short to behold it, or theirs shorter to enjoy is; "they are set in slippery places, and are suddenly destroyed," Ps 73:18; "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave," Job 21:13; *They shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.* Edmund Layfield's Sermon, entitled "*The Mapped of Man's Mortality and Vanity*", 1630.

Verse 2. Sometimes the wicked, like the green herb, wither in their spring, they fall in their rise, they perish in the beginnings of their mischievous designs; but if they do come to a full growth, they grow but to harvest, the fit season of their cutting off. *Robert Mossom.*

Verse 3. Note well the double precept *trust* and *do*. This is the true order, the two must go together, the one produces, the other proves; the promise is to both. *C. H. S.*

Verse 3. *So shall thou dwell in the land,* etc. Thou shalt have a settlement, a quiet settlement, and a maintenance, a comfortable maintenance: *Verily thou shalt be fed;* some read it, Thou shalt be fed by faith, as the just are said to live by faith, and it is good living, good feeding upon the promises. *Verily thou shalt be fed,* as Elijah in the famine, with what is needful for thee. God himself is a shepherd, a feeder to all those that trust in him, Ps 23:1. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 3. *So shalt thou dwell in the land,* etc. The land of Canaan was considered as the sum of earthly, and the type of heavenly felicity: to be provided for in the Lord's land, and there to dwell under his protection, near his ordinances, and among his people, was all that the genuine Israelite could desire. *Thomas Scott (1744-1821) in loc.*

Verse 3. *Thou shalt be fed.* A manner of speech taken from cattle feeding securely, under the conduct and keeping of a good shepherd. *Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 3. *Thou shalt be fed.* Fed in plenty. *Thomas Secker (Archbishop), 1768.*

Verse 3. Fed in security. *John Parkhurst.*

Verse 4. Note thy part and God's part. Do thou *delight*, and he will *give*. *C. H. S.*

Verse 4. How much grace and love breathes in these words, *Delight thyself also in the Lord! Trust in him* was recommended before, and now, this being added also, how plain is it that your ease and rest is the thing designed! Is it fit to receive so much kindness with neglect? Again, *he delights in you;* I speak to such of whom this may be supposed. And it is indefinitely said, "His delights were with the sons of men," Pr 8:31. Think what he is, and what you are; and at once, both wonder and yield. And what else have you to delight in? what thing will you name that shall supply the place of GOD, or be to you in the stead of him? Moreover, who should delight in him but you—his friends, his sons, those of his own house? Think what life and vigour it will infuse into you, and that "the joy of the Lord will be

your strength, "Ne 8:10. How pleasantly will you hold on your course, and discharge all the other duties of this your present state? You must serve him. Dare you think of throwing off his yoke? How desirable is it then to take delight in him whom I must serve; which only makes that service acceptable to him, and easy to myself! Further, this is a pleasure none can rob you of; a joy that cannot be taken from you. Other objects of your delight are vanishing daily. Neither men nor devils can ever hinder you delighting in God, if your hearts be so inclined. And were you never brought to take pleasure in any person or thing to which you had a former aversion? One that had wronged you might yet possibly win you by after kindness. Give a reason why you should be more difficult towards the blessed God that never wronged you, and whose way towards you hath constantly imported so much good will! And consider that your condition on earth is such as exposes you to many sufferings and hardships, which, by your not delighting in him, you can never be sure to avoid (for they are things common to men), but which, by your delighting in him, you may be easily able to endure. Besides all this, seriously consider that you must die. You can make no shift to avoid that. How easily tolerable and pleasant will it be to think, then, of going to him with whom you have lived in a delightful communion before! And how dreadful to appear before him to whom your own heart shall accuse you to have been (against all his importunities and allurements) a disaffected stranger! *John Howe's "Treatise of Delight in God."*

Verse 4. We have in the former part extended the meaning of the words *Delight thyself in the Lord*, beyond what they seem at first sight literally to signify; so as not to understand them merely as requiring that very single act of *delight* to be immediately and directly terminated on God himself; but to take them as comprehending all *the sum of all holy and religious converse with God, i.e.,* as it is delightful, or as it is seasoned (intermingled, and as it were besprinkled) with delight; and upon the same account, of all out other converse, so far as it is influenced by religion. And I doubt not, to such as shall attentively have considered what hath been said, it will be thought very reasonable to take them in that latitude; whereof the very letter of the text (as may be alleged for further justification hereof) is most fitly capable. For the particle which we read *in the Lord*, hath not that signification alone, but signifies also *with, or by, or besides, or before, or in presence of,* as if it had been said, "Come and sit down with God, retire thyself to him, and solace thyself in the delights which are to be found in his presence and converse, in walking with him, and transacting thy course as before him, and in his sight." As a man may be said to delight himself with a friend that puts himself under his roof, and, besides personal converse with himself, freely enjoys the pleasure of all the entertainments, accommodations, and provisions which he is freely willing to communicate with him, and hath the satisfaction which a sober person would take in observing the rules and order of a well governed house. *John Howe.*

Verse 4. *He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.* It shall be unto thee even as thou wilt. It is said

of Luther that he could have what he would of Almighty God. What may not a favourite, who hath the royalty of his prince's care, obtain of him? *John Trapp*.

Verse 4. *The desires of thine heart.* All the desires of this spiritual seed are of the nature of this seed, namely, substantial, and shall meet with substance. All the desires of natural man, even after God, after Christ, after righteousness, shall burn and perish with him (for they are not the truth, nor do they come from the truth, nor can they reach to the truth;) but all the desires of this spirit shall live with the Spirit of God, in rest and satisfaction for ever. *John Pennington, 1656.*

Verse 4. The *desires* of God, and the *desires* of the righteous, agree in one; they are of one mind in their desires. *John Bunyan.*

Verse 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord,* etc. When we bear the burden of our own affairs ourselves, and are chastised with anxiety and want of success, and with envying the ungodly who prosper better than we do, the best remedy is first to do our duty, as we are enabled in the use of the means, then cast the care of the success over on God, as the ploughman doth when he hath harrowed his land; and let the burden of it rest on God, and let us not take it off him again, but put our mind to rest, resolved to take the harvest in good part, as he shall send it. *David Dickson.*

Verse 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord,* is rendered by the Vulgate, *Revela viam Domino,* reveal thy way; and by St. Ambrose, understood of revealing our sins to God. Indeed, since it is impossible to cover, why should we not discover our sins? Conceal not that which God knoweth already, and would have thee to make known. It is a very ill office to be the devil's secretary. Oh, break thy league with Satan by revealing his secrets, thy sins, to God. *Nathaniel Hardy.*

Verse 5. *Commit thy way unto.* Margin and Hebrew, *Roll thy way upon*—as one who lays upon the shoulder of one stronger than himself a burden which he is not able to bear. *William De Burgh, D.D., in "A Commentary on the Book of Psalms. Dublin:" 1860.*

Verse 5. Note the double again, *Commit* and *trust.* *C. H. S.*

Verse 5. *He shall bring it to pass.* When a hard piece of work is put into the hand of an apprentice for the first assay of his skill, the beholders are justly afraid of a miscarriage in his young and inexperienced hand; but when the worker is an old master of craft, none are afraid but his cunning hand can act again what so oft it hath wrought to the contentment of all the beholders. Were our God a novice in the great art of governing the world, and of the church in the bosom thereof; had he to this day never given any proof of his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, in turning about the most terrible accidents to the welfare and joy of his saints; we might indeed be amazed whenever we feel ourselves sinking in the dangers wherein the practices of our enemies oft do plunge us over head and ears; but the Lord having given in times past so many documents of his uncontroverted skill and most certain will to bring about all human affairs, as to his own glory, so to the real good of all that love him, it would be in us an impious and unexcusable uncharitableness to suspect the end of any

work which he hath begun. *Robert Baylie's Sermon before the House of Commons, 1643.*

Verses 5, 7.

To God thy way commending,
Trust him whose arm of might,
The heavenly circles bending,
Guides every star aright:
The winds, and clouds, and lightning,
By his sure hand are led;
And he will dark shades brightening.
Show thee what path to tread.
Although to make God falter,
The powers of hell combine,
One jot they cannot alter
Of his all wise design:
All projects and volition
Of his eternal mind,
Despite all opposition,
Their due fulfilment find.
No more, then, droop and languish,
Thou sorrow stricken soul;
Even from the depths of anguish,
Whose billows over thee roll,
Thy Father's hand shall draw thee:
In hope and patience stay,
And joy will soon shed over thee
An ever brightening ray.
All faithless murmurs leaving,
Bid them a last good night,
No more thy vexed soul grieving,
Because things seem not right;
Wisely his sceptre wielding,
God sits in regal state,
No power to mortals yielding,
Events to regulate.
Trust with a faith untiring

In thine Omniscient King,
And thou shalt see admiring
What he to light will bring.
Of all thy griefs, the reason
Shall at the last appear:
Why now denied a season,
Will shine in letters clear.
Then raise thine eyes to heaven,
Thou who canst trust his frown;
Thence shall thy meed be given,
The chaplet and the crown:
Thy God the palm victorious
In thy right hand shall plant,
Whilst thou, in accents glorious,
Melodious hymns shall chant.

—Paul Gerhard (1606-1676), *translated by Frances Elizabeth Cox, in "Hymns from the German,"* 1864.

Verse 6. *He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light*, etc. If thou shouldst be accused as a man of evil designs, let not that trouble thee neither: for though thy fame may be obscured for a time by calumnies and slanders, as the sun is by mists and clouds, yet as that scatters them all at last, so shall thy integrity appear, and shine as bright as the sun at noonday. *Symon Patrick.*

Verse 7. *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* There are two words in the original, which express the privilege and the duty of resting on Christ: one implies such a state of acquiescence, as silences the clamours of conscience, and composes the perturbation of the spirit; the other signifies the refreshment and repose of a weary pilgrim, when he arrives at the end of his journey, and is settled for life in a secure, commodious, plentiful habitation. *James Hervey.*

Verse 7. *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* Take the case of one who, with a load above his strength, has been toiling some steep and broken path, when suddenly he finds it lifted off and transferred to another whose strength he knows to be more than equal to the task, and in whose sympathy he can securely trust. What would his feeling be but one of perfect rest, and calm reliance, and joyous freedom, as they went on their way together? And such is the blessedness of rolling our care upon the Lord—in weakness we are resting on superior strength, in perplexity and doubt we are resting on superior wisdom, in all times of trial and hard service we can stay ourselves on the assurance of his perfect sympathy. The literal meaning of the word *rest*, is *be silent* towards the Lord. With the eye fixed on him let all unbelieving thoughts be stilled, such thoughts as rise and rankle in

the querulous spirit when it sees only its troubles, and not God in them, when the mists of earth hide from its sight the eternal stars of heaven. Then like Jacob, it may say morosely, "All these things are against me; "or, like Elijah, despondently, "It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life; "or, like Jonah, fretfully, "I do well to be angry." In regard to all such dark and unbelieving suggestions, the heart is to keep silence, to be still and know that he is God; silent as to murmuring, but not silent as to prayer, for in that holy meditative stillness the heart turns to commune with him. What is "resting in God," "but the instinctive movement and upward glance of the spirit to him; the confiding all one's griefs and fears to him, and feeling strengthened, patient, hopeful in the act of doing so! It implies a willingness that he should choose for us, a conviction that the ordering of all that concerns us is safer in his hands than in our own.

A few practical remarks: 1. Our "*resting patiently*" in the Lord applies only to the trials which he sends, not to the troubles which even Christians often make for themselves. There is a difference in the burdens that come in the way of duty, and those that come through our wandering into other ways. We can roll the one upon the Lord, but with the other our punishment may be to be left to bear them long, and to be bruised in bearing them. 2. The duty here enjoined is to be carried through all our life. We all admit that *patient* waiting is needed for the great trials of life, but may not acknowledge so readily that it is needed as much for little, daily, commonplace vexations. But these are as much a test of Christian principle as the other. 3. This resting in God is a criterion of a man's spiritual state. It needs a special faculty of discernment, a new sense to be opened in the soul, before our fallen nature can understand or desire it. *James D. Burns, M.A.*

Verse 7. (*first clause*). *Hold thee still* (so it may be translated). And this is the hardest precept that is given to man; insomuch that the most difficult precept of action sinks into nothing when compared with this command to inaction. *Jerome*.

Verse 7. (*first clause*). The Hebrew word rendered *silent* is (*owr*), *dom*, from which the English word *dumb* appears to be derived. The silence here enjoined is opposed to murmuring or complaining. *James Anderson, in Calvin's Commentary*.

Verse 7. Note again the twin duties, *rest* and *wait*.

Verse 7. *Bringeth wicked devices to pass*. Observe the opposition between this and God's bringing to pass, in verse five. The ground for grief is that the ungodly appear to achieve their end, the reason for comfort is that our end shall be achieved also, and that in the best manner by God himself. *C. H. S.*

Verse 8. *Forsake wrath*; which is anger wrought up to a greater degree; and the rather to be shunned and avoided, as being very disagreeable to the character of a good man. *Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil*; evil may be done by fretting at the prosperity of wicked men, or by imitating them, doing as they do, in hope of being prosperous as they are. *John Gill*.

Verse 9. *They shall inherit the earth*. He means that they shall live in such a manner as that the

blessing of God shall follow them, even to the grave. *John Calvin.*

Verse 10. *Thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.* To wit, because he shall be grubbed up by the roots. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 10. *His place...shall not be.* The very land he occupied as a home, and the title to which was unimpeachable, is no longer *his place*. It has passed into other hands. Nothing of all he had on earth is his. He is as poor as the most miserable object that subsisted on alms. *William S. Plumer.*

Verse 10. The peacock, a glorious fowl, when he beholds that comely fan and circle which he maketh of the beautiful feathers of his tail, he rejoiceth, he setteth, and beholdeth every part thereof: but when he looketh on his feet, which he perceiveth to be black and foul, he by and by, with great misliking, vails his top gallant, and seemeth to sorrow. In like manner, a great many know by experience, that when they see themselves to abound in riches and honours, they glory and are deeply conceited of themselves; they praise their fortune, and admire themselves; they make plots, and appoint much for themselves to perform in many years to come. This year, they say, we will bear this office, and the next year that; afterward we shall have the rule of such a province; then we will build a palace in such a city, whereunto we will adjoin such gardens of pleasure, and such vineyards: and thus they make a very large reckoning aforehand, who if they did but once behold their feet, if they did but think upon the shortness of their life, so transitory and inconstant; how soon would they let fall their proud feathers, forsake their arrogancy, and change their purpose, their minds, their lives, and their manners. *Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 11. *The meek shall inherit the earth.* In the meantime, they, and they only, possess the present earth, as they go toward the kingdom of heaven, by being humble, and cheerful, and content with what their good God has allotted them. They have no turbulent, repining, vexatious thoughts that they deserve better; nor are vexed when they see others possessed of more honour, or more riches, than their wise God has allotted for their share. But they possess what they have with a meek and contented quietness; such a quietness as makes their very dreams pleasing, both to God and themselves. *Isaak Walton (1593-1683), in "The Complete Angler."*

Verse 11. *The meek.* What is thy Beloved more than any other beloved? It is spoken to the spouse. So what is meekness more than any other virtues? We may say, here is *synecdoche speciei*, one particular taken for the general, one virtue for all the rest. Or the effect is put for the cause; because meekness is one of the principal and chiefest parts of holiness. But if you will give me leave to conjecture, the Holy Ghost may seem in this promise at once to show the condition of the church, and to comfort her; and because being laid hard at on every side, she stands in need of this virtue more than any other, to fit and fashion the reward to the virtue, to cherish and exalt it in us with the promise of something beyond our expectation, even the *inheritance of the earth*. And indeed what fitter reward can there be of meekness? What more fit and just than that they who have been made the

anvil for injuries to beat on, who have been *virī perpressitī*, as Seneca speaks of Socrates, men of great sufferance, who have suffered not only their goods to be torn from them by oppression and wrong, but their reputations to be wounded with the sharp razor of detraction, and have withstood the shock of all *spectantibus similes*, with the patience of a looker on, should be raised and comforted with a promise of that which their meekness gave up to the spoil; and that by the providence of God which loves to thwart the practice of the world, they should be made heirs even of those possessions which the hand of violence hath snatched from them. *Anthony Farindon, B.D., 1596-1658.*

Verse 11. Not the hot stirring spirits who bustle for the world shall have it, but the meek, who are thrust up and down from corner to corner, and hardly suffered to remain anywhere quietly in it. This earth, which they seem most deprived of, they only shall have and enjoy. When the Lord hath made it worth the having, then none shall have it but they. *They shall inherit the earth.* The earth is the Lord's; these are the children of the Lord, and they shall inherit this earth. When the Lord taketh it into his own possession and enjoyment, they shall succeed him in the possession and enjoyment of it. It is their right, and shall descend unto them by right, by inheritance. It is the Lord's right, and by the Lord shall descend to them as their right. They cannot yet have it, for the Lord hath it not yet; but when the Lord hath it, it shall fairly descend to them. This accursed earth they shall never have, but when it is taken into the hands of the Lord, and blessed by the Lord, then it shall be theirs, then it shall be inherited by the children of blessing. *John Pennington.*

Verse 11. *And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.* Surely when the glory of the Lord covers the earth, and all the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Prince of Peace, and the wicked one is rooted out, we may well expect peace in rich abundance. *W. Wilson.*

Verses 12-13. Note how the gesture of the wicked in *gnashing their teeth* is returned to them in the Lord's scornful *laughter* at their devices. Their plotting, too, is countermined by that winding up of all plots, which the Lord knoweth, though they are wilfully ignorant of it. *C. H. S.*

Verse 13. *The Lord shall laugh at him,* etc. He seems to provide very coldly for our consolation under sorrow, for he represents God as merely *laughing*. But if God values highly our salvation, why does he not set himself to resist the fury of our enemies, and vigorously oppose them? We know that this, as has been said in Ps 2:4, is a proper trial of our patience when God does not come forth at once, armed for the discomfiture of the ungodly, but connives for a time, and withholds his hand. Lest the flesh should still murmur and complain, demanding why God should only laugh at the wicked, and not rather take vengeance upon them, the reason is added, that he sees the day of their destruction at hand. *For he seeth that his day is coming.* *John Calvin.*

Verse 13. *For he seeth that his day is coming.* He laughs at such poor worms, who make themselves so great upon the earth, and act so loftily in their impotence, seeing it must so soon be over with them. *Berleb. Bible, quoted by E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 13. *For he seeth that his day is coming.* His dismal day, his death's day, which will also be his doom's day. *John Trapp.*

Verses 14-15. The tongue is a *sword* and a *bow*, which shooteth its arrows, even bitter words, against the humble and upright, Jesus and his disciples. But these are not the only weapons that have been drawn against them. How the malice of the Jews returned upon their own heads no one is ignorant, though few lay it to heart, and consider them as set forth for an example. *George Horne.*

Verses 14-15. When the wicked are most near to do a mischief to the Lord's people, then is a mischief most near unto them. *David Dickson.*

Verse 16. *A little that a righteous man hath*, etc. To wit, 1. Because the wicked do often enrich themselves by unjust means, and so have much vexation and trouble with them, and likewise thereby do treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; whereas the righteous with a little, well gotten, have much peace of conscience, with hope of heaven hereafter. 2. Because the righteous use theirs well, and are the better for them; whereas the wicked abuse theirs many ways, and are in many respects the worse for them. 3. Because the righteous enjoy what they have from hand to mouth as the gifts of God, and the pledges of his fatherly love and care over them, and so it is to them as manna from heaven, and hereby they enjoy much sweet comfort, and are fully satisfied with what they have; whereas the wicked have none of this joy nor satisfaction by their wealth. 4. Because God by his blessing doth usually make that the righteous enjoy to be more effectual for their good than is the abundance of the wicked. A little coarse fare makes them more healthful and strong than the wicked are with all their plenty. And, 5. Because the wicked enjoys not his wealth long, as the righteous man doth; and this indeed agrees best with the following words. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 16. Strangers to Christ have the use of outward mercies, but cannot be properly said to have the enjoyment; they seem to be masters of them, but indeed they are servants to them; possessors as to outward use, but slaves as to their inward affections; they serve them while they seem to dispose of them; they do not *dominari*, but *servire*—have not the command of, but are enslaved. Nor is their use truly comfortable; they may fancy comfort, but their comfort is but a fancy; it flows from another fountain than can be digged in earth; true, solid comfort is the portion of those only who have the righteousness of Christ for their portion. These may look upon every temporal enjoyment as a token of everlasting love, as a pledge and earnest of eternal glory; and both these, because they may receive them as the purchase of the blood and righteousness of Christ; aye, here is the well spring of comfort, the fountain of that comfort which is better than life. Oh, what comfort is it to taste the sweetness of Christ's love in every enjoyment! When we can say, "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me, that I might enjoy these blessings, "oh, how will this raise the value of every common mercy! Christ's righteousness which was performed, the highest expression of his love, purchased this for me! Upon this account is that of the psalmist true, *A little that a righteous man hath is better than the*

riches of many wicked. He that hath but food and raiment hath in this respect more than he that hath the Turkish empire, or the gold of the Indies. He hath more ground of comfort in his little than they in all. *David Clarkson.*

Verse 16. If thine estate were but little, yet it would be perfumed with love, and that lump of sugar in thy cup would make the liquor sweet, be it never so small. As the waters which flow from the hills of some of the islands of Molucca taste of the cinnamon and cloves which grow there, so should thy gift, though it were but water, taste of the goodwill and special grace of the Giver. Thy *little*, with the fear of the Lord, would be *better than the riches of many wicked men.* As a little ring with a very costly diamond in it is far more worth than many great ones without it, so thy estate, though it were but a penny, should be joined with the precious jewel of that love which is better than life, and enjoyed by special promise, and thereby be infinitely more worth than the thousands and millions of others bestowed merely from common bounty, and enjoyed only by a general providence. *George Swinnock.*

Verse 16. It is as possible for a wicked man to fill his body with air and his chest with grace, as his mind with wealth. It is with them as with a ship; it may be overladen with silver and gold, even unto sinking, and yet have compass and sides to hold ten times more. So here, a covetous wretch, though he have enough to sink him, yet he shall never have enough to satisfy him. So that the conclusion which the psalmist delivers is most worthy to be observed: *A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked;* he doth not say of how many, because let us think of never so many, yea, all of them, the righteous man's little is better in very many respects than all their greatest treasures heaped together. The King of Spain although the greatest prince in Christendom by far, having his empire so far extended, that he may truly say, that the sun ever shines upon his dominions, yet gives this for his motto, *Totus non sufficit orbis*, The whole world is not sufficient. God by Solomon tells us that "In the house of the righteous is much treasure" Pr 15:6, although many times there is scarce a good bed to lie, or a seat to sit on. The time will certainly come, when the richest wicked men that ever lived will see clearly that their account would have been much narrower, and consequently their condition to all eternity less miserable, if they had been so poor as to have begged their bread from door to door all their lives long. It is with the blessings of this life as it is with perfumed gloves; when they are richly perfumed their perfume is much more valuable than the leather of which they are made: so, not so much earthly blessings considered in themselves, as their being perfumed with the sweet love of God in Christ, is that which maketh them blessings indeed, truly deserving the name they bear. Now all the blessings of those who have made Mary's choice are all thus perfumed; all the barley bread they eat, be it never so coarse; all the clothes they wear, be they never so mean; with all their other temporal blessings, they proceed from the same sweet love of God, wherewith he was moved to bestow Jesus Christ upon them for salvation. Ro 8:32. *John*

Glascoock's Sermon, entitled "Mary's Choice," 1659.

Verses 16-17. A little blest is better than a great deal curst; a little blest is better than a world enjoyed; a pound blest is better than a thousand curst; a black crust blest is better than a feast curst; the gleanings blest are better than the whole harvest curst; a drop of mercy blest is better than a sea of mercy curst; Lazarus crumbs blest was better than Dives' delicates curst; Jacob's little blest unto him was better than Esau's great estate that was curst unto him. It is always better to have scraps with a blessing, than to have manna and quails with a curse; a thin table with a blessing is better than a full table with a snare; a threadbare coat with a blessing is better than a purple robe curst; a hole, a cave, a den, a barn, a chimney corner with a blessing, is better than stately palaces with a curse; a woollen cap blest is better than a golden crown curst; and it may be that emperor understood as much, that said of his crown, when he looked on it with tears: "If you knew the cares that are under this crown you would never stoop to take it up." And therefore, why should not a Christian be contented with a little, seeing his little shall be blest unto him? Isaac tills the ground and sows his seed, and God blesses him with an hundredfold; and Cain tills the ground and sows his seed, but the earth is cursed to him and commanded not to yield to him his strength. Oh, therefore never let a Christian murmur because he hath but little, but rather let him be still blessing of that God that hath blest his little, and doth bless his little, and that will bless his little to him. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 17. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but he upholdeth (or underprops) the righteous.* By the arms of the wicked, you are to understand their strength, their valour, their power, their wit, their wealth, their abundance, which is all the arms they have to support and bear up themselves in the world with. Now, these arms shall be broken, and when they are broken, then, even then, will God uphold the righteous, that is, God will be a continual overflowing fountain of good to his righteous ones; so that they shall never want, though all the springs of the wicked are dried up round about them. *Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 18. *The Lord knoweth the days of the upright.* Deposits their days, lays them up in safety for them: for such is the original idea of (edy). *John Fry.*

Verse 18. *The Lord knoweth the days of the upright,* and they cannot be cut short by the malice of man. *W. Wilson.*

Verse 20. *As the fat of lambs.* As the glory of fat sheep, which are at length slain. *Targum.*

Verse 20. *Fat of lambs.* As the fat of the sacrifices was consumed on the altar by the fire (which was a type of God's righteous vengeance upon sinners), till it vanished into smoke; so the wicked will be the sacrifices to God's justice, and be destroyed by the fire of his indignation. *Thomas Scott.*

Verse 20. *Into smoke shall they consume.* "What hath pride profited us? or what hath our boasting of riches given us?" Such are the things, they shall speak who are in hell and who have sinned. For, the hope of the ungodly is like a dry thistle down, by the wind carried away, or the thin foam spread upon

the billows, or as a smoke floated hither and thither by the wind, or as the remembrance of a wayfaring man for a day. *Wouter of Stoelwyk*, 1541.

Verse 21. *Payeth not again*; i.e., has it not in his power, from his straitened circumstances, to repay what he has borrowed: compare De 28:12. A Jew thus circumstanced became the bond slave of his creditors: compare 2Ki 4:1. *Daniel Cresswell*.

Verse 22. God promises that the seed of his people shall inherit the earth. The child of such a tenant as paid his rent well, shall not be put out of his farm. *John Glascock*.

Verse 23. *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*. When this Pilot undertakes to steer their course, their vessel shall never split upon the rock, run upon the sands, or spring a leak, so as to sink in the seas. To be sure he will see them safe in their harbour. He was no Christian, yet I suppose none will deny but he spake good divinity, who said, "If a man will choose God for his Friend, he shall travel securely through a wilderness that hath many beasts of prey in it; he shall pass safely through this world; for he only is safe that hath God for his guide." (Ar. Epist. 27) Doth he not speak a little like David himself Ps 37:23, who never expected to come to glory except he were guided by his counsel? Now, if a poor heathen could say thus, and see good reason to trust God, and admire his faithfulness as he doth frequently (and so doth Seneca, justifying God's faithfulness in all his dealings with the best men in all their sufferings, and the prosperity of the wicked); what then shall the heavenly Christian say, who hath experienced so much of God's faithfulness in answering his prayers, in fulfilling his promises, and supplying all his exigencies? *James Janeway*.

Verse 23. *He delighteth in his way*. Note that in verse four, we are bidden to delight in the Lord, and here he delights in us, and as here our way is his delight, so in verse thirty-four we are to "keep *his* way." These antitheses are instructive. *C. H. S.*

Verses 23-24. Strange words to us! the very *steps* all *ordered*, and that by an Almighty One, who "delights" in the goodness of the good man's way. And yet the inference so distinctly to be drawn is that the good man *may* fall, and that his God and Guide may stand by and behold and permit! Let us add to the suggestion of these verses, one or two references which may help us to establish the principle in our hearts, that the child of God may fall and still remain the child of God; and also to explain somewhat of the reason why this is part of their lot, whether ordered, or only permitted, at all events, a step of the "right way, "by which God leads them to a "city of habitation." Ps 107:7. It is observed near the close of Hezekiah's good and prosperous life that, "in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon...God left him *to try him*, that he might know all that was in his heart, " 2Ch 32:31. And again, in Daniel's prophecy regarding the latter days, we find Da 11:35, "And some of them of understanding shall fall, *to try them*, and *to purge*, and *make them white*." In the two preceding verses, we have also some valuable details regarding such falls, such as the help with which God will uphold them, the flatteries with which the world will still beset, and hinder them from

rising again; the outward troubles into which their fall shall lead them, as through a furnace; the high position (instructors of many) which yet shall not save them from their needed ordeal—the time appointed—and the end in view. So here. The acknowledgment of the possibility of the good man's fall is accompanied with the precious assurance that *he shall not be utterly cast down*. *Mary B. M. Duncan, in "Under the Shadow, 1867."*

Verse 24. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down*, etc. Thus the Spirit comforts and answers the secret thoughts which everyone might have, saying with himself, I have, however, seen it happen, that the righteous is oppressed, and his cause is trodden in the dust by the wicked. Nay, he replies, dear child, let it be so, that he falls; he still cannot remain lying thus and be cast away; he must be up again, although all the world doubts of it. For God catches him by the hand, and raises him again. *Martin Luther.*

Verse 24. *Though he fall*, namely, as one that were faint hearted, *he shall not be cast off*, namely, utterly, or for ever from God 2Co 4:9; *"for the Lord putteth under his hand, "i.e., his power and might, namely, to uphold him from utter falling away, which we should quickly do if God were not with us.* *Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 24. A man pardoned, and justified by faith in Christ, though he may, and sometimes doth, fall into foul sins, yet they never prevail so far as to reverse pardon, and reduce to a state of non-justification. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand!* He speaks of a good man pardoned, justified; he may fall; but how far? from pardon, from justification? No, then he should utterly fall, be cast down beneath God's hand; but the text saith, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand; or, as Montanus renders the words, the Lord upholdeth his hands, and he will not let him sink into such a condition. If it were so, then sin should have dominion over him, but, Ro 6:14. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; "and Ro 8:2, justified ones are freed from the law of sin and death; and Ro 8:30, the predestinated, called, justified, and glorified ones, are so linked together, that there is no breaking their chain; if they do sin, they have an "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1Jo 2:1-2. *William Greenhill.*

Verse 25. *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken* (he doth not say, In my experience I never saw the righteous afflicted, but, I never saw him left or forsaken in his affliction), *and I never saw his seed begging their bread:* he puts in that, because begging of bread, especially in the commonwealth of Israel, and in the state of the Jews, was a note of utter dereliction! for though God had told them that they should have the poor always with them, yet he had given an express law that there should be no beggar among them; therefore, saith he, I have not seen the righteous so forsaken, that they should be forced to live by begging. If any say, that David himself begged, he asked bread of Abimelech and of Nabal; I answer, it is a good rule, and it resolves

the case; transitory cases, and sudden accidents, make no beggars: we must not say, David was a beggar, or begged his bread, because once he was in a strait and asked bread of Abimelech; and in a second strait sent to Nabal: in such sudden cases, the richest man in the world may be put to ask a piece of bread. A good man may fall into such wants, but good men are rarely, if ever or at all, left in them. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 25. *Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* Perhaps it will be objected that there have been many righteous men poor: but the place speaketh of a righteous charitable man, for so the following verse showeth, which saith, "He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed." And who hath seen such a one or his seed to be brought to such poverty as to beg his bread? When our Saviour Christ had fed four thousand with seven loaves and a few fishes, all being filled, seven baskets full of fragments were gathered up: and it is Saint Austin's note upon it, *crescit dum impenditur victus, sic eleemosyna si indigentibus erogetur*, the victuals in expending were augmented, and so is the alms which is given to the poor. *Michael Jermin.*

Verse 25. *Yet have I not seen, etc.* I believe this to be literally true in all cases. I am now grey headed myself; I have travelled in different countries, and have had many opportunities of seeing and conversing with religious people in all situations in life; and I have not, to my knowledge, seen one instance to the contrary. I have seen no *righteous man forsaken*, nor any *children* of the righteous *begging their bread*. God puts honour upon all that fear him; and thus careful is he of *them*, and of their *posterity*. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 25. *Begging bread.* This is not meant of an occasional seeking relief in want (for so David himself desired bread of Abimelech, 1Sa 21:3, and he and his soldiers desired some supply of victuals from Nabal, 1Sa 25:8); but of living in a continual way of begging from door to door, which is denounced as a curse against the wicked Ps 109:10, "Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg." Nor doth it hence follow, that neither the righteous man, nor his seed, are ever brought to this sad degree of misery; but only that it doth so rarely happen, that David in all his time had never seen it. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 25. This observation of the psalmist will be found generally verified. We find indeed exceptions, as in the case of Eli's family. But this was the result of his defect of character as a righteous man. And we know that the promises must fail, if they neglect the means necessary to their accomplishment (see Ge 18:19). But some think that this verse admits of an explanatory supplement; and render the last clause thus, "Nor his seed (forsaken, though) begging bread." *David Davidson, in "The Pocket Commentary, 1836."*

Verse 25. These words must be taken as a general observation, not absolutely verified in every case; yet the strict fact is, I apprehend, that the immediate descendants of truly pious persons are very seldom, if ever, reduced to such extremities, unless by their own great imprudence, or their

abandoned practices. *William Walford.*

Verse 25. Here he records an experiment of his (such as whereof Psalm 119 is mostly made up), and if other men's experiences agree not altogether with his, it is no wonder: kings use not to mind beggars. *John Trapp.*

Verses 25-26. Many persons are solicitously perplexed how their children shall do when they are dead; yet they consider not, how God provided for them when they were children. Is the Lord's arm shortened? Did he take thee from thy mothers breasts; and when thy parents forsook thee (as the psalmist saith), became thy Father? And cannot this experienced mercy to thee, persuade thee that he will not forsake thine? Is not "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever?" "I have been young, "saith David, "and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, "that is granted, nay, "not his seed begging bread."

Many distrustful fathers are so carking for their posterity, that while they live they starve their bodies, and hazard their souls, to leave them rich. To such a father it is said justly, *Dives es haeredi, pauper inopsque tibi.* Like an over kind hen, he feeds his chickens, and famishes himself. If usury, circumvention, oppression, extortion, can make them rich, they shall not be poor. Their folly is ridiculous; they fear lest their children should be miserable, yet take the only course to make them miserable; for they leave them not so much heirs to their goods as to their evils. They do as certainly inherit their fathers' sins as their lands: "God layeth his iniquity for his children: and his offspring shall want a morsel of bread." Job 21:19.

On the contrary, the good man *is merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.* What the worldling thinks shall make his posterity poor, God saith shall make the good man's rich. The precept gives a promise of mercy to obedience, not confined to the obedient man's self, but extended to his seed, and that even to a thousand generations, Ex 20:6. Trust, then, Christ with thy children; when thy friends shall fail, usury bear no date, oppression be condemned to hell, thyself rotten to the dust, the world itself turned and burned into cinders, still "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever." *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.* He, the good man, is *merciful to himself*, for mercy, like charity, begins at home; he is not afraid to eat a good meal because he hath children. And he is merciful to *others* too; for he will lend and do good to whom he can, and then his seed fares the better for it. Mark, that the more he gives and lends in doing works of mercy, the better it is for his children; for those children are ever best provided for whose parents bear this mind—they had rather trust God with their children, than their children with riches; and have made this their hope, that though they die, yet God lives. Did but one of those rich and wretched parents (who pinched and pined himself to make his son a gentleman, forsooth), rise from the dead, and see that proverb of Solomon fulfilled in himself, "He begetteth a son, and in his hand is nothing; "I persuade myself, the

rumination of this would afflict him in his soul as much as any one pain of sense, even in hell itself. O consider this, you that now live and see it in others; and remember withal, that if your goods be either ill gotten, or worse kept, it may be your children's case when you are departed, and feel it, though you see it not. *Matthew Griffith.*

Verse 28. *For the Lord...forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever.* How? since they die as others do. Mark the *antithesis*, and that will explain it. *They are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.* They are preserved in their posterity: children are but the parents multiplied, and the parents continued; it is *nodosa aeternitas*; when the father's life is run out to the last, there is a knot tied, and the line is still continued by the child. I confess temporal blessings, such as long life, and the promise of an happy posterity, are more visible in the eye of that dispensation of the covenant; but yet God still taketh care for the children of his people, and many promises run that way that belong to the gospel administration, and still God's service is the surest way to establish a family, as sin is the ready way to root it out. And if it doth not always fall out accordingly, yet for the most part it doth; and we are no competent judges of God's dispensations in this kind, because we see providence by pieces, and have not the skill to set them together; but at the day of judgment, when the whole contexture of God's dealings is laid before us, we shall clearly understand how *the children of his servants continue, and their seed is established.* Ps 102:28. *Thomas Manton.*

Verse 29. *The righteous shall inherit the land, or the earth.* There is clearly an emphasis in the repetition of the same promise in the same terms which ought to have been uniformly rendered throughout Ps 37:9,11,22,29,34. And it cannot be doubted, that there is a reference to the new heavens and the new earth of Isa 56:17 2Pe 3:13. *W. Wilson.*

Verse 29. *The righteous shall inherit the land, etc.* Compare Mt 5:5. Consider well this Bible truth, of the future exclusive possession of the earth by the righteous. The millennial kingdom furnishes a fuller explanation. *T. C. Barth.*

Verse 31. *The law of his God is in his heart, etc.* The flock of sheep that's indisposed and unwilling to drive, start out of the way into every lane's end, one this way and another that; and just so is it with an unwilling heart; one thought starts this way, and another that, and it's a piece of skill to drive them through. But a willing heart, a heart prepared and ready to every good work, it flies quite up an end, and delights itself in the Lord. *Richard Steele.*

Verse 31. (*first clause*). He hath a Bible in his head, and another in his heart; he hath a good treasure within, and there hence bringeth good things. *John Trapp.*

Verses 32-33. The Jews *watched* that Just One daily and hourly; they *sought to slay him*, and did so; but *Jehovah left him not in their hands*, but vindicated his innocence by raising him from the dead. *George Horne.*

Verse 34. *Wait on the Lord, etc.* He that truly trusts in God will stay God's time, and use God's

means, and walk in God's way, though it seem round about; they will not neglect their souls for haste; they know this would be to make more haste than good speed. Nor would they step out of the way, the way that is holy and righteous, though they may escape a loss, an affliction by it, though they might gain some desirable advantage by it. True faith goes leaning upon God, and therefore will *keep his way*. He that will not be liberal for the promoting and honouring of the gospel; he that fears poverty or affliction more than he fears sin; he that is more careful for the things of the world than for his soul; he that takes indirect or suspected courses, to get, or increase, or secure his estate; he that is not jealous or watchful, lest his cares for the world (when he is much engaged therein) should be immoderate—it is plain he doth not trust God with his estate; and that he does not trust God for his estate, whatever he thinks or pretend, he does not trust God for his soul, for his salvation; his hopes of heaven and salvation are but presumption. *David Clarkson.*

Verse 34. *Wait on the Lord.* Bind him not to a day, wake not the Beloved till he please. *John Trapp.*

Verse 34. *Wait...keep.* While we are waiting let us take heed of wavering. Go not a step out of God's way, though a lion be in the way; avoid not duty to meet with safety; keep God's highway, the good old way Jer 6:16, the way which is paved with holiness. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness." Isa 35:8. Avoid crooked paths, take heed of turning to the left hand, lest you be set on the left hand. Sin doth cross our hopes, it barricades up our way; a man may as well expect to find heaven in hell, as in a sinful way. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 35. *Green bay tree.* The LXX translate (Nner xrzak) as if it were (Nnbl xrzak), "Like the cedar of Lebanon; "but (Nner xrza) according to Delitzsch, means a noble timber tree, one that in the course of centuries of growth has acquired a gigantic trunk, and an umbrageous, dome like crown.

Verse 35. *Green bay tree.* The marginal rendering—"a tree that groweth in his own soil"—is, no doubt, the true one. The idea generally formed of this passage by the reader of the English Bible is that the tree referred to was the bay laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), or cherry laurel of our gardens. But this plant belongs to an entirely different family. The bay and the Portugal laurels, whose forms of growth and evergreen leaves make them highly ornamental in shrubberies, belong to a subfamily (*Drupaceae*, Lind.) of the rose tribe (*Rosaceae*), but the bay tree proper, which flourisheth luxuriantly in Southern Europe, is the type of the laurel family (*Lauraceae*). Several circumstances make it unlikely that the true bay tree represents the Hebrew *esrach*. There is no evidence that it was ever so plentiful in Palestine as to be chosen by the psalmist in an illustration in a poem for popular use. It is indeed to be met with, but that chiefly in localities on the borders of the eastern shore of the Great Sea. The chief objection to the supposition that the bay tree was referred to by the royal poet is to be found in the Psalm itself. Having mentioned it in the lines quoted above, he adds, "Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." The idea here is not one which could be represented and illustrated by an evergreen plant, slow of growth, and yet reaching in

maturity a height of above thirty feet. The words demand a quick growing tree, in a soil more than usually favourable to its growth. Thus planted, and shooting up in calm and sunshine, it would attract every eye; but when the storm broke over it, when the strong wind swept imperiously through its branches, it would not stand. Torn up by the root, and its timber comparatively useless, like Abraham's dead, it would be buried out of sight. And thus with the wicked. He was sought and could not be found. *John Duns, D.D., F.R.S.E., in "Biblical Natural Science."*

Verse 35. We see no force in the observation of Dr. Duns; in fact, if there were not other reasons for preferring the translation given in the following note by Wilson, we should see all the more reason to keep to the bay tree. It was a tree of permanence and of long continued verdure, and so the prosperous wicked seem to be. They look as if their happiness would be eternal; yet, for all that, those who carefully note the dealings of providence, observe with holy wonder that divine justice cuts short their glory, and they perish utterly. *C. H. S.*

Verse 35. I have seen the wicked in great power (terrible, fierce, violent), *and spreading himself like a green bay tree* (a tree in its native soil, vigorous, and luxuriant, that had never been transplanted). A striking figure of the ungodly man of the world, firmly rooted in earthly things—his native soil, grown proud and wanton in his prosperity, without fear or apprehension of any reverse. *William Wilson.*

Verse 35. *Like a green bay tree*, which produces all leaves and no fruit. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 35. *I have seen the wicked*, saith David, *in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree*. And why like a green bay tree? Because in the winter, when all other trees—as the vine tree, fig tree, apple tree, etc., which are more profitable trees—are withered and naked, yet the bay tree continueth as green in the winter as the summer. So fares it with wicked men when the children of God, in the storms of persecutions, and afflictions, and miseries, seem withered, and, as it were, dead, yet the wicked all that time flourish, and do appear green in the eyes of the world: they wallow in worldly wealth, but it is for their destruction; they wax fat, but it is for the day of slaughter. It was the case of Hophni and Phinehas: the Lord gave them enough and suffered them to go on and prosper in their wickedness; but what was the reason? Because he would destroy them. *J. Gore's Sermon at St. Paul's, 1633.*

Verses 35-36.

—Today he puts forth

The tender leaves of hopes, tomorrow blossoms,

And bears his blushing honours upon him:

Third day comes a frost, a killing frost;

And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely

His greatness is a ripening—nips his root,

And then he falls, as I do.

—*William Shakespeare, in Henry VIII.*

Verses 36-37. The hawk flies high, and is as highly prized, being set upon a perch, vervelled with the jingling bells of encouragement, and carried on his master's fist; but being once dead and picked over the perch, is cast upon the dunghill as good for nothing. The hen scrapes in the dust, not anything rewarded when she is alive, but being dead, is brought as a choice dish to her master's table. Thus wicked men are commonly set in high places, and prosper in this life; and good men lie grovelling with their mouths in the dust, as the very underlings of the world; but being once dead, the one is cast into the dungeon of hell, the other advanced to the kingdom of heaven: the one is into Abraham's bosom, whilst the other is tormented with the devil and his angels. *Thomas Westfield, D.D., 1644.*

Verse 37. *Mark...and behold.* Herodotus maketh mention of a custom among the Ethiopians to set the dead bodies of their friends in glazed sepulchres, that their proportions might be obvious to the passengers. How needless soever that custom was, it is doubtless no more than just that the pious lineaments of their minds who die in the Lord should be presented to the living in the mirror of art. Indeed, commendation after death is the tribute of a religious life. Good works are jewels not to be locked up in a cabinet, but to be set forth to public view. If Christ would have Mary's name remembered in the gospel until the world's end for one box of ointment poured on his head, we cannot imagine that he would have the many pious and charitable deeds of his servants to be buried in oblivion. Consult the Scriptures and you shall scarce find any godly man laid in his grave without an epitaph of honour. View the fathers, and you shall observe it their practice to honour the death of the good by giving them their deserved praises. *Nathaniel Hardy.*

Verse 37. *The perfect man, etc.*—Divines well distinguish of a double perfection, it is *absoluta* or *comparata*. That is absolutely *perfect*, to which nothing (that it may be accounted truly good) is wanting; and thus He only is *perfectus* who is *in factus*; God, who made all things, and himself is not made, only enjoying an all sufficient perfection, in and of himself. That is comparatively *perfect*, in which, notwithstanding some wants there is a fulness compared with others. Thus every saint is *perfect* in comparison of the wicked among whom he liveth. In this respect it is said of Noah, *That he was a perfect man in his generations*; his grace compared with the wickedness of the old world well deserving the name of perfection; indeed every upright man is *perfect* in comparison of them who are openly bad, or but openly good; stained with wickedness, or but painted with holiness. Thus one saint may be *perfect* if compared with another, the strong Christian in respect of the weak, whom he outstrips in grace and piety: such saints Paul means when he saith, "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect;" that is, such as have attained to greater measures of grace than others. It was said of Benaiah, "He was more honourable than thirty, but he attained not to the first three;" and though no saint can ever attain to the perfections of the *first three*, the blessed Trinity, yet many saints may be honourable amongst *thirty perfect* in comparison of those among whom they live.

We must further distinguish of a double perfection, it is *extrinseca* and *intrinseca*. Extrinsic perfection so called, because by imputation, is that which every believer is partaker of through the perfect righteousness of Christ, whereby all his imperfections are covered; in this respect the author to the Hebrews tells us, "That by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" and S. Paul tells the Colossians that they were "complete in him," meaning Christ. Indeed *omnia Dei mandata tunc facta deputantur, quando id quod non fit ignoscitur*: divine commands are then in God's account fulfilled when our defects for Christ's sake are pardoned; and the evangelical perfection of a Christian consists not *in perfectione virtutum, sed remissionis vitiorum*, in the completion of our graces, but remission of our sins.

Intrinsic perfection, so called because by inhesion, is no less rationally than usually thus distinguished, there is *perfectio partium et graduum*. He is said to be *perfect, cui nihil deest eorum quae ad statum salutis necessaria*, who wants no graces that accompany salvation; or he is perfect, *cui nihil deest in gradibus gratiarum et virtutum*; who is not defective in the measures of those graces; both these are frequently and fitly illustrated by the resemblance of a child, and a grown man; the one whereof hath all the essential and integral parts of a man, the other a complete use and measure of those parts. *Nathaniel Hardy*.

Verse 37. *The end.* All wise men affect the conclusion to be best: to ride two or three miles of fair way, and to have a hundred deep and foul ones to pass afterward is uncomfortable; especially when the end is worse than the way. But let the beginning be troublesome, the progress somewhat more easy, and the journey's end happy, and there is fair amends. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.* Mark him in the setting out, he hath many oppositions; mark him in the journey, he is full of tribulations; but mark in the conclusion, and the end of that man is peace. *Thomas Adams*.

Verse 37. *The end of that man is peace.* Give me leave to determine what it is to end or die in peace. To end in peace with *Euthymius*, is to end in *pace cogitationis*, in peace of mind as it is opposed to doubting. To end in peace with *Cyprian*, is to end in *pace securitatis*, in peace of security, as it is opposed to final falling. To end in peace with *Origen*, is to end in *pace conscientiae*, in peace of conscience as it is opposed to despairing. To end in peace with old *Irenaeus*, is to end in *pace mortis*, in the peace of death as it is opposed to labouring. Again, to end in peace, is to end in *pace Dei*, in the peace of God which passeth all understanding, *i.e.*, far beyond men's apprehensions. To end in peace, is to end in *pace proximi*, in peace with our neighbours, *i.e.*, when no outcries or exclamations follow us. And lastly, to end in peace, is to end in *pace sui*, in peace with ourselves, *i.e.*, when no distractions or perturbations of mind molest us. *Richard Parre*.

Verse 37. The text may be divided into these two parts. Here is 1. The godly man's *property*; and 2. The godly man's *privilege*. His property is perfection; his privilege is peace. Here is the saint's

character and the saint's *crown*: he is characterised by uprightness or sincerity, and crowned with peace. Here is the Christian's *way* and his *end*, his *motion*, and his *rest*. His way is holiness, his end happiness; his motion is towards perfection and in uprightness; his rest is peace at his journey's end. *John Whitlock, in a Funeral Sermon entitled, "The Upright Man and his Happy End," 1658.*

Verse 37. Time would fail me to tell how Christians die, nor can anything save the pen of the recording angel who has stood by their bed of death and borne them to Abraham's bosom narrate the unnumbered instances of their delightful departure from the present world, which verify the truth of the Bible. "I could never have believed," said a dying saint, "that it was so delightful a thing to die, or that it was possible to have such views of the heavenly world as I now enjoy." The memorable Melancthon just before he died, chanted in his sleep the words, "I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." He seemed restless, and on being asked by one near him, "Whether there was anything more that he desired?" replied, *Aliud nihil nisi coelum*—nothing more, unless it be heaven. *Gardiner Spring.*

Verse 37. To die well be sure to live well; we must not think to have Lazarus's death, and Dive's life; like him in Plutarch that would live with Craesus, as he said, but he would die with Socrates. No, Balaam's wishes are foolish and fruitless: If you would die well, Christians, you must have a care to live well: *qualis vita, finis ita*, if you would die quietly, you must live strictly; if you would die comfortably, you must live conformably; if you would die happily, you must live holily. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. John Kitchin, M.A., 1660.*

Verse 38. *The end of the wicked shall be cut off.* The wicked in this world do easily run up without rub or interruption, many times with acclamations and applause, all the golden steps of honours and preferments; but upon the highest stair they find the most slippery standing, and the top of their earthly felicity is the most immediate and certain descent unto the greatest downfall. They are royally mounted here upon earth, and gallop swiftly over the fair and green plains of plenty and pleasures; but at the end of their race they are overturned horse and man, and tumbled headlong into the pit of destruction. They fairly glide over the sea of this world with full sail, with much calmness and serenity, and richly laden; but in the brightest sunshine, and when they least suspect it, they suddenly and without recovery, sink into the gulf of darkness and desolation. *Robert Bolton.*

Verse 40. *And the Lord shall help them.* He *shall, he shall, he shall.* Oh, the rhetoric of God! the safety of the saints! the certainty of the promises! *John Trapp.*

Luther closes his Exposition of the Psalm with the words, Oh, shame on our faithlessness, mistrust, and vile unbelief, that we do not believe such rich, powerful, consolatory, declarations of God, and take up so readily with little grounds of offence, whenever we but hear the wicked speeches of the ungodly. Help. O God, that we may once attain to right faith. Amen.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. The art of tranquillity. *W. Jones.*

Verses 1-2. A frequent temptation, and a double corrective—a sight of sinners in death and hell.

Verses 1,2. A frequent temptation, and a double corrective—a sight of sinners in death and hell.

Verse 2. How and when the wicked perish.

Verse 3.

1. A combination descriptive of holy living.
2. A combination descriptive of happy living.

Verse 3. The believer portrayed.

1. His object of trust.
2. His mode of life.
3. His place of abode.
4. His certainty of provision.

Verse 3. (*last clause*). Read it in four ways.

1. "Certainly fed, "or the certainty of supply.
2. "Fed in verity, "or the sufficiency of the provision for soul and body.
3. "Fed on truth, "or the spirituality of the provision.
4. "Feed on truth, "or the duty of choosing such provision.

Verse 4. Explain the delight and the desire of the believer, and show the connection between them.

Verses 5-6. The higher life.

1. Based on hearty resignation.
2. Sustained by faith.
3. Constantly unfolded by the Lord.
4. Consummated in meridian splendour.

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Verse 6. Sweet comfort for slandered saints. Where their character now is. Who shall reveal it. The gradual yet sure manner of the revelation, and the glorious conclusion.

Verse 7. *Rest in the Lord.* What? Where? When? Why? How?

Verse 7. Peace, patience, self possession.

Verse 7. Stillness in God. *Bishop Wilberforce.*

Verse 7. *Rest in the Lord.*

1. Rest in the *will* of God, for whatever he wills is for your good, your highest good.
2. Rest in the *love* of God, and often meditate on the words of Jesus on this point, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me."
3. Rest in the *mercy* of God.
4. Rest in the *word* of God.
5. Rest in the *relation* thy God fills to thee; he is the Father.
6. Rest in the Lord as he is manifested in Jesus, thy God *in covenant*.

James Smith.

Verse 8. A SERMON FOR THE FRETFUL.

1. Cease from present anger. It is madness, it is sin; it shuts out our prayers; it will grow into malice; it may lead to worse.
2. *Forsake it* for the future. Repent of it, watch temper, discipline thy passions, etc.
3. *Avoid* all kindred feelings of fretfulness, impatience, envy, etc., for they lead to evil.

Verse 9. How the humble are the true lords of the land.

Verse 10.

1. Consider what the departed sinner has left. Possessions, joys, honours, aims, hopes, etc.
2. Consider where he has gone.
3. Consider whether you will share the same lot.

Verses 10-11. Terror to the wicked: comfort for believers. *A. Farindon.*

Verse 11. The meek man's delight, or "the harvest of a quiet eye."

Verse 14. *Upright conversation.*

1. What it excludes. The horizontal or earthly, the crooked or crafty, the slanting or sinister.
2. What it includes. Motive, object, language, action.
3. What it achieves. It stands like a pillar; it supports like a column; it ascends like a tower; it adorns like a monument; it illuminates like a Pharos.

Verse 15. The self destructive nature of evil.

Verse 16. How to make much of a little.

Verses 16-17.

1. The owners contrasted.
2. The possessions compared.
3. The preference given.
4. The reasons declared.

Verse 17. (*last clause*).

1. The favoured persons.
2. Their evident need, "upholding."

3. Their singular blessedness, "upheld, "above trial, under trial, after trial.

4. Their august Patron.

Verse 18. The comforts derivable from a consideration of the divine knowledge. The eternity of the righteous man's possessions.

Verse 18.

1. The *persons*, "the upright."

2. The *period*, "their days." These are known to God. (1) He knows them *kindly* and *graciously*; (2) He knows their *number*; (3) He knows the *nature* of them.

3. The *portion*, "their inheritance shall be for ever."

—William Jay.

Verse 18 (*last clause*). What it is. How they come by it. How long they hold it.

Verse 19. Good words for hard times.

Verse 21. Monetary transactions tests of character.

Verse 22. The divine blessing the secret of happiness. The divine displeasure the essence of misery.

Verses 23-24.

1. The divine predestination.

2. The divine delight.

3. The divine support.

Verse 24. Temporary trials.

1. To be expected.

2. Have their limit.

3. Have their results.

4. Our secret comfort under them.

What may be. What cannot be. What shall be.

Verse 25. Memorandum of an aged observer.

Verse 26. The righteous man's merciful disposition, generous action, and rich reward.

Verse 26. The benediction of the good man's family: what it is, and what it is not.

Verse 27. Negative, positive, remunerative.

Verse 28.

1. The Lord's love of right.

2. His faithfulness to the righteous.

3. Their sure preservation thus doubly guaranteed.

4. The doom of the wicked thus certified.

Verse 29. Canaan as a type of the righteous man's inheritance.

Verse 30. *Our speech* as a test of godliness.

Verse 31.

1. The best thing.
2. In the best place.
3. With the best of results.

Verses 32-33. Our enemies; their inveterate malice; our safeguard and justification.

Verse 34.

1. A twofold admonition: (a) *Wait on the Lord.* (b) *And keep his way;* wait and work, wait and walk, get grace and exercise it.

2. A twofold promise: (a) *He shall exalt thee to inherit the land;* God is the source of all elevation and honour. (b) *When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it;* and they will be cut off. *William Jay.*

Verse 34. Patient faith, persevering holiness, and promised exaltation.

Verse 34 (*last clause*). Emotions caused in the godly by a sight of the sinner's doom.

Verse 34. (*last clause*). The wicked are often cut off 1. Even *in life*, from their places, and riches, and prospects. 2. At *death* they are cut off from all their possessions and comforts. 3. In *the last day* they will be cut off from "the resurrection of life." *William Jay.*

Verses 35-37. Three memorable scenes.

1. The imposing spectacle.
2. The astounding disappearance.
3. The delightful exit.

Verses 35-37. Three memorable scenes.

1. The imposing spectacle.
2. The astounding disappearance.
3. The delightful exit.

Verses 39-40.

1. The doctrines of grace condensed.
2. The experience of the gracious epitomised.
3. The promises of grace summarised.
4. The grandest evidence of grace declared: *because they trust in him.*

Psalm 38

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. A Psalm of David, to bring remembrance. David felt as if he had been forgotten of his God, and, therefore, he recounted his sorrows and cried mightily for help under them. The same title is given to Psalm 70, where in like manner the psalmist pours out his complaint before the Lord. It would be foolish to make a guess as to the point in David's history when this was written; it may be a commemoration of his own sickness and endurance of cruelty; it may, on the other hand, have been composed by him for the use of sick and slandered saints, without special reference to himself.

DIVISION. The Psalm opens with a prayer, Ps 38:1; continues in a long complaint, Ps 38:2-8; pauses to dart an eye to heaven, Ps 38:9; proceeds with a second tale of sorrow, Ps 38:10-14; interjects another word of hopeful address to God, Ps 38:15; a third time pours out a flood of griefs, Ps 38:16-20; and then closes as it opened, with renewed petitioning, Ps 38:21-22.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath.* Rebuked I must be, for I am an erring child and thou a careful Father, but throw not too much anger into the tones of thy voice; deal gently although I have sinned grievously. The anger of others I can bear, but not thine. As thy love is most sweet to my heart, so thy displeasure is most cutting to my conscience. *Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.* Chasten me if thou wilt, it is a Father's prerogative, and to endure it obediently is a child's duty; but, O turn not the rod into a sword, smite not so as to kill. True, my sins might well inflame thee, but let thy mercy and longsuffering quench the glowing coals of thy wrath. O let me not be treated as an enemy or dealt with as a rebel. Bring to remembrance thy covenant, thy fatherhood, and my feebleness, and spare the servant.

Verse 2. *For thine arrows stick fast in me.* By this he means both bodily and spiritual griefs, but we may suppose, especially the latter, for these are most piercing and stick the fastest. God's law applied by the Spirit to the conviction of the soul of sin, wounds deeply and rankles long; it is an arrow not lightly to be brushed out by careless mirthfulness, or to be extracted by the flattering hand of self-righteousness. The Lord knows how to shoot so that his bolts not only strike but stick. He can make convictions sink into the innermost spirit like arrows driven in up to the head. It seems strange that the Lord should shoot at his own beloved ones, but in truth he shoots at their sins rather than them, and those who feel his sin-killing shafts in this life, shall not be slain with his hot thunderbolts in the next world. *And thy hand presseth me sore.* The Lord had come to close dealings with him, and pressed him down with the weight of his hand, so that he had no rest or strength left. By these two expressions we are taught that conviction of sin is a piercing and a pressing thing, sharp and sore, smarting and crushing. Those who know by experience "the terrors of the Lord," will be best able to vouch for the accuracy of such descriptions; they are true to the life.

Verse 3. *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger.* Mental depression tells upon the

bodily frame; it is enough to create and foster every disease, and is in itself the most painful of all diseases. Soul sickness tells upon the entire frame; it weakens the body, and then bodily weakness reacts upon the mind. One drop of divine anger sets the whole of our blood boiling with misery. *Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.* Deeper still the malady penetrates, till the bones, the more solid parts of the system, are affected. No soundness and no rest are two sad deficiencies; yet these are both consciously gone from every awakened conscience until Jesus gives relief. God's anger is a fire that dries up the very marrow; it searches the secret parts of the belly. A man who has pain in his bones tosses to and fro in search of rest, but he finds none; he becomes worn out with agony, and in so many cases a sense of sin creates in the conscience a horrible unrest which cannot be exceeded in anguish except by hell itself.

Verse 4. *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head.* Like waves of the deep sea; like black mire in which a man utterly sinks. Above my hopes, my strength, my life itself, my sin rises in its terror. Unawakened sinners think their sins to be mere shallows, but when conscience is aroused they find out the depth of iniquity. *As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.* It is well when sin is an intolerable load, and when the remembrance of our sins burdens us beyond endurance. This verse is the genuine cry of one who feels himself undone by his transgressions and as yet sees not the great sacrifice.

Verse 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.* Apply this to the body, and it pictures a sad condition of disease; but read it of the soul, and it is to the life. Conscience lays on stripe after stripe till the swelling becomes a wound and suppurates, and the corruption within grows offensive. What a horrible creature man appears to be in his own consciousness when his depravity and vileness are fully opened up by the law of God, applied by the Holy Spirit! It is true there are diseases which are correctly described in this verse, when in the worst stage; but we prefer to receive the expressions as instructively figurative, since the words "because of my foolishness" point rather at a moral than a physical malady. Some of us know what it is to stink in our own nostrils, so as to loathe ourselves. Even the most filthy diseases cannot be so foul as sin. No ulcers, cancers, or putrifying sores, can match the unutterable vileness and pollution of iniquity. Our own perceptions have made us feel this. We write what we do know, and testify what we have seen; and even now we shudder to think that so much of evil should lie festering deep within our nature.

Verse 6. *I am troubled.* I am wearied with distress, writhing with pain, in sore travail on account of sin revealed within me. *I am bowed down greatly.* I am brought very low, grievously weakened and frightfully depressed. Nothing so pulls a man down from all loftiness as a sense of sin and of divine wrath concerning it. *I go mourning all the day long.* The mourner's soul sorrow knew no intermission, even when he went about such business as he was able to attend, he went forth like a mourner who goes to the tomb, and his words and manners were like the lamentations of those who follow the

corpse. The whole verse may be the more clearly understood if we picture the Oriental mourner, covered with sackcloth and ashes, bowed as in a heap, sitting amid squalor and dirt, performing contortions and writhings expressive of his grief; such is the awakened sinner, not in outward guise, but in very deed.

Verse 7. *For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease*—a hot, dry, parching disorder, probably accompanied by loathsome ulcers. Spiritually, the fire burns within when the evil of the heart is laid bare. Note the emphatic words, the evil is *loathsome*, it is in the *loins*, its seat is deep and vital—the man is *filled* with it. Those who have passed through the time of conviction understand all this. *And there is no soundness in my flesh.* This he had said before, and thus the Holy Spirit brings humiliating truth again and again to our memories, tears away every ground of glorying, and makes us know that in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.

Verse 8. *I am feeble.* The original is "benumbed, "or frozen, such strange incongruities and contradictions meet in a distracted mind and a sick body—it appears to itself to be alternately parched with heat and pinched with cold. Like souls in the Popish fabled Purgatory, tossed from burning furnaces into thick ice, so tormented hearts rush from one extreme to the other, with equal torture in each. A heat of fear, a chill of horror, a flaming desire, a horrible insensibility—by these successive miseries a convinced sinner is brought to death's door. *And sore broken.* Crushed as in a mill, pounded as in a mortar. The body of the sick man appears to be all out of joint and smashed into a palpitating pulp, and the soul of the desponding is in an equally wretched case; as a victim crushed under the car of Juggernaut, such is a soul over whose conscience the wheels of divine wrath have forced their awful way. *I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.* Deep and hoarse is the voice of sorrow, and often inarticulate and terrible. The heart learns groanings which cannot be uttered, and the voice fails to tone and tune itself to human speech. When our prayers appear to be rather animal than spiritual, they are none the less prevalent with the pitiful Father of mercy. He hears the murmur of the heart and the roaring of the soul because of sin, and in due time he comes to relieve his afflicted. The more closely the preceding portrait of an awakened soul is studied in the light of experience, the more will its striking accuracy appear. It cannot be a description of merely outward disorder, graphic as it might then be; it has a depth and pathos in it which only the soul's mysterious and awful agony can fully match.

Verse 9. *Lord, all my desire is before thee.* If unuttered, yet perceived. Blessed be God, he reads the longings of our hearts; nothing can be hidden from him; what we cannot tell to him he perfectly understands. The psalmist is conscious that he has not exaggerated, and therefore appeals to heaven for a confirmation of his words. The good Physician understands the symptoms of our disease and sees the hidden evil which they reveal, hence our case is safe in his hands. *And my groaning is not hid from thee.*

"He takes the meaning of our tears,
The language of our groans."

Sorrow and anguish hide themselves from the observation of man, but God spies them out. None more lonely than the broken hearted sinner, yet hath he the Lord for his companion.

Verse 10. *My heart panteth.* Here begins another tale of woe. He was so dreadfully pained by the unkindness of friends, that his heart was in a state of perpetual palpitation. Sharp and quick were the beatings of his heart; he was like a hunted roe, filled with distressing alarms, and ready to fly out of itself with fear. The soul seeks sympathy in sorrow, and if it finds none, its sorrowful heart throbs are incessant. *My strength faileth me.* What with disease and distraction, he was weakened and ready to expire. A sense of sin, and a clear perception that none can help us in our distress, are enough to bring a man to death's door, especially if there be none to speak a gentle word, and point the broken spirit to the beloved Physician. *As for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.* Sweet light departed from his bodily eye, and consolation vanished from his soul. Those who were the very light of his eyes forsook him. Hope, the last lamp of night, was ready to go out. What a plight was the poor convict in! Yet here, we have some of us been; and here should we have perished had not infinite mercy interposed. Now, as we remember the lovingkindness of the Lord, we see how good it was for us to find our own strength fail us, since it drove us to the strong for strength; and how right it was that our light should all be quenched, that the Lord's light should be all in all to us.

Verse 11. *My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore.* Whatever affection they might pretend to, they kept out of his company, lest as a sinking vessel often draws down boats with it, they might be made to suffer through his calamities. It is very hard when those who should be the first to come to the rescue, are the first to desert us. In times of deep soul trouble, even the most affectionate friends cannot enter into the sufferer's case; let them be as anxious as they may, the sores of a tender conscience they cannot bind up. Oh, the loneliness of a soul passing under the convincing power of the Holy Ghost! *And my kinsmen stand afar off.* As the women and others of our Lord's acquaintances from afar gazed on his cross, so a soul wounded for sin sees all mankind as distant spectators, and in the whole crowd finds none to aid. Often relatives hinder seekers after Jesus, oftener still they look on with unconcern, seldom enough do they endeavour to lead the penitent to Jesus.

Verse 12. *They also that seek after my life lay snares for me.* Alas! for us when in addition to inward griefs, we are beset by outward temptations. David's foes endeavoured basely to ensnare him. If fair means would not overthrow him, foul should be tried. This snaring business is a vile one, the devil's own poachers alone condescend to it; but prayer to God will deliver us, for the craft of the entire college of tempters can be met and overcome by those who are led of the Spirit. *They that seek my hurt speak mischievous things.* Lies and slanders poured from them like water from the town pump.

Their tongue was for ever going, and their heart fore ever inventing lies. *And imagine deceit all the day long.* They were never done, their forge was going from morning to night. When they could not act they talked, and when they could not talk they imagined, and schemed, and plotted. Restless is the activity of malice. Bad men never have enough of evil. They compass sea and land to injure a saint; no labour is too severe, no cost too great if they may utterly destroy the innocent. Our comfort is, that our glorious Head knows the pertinacious malignity of our foes, and will in due season put an end to it, as he even now sets a bound about it.

Verse 13. *But I, as a deaf man, heard not.* Well and bravely was this done. A sacred indifference to the slanders of malevolence is true courage and wise policy. It is well to be as if we could not hear or see. Perhaps the psalmist means that this deafness on his part was unavoidable because he had no power to answer the taunts of the cruel, but felt much of the truth of their ungenerous accusations. *And I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.* David was bravely silent, and herein was eminently typical of our Lord Jesus, whose marvellous silence before Pilate was far more eloquent than words. To abstain from self defence is often most difficult, and frequently most wise.

Verse 14. *Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.* He repeats the fact of his silence that we may note it, admire it, and imitate it. We have an advocate, and need not therefore plead our own cause. The Lord will rebuke our foes, for vengeance belongs to him; we may therefore wait patiently and find it our strength to sit still.

Verse 15. David committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, and so in patience was able to possess his soul. Hope in God's intervention, and belief in the power of prayer, are two most blessed stays to the soul in time of adversity. Turning right away from the creature to the sovereign Lord of all, and to him as our own covenant God, we shall find the richest solace in waiting upon him. Reputation like a fair pearl may be cast into the mire, but in due time when the Lord makes up his jewels, the godly character shall shine with unclouded splendour. Rest then, O slandered one, and let not thy soul be tossed to and fro with anxiety.

Verse 16. *For I said, hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me.* The good man was not insensible, he dreaded the sharp stings of taunting malice; he feared lest either by his conduct or his condition, he should give occasion to the wicked to triumph. This fear his earnest desires used as an argument in prayer as well as an incentive to prayer. *When my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.* The least flaw in a saint is sure to be noticed; long before it comes to a fall the enemy begins to rail, the merest trip of the foot sets all the dogs of hell barking. How careful ought we to be, and how importunate in prayer for upholding grace! We do not wish, like blind Samson, to make sport for our enemies; let us then beware of the treacherous Delilah of sin, by whose means our eyes may soon be put out.

Verse 17. *For I am ready to halt.* Like one who limps, or a person with tottering footsteps, in danger

of falling. How well this befits us all. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." How small a thing will lame a Christian, how insignificant a stumbling block may cause him to fall! This passage refers to a weakness caused by pain and sorrow; the sufferer was ready to give up in despair; he was so depressed in spirit that he stumbled at a straw. Some of us painfully know what it is to be like dry tinder for the sparks of sorrow; ready to halt, ready to mourn, and sigh and cry upon any occasion, and for any cause. *And my sorrow is continually before me.* He did not need to look out of window to find sorrow, he felt it within, and groaned under a body of sin which was an increasing plague to him. Deep conviction continues to irritate the conscience; it will not endure a patched up peace; but cries war to the knife till the enmity is slain. Until the Holy Ghost applies the precious blood of Jesus, a truly awakened sinner is covered with raw wounds which cannot be healed nor bound up, nor mollified with ointment.

Verse 18. *For I will declare mine iniquity.* The slander of his enemies he repudiates, but the accusations of his conscience he admits. Open confession is good for the soul. When sorrow leads to hearty and penitent acknowledgment of sin it is blessed sorrow, a thing to thank God for most devoutly. *I will be sorry for my sin.* My confession will be salted with briny tears. It is well not so much to bewail our sorrows as to denounce the sins which lie at the root of them. To be sorry for sin is no atonement for it, but it is the right spirit in which to repair to Jesus, who is the reconciliation and the Saviour. A man is near to the end of his trouble when he comes to an end with his sins.

Verse 19. *But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong.* However weak and dying the righteous man may be, the evils which oppose him are sure to be lively enough. Neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil, are ever afflicted with debility or inertness; this trinity of evils labour with mighty unremitting energy to overthrow us. If the devil were sick, or our lusts feeble, or Madame Bubble infirm, we might slacken prayer; but with such lively and vigorous enemies we must not cease to cry mightily unto our God. *And they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.* Here is another misery, that as we are no match for our enemies in strength, so also they outnumber us as a hundred to one. Wrong as the cause of evil is, it is a popular one. More and more the kingdom of darkness grows. Oh, misery of miseries, that we see the professed friends of Jesus forsaking him, and the enemies of his cross and his cause mustering in increasing bands!

Verse 20. *They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries.* Such would a wise man wish his enemies to be. Why should we seek to be beloved of such graceless souls? It is a fine plea against our enemies when we can without injustice declare them to be like the devil, whose nature it is to render evil for good. *Because I follow the thing that good is.* If men hate us for this reason we may rejoice to bear it: their wrath is the unconscious homage which vice renders to virtue. This verse is not inconsistent with the writer's previous confession; we may feel equally guilty before God, and yet be entirely innocent of any wrong to our fellow men. It is one sin to acknowledge the truth, quite

another thing to submit to be belied. The Lord may smite me justly, and yet I may be able to say to my fellow man, "Why smitest thou me?"

Verse 21. *Forsake me not, O Lord.* Now is the time I need thee most. When sickness, slander, and sin, all beset a saint, he requires the especial aid of heaven, and he shall have it too. He is afraid of nothing while God is with him, and God is with him evermore. *Be not far from me.* Withhold not the light of thy near and dear love. Reveal thyself to me. Stand at my side. Let me feel that though friendless besides, I have a most gracious and all sufficient friend in thee.

Verse 22. *Make haste to help me.* Delay would prove destruction. The poor pleader was far gone and ready to expire, only speedy help would serve his turn. See how sorrow quickens the importunity of prayer! Here is one of the sweet results of affliction, it gives new life to our pleading, and drives us with eagerness to our God. *O Lord my salvation.* Not my Saviour only, but my salvation. He who has the Lord on his side has salvation in present possession. Faith foresees the blessed issue of all her pleas, and in this verse begins to ascribe to God the glory of the expected mercy. We shall not be left of the Lord. His grace will succour us most opportunely, and in heaven we shall see that we had not one trial too many, or one pang too severe. A sense of sin shall melt into the joy of salvation; grief shall lead on to gratitude, and gratitude to joy unspeakable and full of glory.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

TITLE. The first word, MIZMOR, or Psalm, is the designation of forty-four sacred poems, thirty-two of which are ascribed to David. The English reader must observe, that this word is not the same in the original Hebrew as that which forms the general title of the book of Psalms; the latter expressing a Hymn of Praise. The word *Psalm*, however, as used both in the context and in the titles of the individual compositions, is uniformly *Mizmor* in the original; a term which accurately defines their poetical character. To explain its proper meaning I must have recourse to the beautiful and accurate definition of Bishop Lowth. "The word *Mizmor* signifies a composition, which in a peculiar manner is cut up into sentences, short, frequent, and measured by regular intervals." ...He adds that *Zamar* means to cut or prune, as applied to the removing superfluous branches from trees; and, after mentioning the secondary sense of the word, "to sing with a voice or instrument," gives it as his opinion, that *Mizmar* may be more properly referred to the primary sense of the root, so as to mean a poem cut up into short sentences, and pruned from all superfluity of words, which is the peculiar characteristic of the Hebrew poetry. *John Jebb.*

Title. The title that David gives this Psalm is worth your notice. *A Psalm of David to bring to remembrance.* David was on his deathbed as he thought, and he said it shall be a Psalm of remembrance, to bring sin to remembrance, to confess to God my uncleannesses with Bathsheba, to bring to my remembrance the evils of my life. Whenever God brings thee under affliction, thou art

then in a fit plight to confess sin to God, and call to remembrance thy sins. *Christopher Love.*

Title. The Psalm is *to bring to remembrance*. This seems to teach us that good things need to be kept alive in our memories, that we should often sit down, look back, retrace, and turn over in our meditation things that are past, lest at any time we should let any good thing sink into oblivion. Among the things which David brought to his own remembrance, the first and foremost were, (1) *his past trials and his past deliverances*. The great point, however, in David's Psalm is to bring to remembrance, (2) *the depravity of our nature*. There is, perhaps, no Psalm which more fully than this describes human nature as seen in the light which God the Holy Ghost casts upon it in the time when he convinces us of sin. I am persuaded that the description here does not tally with any known disease of the body. It is very like leprosy, but it has about it certain features which cannot be found to meet in any leprosy described either by ancient or modern writers. The fact is, it is a spiritual leprosy, it is an inward disease which is here described, and David paints it to the very life, and he would have us to recollect this. A third thing the Psalm brings to our remembrance is, (3) *our many enemies*. David says, that his enemies laid snares for him, and sought his hurt, and spoke mischievous things, and devised and imagined deceits all the day long. "Well," says one, "how was it that David had so many enemies?" How could he make so many? Must he not have been imprudent and rash, or perhaps morose? It does not appear so in his life. He rather made enemies by his being scrupulously holy. His enemies attacked him, not because he was wicked, but as he says, in this very Psalm, they were his enemies because he loved the thing which is good. The ultimate result of the religion of Christ is to make peace everywhere, but the first result is to cause strife. Further, the Psalm reminds us of, (4) *our gracious God*. Anything which drives us to God is a blessing, and anything which weans us from leaning on the arm of flesh, and especially that weans us from trying to stand alone, is a boon to us. *C. H. S*

Whole Psalm. The most wonderful features in this Psalm, are the depth of misery into which the psalmist gradually plunges in his complaints in the first part of it, the sudden grasp at the arm of mercy and omnipotence that is made in Ps 38:8, and the extreme height of comfort and consolation that it reaches in the end. *Benjamin Weiss.*

Verse 1. *O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath.* But is it not an absurd request, to require God not to rebuke me in his anger; as though I thought he would rebuke me if he were not angry? Is it not a senseless suit to pray to God not to chasten me in his displeasure, as though he would chasten me if he were not displeased? The most froward natures that are, will yet be quiet as long as they be pleased: and shall I have such a thought of the great yet gracious God, that he should be pleased and yet not be quiet? But, O my soul, is it all one, to rebuke in his anger and to rebuke when he is angry? He may rebuke when he is angry, and yet restrain and bridle in his anger; but to rebuke in his anger is to let loose the reins to his anger; and what is it to give the reins to his anger, but to make it

outrun his mercy? And then what a miserable case should I be in, to have his anger to assault me, and not his mercy ready to relieve me? To have his indignation fall upon me when his lovingkindness were not by to take it off! Oh, therefore, *rebuke me not in thine anger, O God*, but let thy rebuking stay for thy mercy; chasten me not in thy displeasure, but let thy lovingkindness have the keeping of thy rod. *Sir Richard Baker*.

Verse 1. *Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure*, etc. Both these words, which we translate to *chasten*, and *hot displeasure*, are words of a heavy and of a vehement signification. They extend both to express the eternity of God's indignation, even to the binding of the soul and body in eternal chains of darkness. For the first, *jasar*, signifies in the Scriptures, *vincire*, to bind, often with ropes, often with chains; to fetter, or manacle, or pinion men that are to be executed; so that it imports a slavery, a bondage all the way, and a destruction at last. And so the word is used by Rehoboam, "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chasten you with scorpions." 1Ki 12:11. And then, the other word, *chamath*, doth not only signify *hot displeasure*, but that effect of *God's hot displeasure* which is intended by the prophet Esay: "Therefore hath he poured forth his fierce wrath, and the strength of battle, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not, and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." These be the fearful conditions of God's hot displeasure, to be in a furnace, and not to feel it; to be in a habit of sin, and not know what leads us into temptation; to be burnt to ashes, and so not only without all moisture, all holy tears, but, as ashes, without any possibility that any good thing can grow in us. And yet this word, *chamath*, hath a heavier signification than this; for it signifies poison itself, destruction itself, for so it is twice taken in one verse: "Their poison is like the poison of a serpent" Ps 58:4; so that this *hot displeasure* is that poison of the soul, obduration here, and that extension of that obduration, a final impenitence in this life, and an infinite impenitableness in the next, to die without any actual penitence here, and live without all possibility of future penitence for ever hereafter. David therefore foresees, that if God *rebuke in anger*, it will come to a *chastening in hot displeasure*. For what should stop him? For, "if a man sin against the Lord, who will plead for him?" says Eli. "Plead thou my cause," says David; it is only the Lord that can be of counsel with him, and plead for him and that Lord is both the judge and angry too. *John Donne*.

Verse 2. *For thine arrows stick fast in me*. First, we shall see in what respect he calls them *arrows*: and therein, first, that they are *alienae*, they are shot from others, they are not in his own power; a man shoots not an arrow at himself; and then that they are *veloces*, swift in coming, he cannot give them their time; and again, they are *vix visibiles*, though they be not altogether invisible in their cunning, yet there is required a quick eye, and an express diligence and watchfulness to avoid them; so they are arrows in the hand of another, not his own; and swift as they come, and invisible before they come. And secondly, they are many arrows, the victory lies not in escaping one or two. And thirdly, they *stick* in him: they find not David so good proof as to rebound back again, and imprint no

sense: and they stick *Fast*: though the blow be felt and the wound discerned, yet there is not a present cure, he cannot shake them off; *infixae sunt*, and then, with all this, they stick fast *in him*; that is, in all him; in his body and soul; in him, in his thoughts and actions; in him, in his sins and in his good works too; *infixae mihi*, there is no part of him, no faculty in him, in which they stick not; for (which may well be another consideration), that *hand*, which shot them, *presses him*: follows the blow, and presses him sore, that is, vehemently. But yet (which will be our conclusion), *sagittae tuae*, *thy arrows*, and *manus tua*, *thy hand*, these arrows that are shot, and this hand that presses him so sore, are the arrows, and the hand of God; and therefore, first, they must have their effect, they cannot be disappointed; but yet they bring their comfort with them, because they are his, because no arrows from him, no pressing with his hand, comes without that *balsamum* of mercy to heal as fast as he wounds. *John Donne*.

Verse 2. *Thine arrows stick fast*. Though importunity be to God most pleasing always, yet to us it is then most necessary when the cheerful face of God is turned into frowns, and when there is a justly conceived fear of the continuance of his anger: and have I not just cause to fear it, having the arrows of his anger sticking so fast in me? If he had meant to make me but a butt, at which to shoot his arrows, he would quickly, I suppose, have taken them up again; but now that he leaves them sticking in me, what can I think, but that he means to make me his quiver; and then I may look long enough before he come to pluck them out. They are arrows, indeed, that are feathered with swiftness, and headed with sharpness; and to give them a force in flying, they are shot, I may say, out of his crossbow, I am sure his bow of crosses; for no arrows can fly so fast, none pierce so deep, as the crosses and afflictions with which he hath surprised me: I may truly say surprised me, seeing when I thought myself most safe, and said, "I shall never be moved," even then, these arrows of his anger lighted upon me, and stick so fast in my flesh, that no arm but his that shot them, is ever able to draw them forth. Oh, then, as thou hast stretched forth thine arm of anger, O God, to shoot these arrows at me, so stretch forth thine arm of mercy to draw them forth, that I may rather sing hymns than dirges unto thee; and that thou mayest show thy power, as well in pardoning as thou hast done in condemning. *Sir Richard Baker*.

Verse 2. *Thine arrows*. Arrows are (1) swift, (2) secret, (3) sharp (4) killing instruments. They are instruments drawing blood and drinking blood, even unto drunkenness De 32:42; afflictions are like arrows in all these properties. 1. Afflictions often come very speedily, with a glance as an arrow, quick as a thought. 2. Afflictions come suddenly, unexpectedly; an arrow is upon a man afore he is aware, so are afflictions. Though Job saith, the thing he feared came upon him, he looked for this arrow before it came; yet usually afflictions are unlooked for guests, they thrust in upon us when we dream not of them. 3. They come with little noise; an arrow is felt before, or, as soon as it is heard; an arrow flies silently and secretly, stealing upon and wounding a man, unobserved and unseen. Lastly, all

afflictions are sharp, and in their own nature killing and deadly. That any have good from them, is from the grace of God, not from their nature. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 2. Let no one think these expressions of penitence Ps 38:1-4 overstrained or excessive. They are the words of the Holy Spirit of God, speaking by the mouth of the man after God's own heart. If we were as repentant as David, we should bring home to ourselves his language; as it is, our affections are chilled, and therefore we do not enter into his words...And let us observe how all the miseries are referred to their proper end. The sin is not bewailed merely on account of its ill effect on the guilty one, but on account of the despite done to God. The psalmist's first thought is the "*anger*" of the Lord, and his *hot displeasure*. It is not the "arrows" that afflict him so much as that they are God's. "*Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me.*" The reason why there is no health in his flesh is because of God's displeasure. Such is true contrition, "not the sorrow of the world which worketh death, but the sorrow that worketh repentance not to be repented of." *A Commentary on the Seven Penitential Psalms. Chiefly from Ancient Sources, (by A.P.F.) 1847.*

Verse 2. *Thy hand presseth me sore.* Not the hand of Egypt or Ashur; then it were hand for hand, a duel of some equality: hand to hand; here forces and stratagems might achieve a victory: but *Thy hand*. The weight of a man's blow is but weak, according to the force and pulse of his arm; as the princes of Midian answered Gideon, when he bade his son try the dint of his sword upon them; "Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength." Jud 8:21. But "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb 10:31. As Homer called the hands of Jupiter *ceirez aeptoi*, hands whose praise could not be sufficiently spoken; which some read *ceires aaptoii*, hands inaccessible, irresistible for strength: all the gods in heaven could not ward a blow of Jupiter's hand. This hand never strikes but for sin; and where sin is mighty his blow is heavy. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 3. *Thine anger...my sin.* I, alas! am as an anvil under two hammers; one of thine anger, another of my sin; both of them beating incessantly upon me; the hammer of thine anger beating upon my flesh and making that unsound; the hammer of my sin beating upon my bones and making them unquiet; although indeed both beat upon both; but thine anger more upon my flesh, as being more sensible; my sin more upon my bones, as being more obdurate. God's anger and sin are the two efficient causes of all misery; but the procatartic (as applied to diseases, signifies the exciting cause) cause indeed is sin: God's anger, like the house that Samson pulled upon his own head, falls not upon us but when we pull it upon ourselves by sin. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 3. *My flesh...my bones.* I know by the unsoundness of my flesh that God is angry with me; for if it were not for his anger my flesh would be sound: but what soundness can there be in it now, when God's angry hand lies beating upon it continually, and never ceaseth? I know by the unquietness of my bones that I have sin in my bosom; for if it were not for sin my bones would be quiet. But what quietness can be in them now, when sin lies gnawing upon them incessantly with the worm of

remorse? One would think my bones were far enough removed and closely enough hidden from sins doing them any hurt: yet see the searching nature, the venomous poison of sin, which pierceth through my flesh, and makes unquietness in my very bones. I know my flesh is guilty of many faults, by which it justly deserves unsoundness; but what have my bones done? for they minister no fuel to the flames of my flesh's sensuality; and why then should they be troubled? But are not my bones supporters of my flesh, and are they not by this at least accessory to my flesh's faults? As accessories, then, they are subject to the same punishment the flesh itself is, which is the principal.

Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 3. *neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.* A Christian in this life is like quicksilver, which hath a principle of motion in itself, but not of rest: we are never quiet, but as the ball upon the racket, or the ship upon the waves. As long as we have sin, this is like quicksilver: a child of God is full of motion and disquiet...We are here in a perpetual hurry, in a constant fluctuation; our life is like the tide; sometimes ebbing, sometimes flowing; here is no rest; and the reason is because we are out of centre. Everything is in motion till it comes at the centre; Christ is the centre of the soul; the needle of the compass trembles till it comes to the North Pole. *Thomas Watson.*

Verse 3. Learn here of beggars how to procure succour and relief. Lay open thy sores, make known thy need, discover all thy misery, make not thy case better than it is. Beggars by experience find that the more miserable they appear to be, the more they are pitied, the more succoured; and yet the mercies of the most merciful men are but as drops in comparison of the oceans of God's mercies; and among men there are many, like the priest and Levite in the parable Lu 10:30-32, that can pass by a naked, wounded man, left half dead, and not pity him nor succour him. But God, like the merciful Samaritan, hath always compassion on such as with sense of their misery are forced to cry out and crave help. Read how Job, Job 6:1-30 and Job 7:1-21; David, Ps 38:3, etc., Hezekiah, Isa 38:10, etc., and other like saints poured out their complaints before the Lord, and withal observe what mercy was showed them of the Lord, and you may have in them both good patterns how to behave yourselves in like cases, and good encouragement so to do. This is it which God expects of us, and whereunto he desireth to bring us, that seeing our own emptiness and insufficiency, and the impotency and disability of others to help us, we should in all humility fly to his mercy. *William Gouge.*

Verse 4. *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.* David proceeds to a reason why his prayer must be vehement, why these miseries of his are so violent, and why God's anger is permanent, and he finds this all to be, because in his sins, all these venomous qualities, vehemence, violence, and continuance, were complicated, and unwrapped; for he had sinned vehemently, in the rage of lust, and violently, in the effusion of blood, and permanently, in a long and senseless security. They are all contracted in this text into two kinds, which will be our two parts in handling these words: first, the *Supergressae super*, "*Mine iniquities are*

gone over my head, "there is the multiplicity, the number, the succession, and so the continuation of his sin; and then, the *Gravatae super*, "My sins are as a heavy burden, too heavy for me, "there is the greatness, the weight, the insupportableness of his sin. St. Augustine calls these two distinctions or considerations of sin, *ignorantiam, et difficultatem*; first that David was ignorant, that he saw not the tide, as it swelled up upon him, *abyssus abyssum*, depth called upon depth; and all thy waters, and all thy billows are gone over me (says he in another place); he perceived them not coming till they were over him, he discerned not his particular sins then when he committed them, till they came to the *supergressae super*, to that height that he was overflowed, surrounded, his iniquities were gone over his head; and in that St. Augustine notes *ignorantiam*, his inobservance, his inconsiderations of his own case; and then he notes *difficultatem*, the hardness of recovering, because he that is under water hath no air to see by, no air to hear by, he hath nothing to reach to, he touches not ground, to push him up, he feels no bough to pull him up, and therein that further notes *difficultatem*, the hardness of recovering. Now Moses expresses these two miseries together, in the destruction of the Egyptians, in his song, after Israel's deliverance, and the Egyptians' submersion, "The depths have covered them" (there is the *supergressae super*, their iniquities, in that punishment of their iniquities, were gone over their heads), and then they sank into the bottom like a stone (says Moses), there is the *gravatae super*, they depressed them, suppressed them, oppressed them, they were under them, and there they must lie. The Egyptians had, David had, we have, too many sins to swim above water, and too great sins to get above water again when we are sunk. *John Donne*.

Verse 4. *As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.* No strength is so great but it may be overburdened; though Samson went light away with the gates of Gaza, yet when a whole house fell upon him it crushed him to death. And such, alas! am I; I have had sin as a burden upon me ever since I was born, but bore it a long time as light as Samson did the gates of Gaza; but now that I have pulled a whole house of sin upon me, how can I choose but be crushed to death with so great a weight? And crushed, O my soul, thou shouldest be indeed, if God for all his anger did not take some pity on thee, and for all his displeasure did not stay his hand from further chastening thee. *Sir Richard Baker*.

Verse 4. It is of singular use to us, that the backslidings of the holy men of God are recorded in Holy Writ. Spots appear nowhere more disagreeable than when seen in a most beautiful face, or on the cleanest garment. And it is expedient to have a perfect knowledge of the filthiness of sin. We also learn from them to think humbly of ourselves, to depend on the grace of God, to keep a stricter eye upon ourselves, lest perhaps we fall into the same or more grievous sins. Ga 6:1. *Herman Witsius, D.D., 1636-1708*.

Verses 4-5. It is only when we can enter into *all* that is implied here that we begin to see our exceeding sinfulness. There is a certain feeling of sin which does not interfere with our pride, and self

respect. We can have that sort of feeling, and say pretty earnestly, *Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.* But it is otherwise with us when we get to know ourselves better, and to feel ourselves *loathsome* in our wickedness, when our folly and meanness and ingratitude oppress us, and we begin to loathe ourselves, and can enter into verse five. Our wounds, once an object of self pity, and something in which we could claim sympathy and healing from our friends, have become *corrupt*, because of the meanness and folly we feel to be in us. We hide them now, for if they were seen, would not "lovers and friends stand aloof from our sore"? Then we are silent except to God, "For in *thee*, O Lord, do I hope; *thou* wilt hear, O Lord my God, "Ps 38:15. O love of God that turns not away! O blessed Jesus, that turneth not away from the leprous man that fell upon his face and said, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean, but put forth thine hand and *touched* him, saying, `I will: be thou clean, 'to whom *can* we go but unto thee!" *Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verse 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt*, etc. These expressions seem to be in a great measure figurative, and significant rather of the diseased state of his mind than of his body. *William Walford.*

Verse 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt.* I know, O Lord, I have done most foolishly, to let my sores run so long without seeking for help; for now, *My wounds stink and are corrupt*, in as ill a case as Lazarus' body was when it had been four days buried; enough to make any man despair that did not know thee as I do. For, do not I know, that *nullum tempus occurrit tibi*; do not I know thou hast as well wisdom to remedy my foolishness as power to cure my wounds? Could the grave hold Lazarus when thou didst but open thy mouth to call him forth? No more can the corruption of my sores be any hindrance to their healing when thy pleasure is to have them to be cured. Although, therefore, I have done my own discretion wrong to defer my care, yet I will not do thy power wrong to despair of thy cure; for, how should I despair, who know thee to be as powerful as thou art merciful; if I may not rather say, to be as merciful as thou art powerful! *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt.* Either they must be understood literally of the sores that were in his body (as the words in the following verse may also seem to import) which he calls *wounds*, to intimate that he looked upon them as the wheals or swelling tumours (for so the original word may signify) which the rod of God had made in his flesh, or the wounds of those arrows of which he had spoken Ps 38:2, "Thine arrows stick fast in me; "or else figuratively, of any other miseries that God had brought upon him, comparing them to stinking and festering sores; either to imply the long continuance of them, or the sharp pains and sorrows which he felt in himself by reason thereof. Yet some, I know, would have it meant of the shame which his sins had brought upon him. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verses 5-6. The spiritual feeling of sin is indispensable to the feeling of salvation. A sense of the malady must ever precede, and prepare the soul for, a believing reception and due apprehension of

the remedy. Wherever God intends to reveal his Son with power, wherever he intends to make the gospel to be "a joyful sound, "he makes the conscience feel and groan under the burden of sin. And sure am I that when a man is labouring under the burden of sin, he will be full of complaint. The Bible records hundreds of the complaints of God's people under the burden of sin. *My wounds stink and are corrupt*, cries one, *because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.* "My soul, "cries another, "is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh until the grave, "Ps 88:3. "He hath led me, "groans out a third, "and brought me into darkness, but not into light." La 3:2. A living man must needs cry under such circumstances. He cannot carry the burden without complaining of its weight. He cannot feel the arrow sticking in his conscience without groaning under the pain. He cannot have the worm gnawing his vitals, without complaining of its venomous tooth. He cannot feel that God is incensed against him without bitterly complaining that the Lord is his enemy. Spiritual complaint then is a mark of spiritual life, and is one which God recognises as such. "I have surely hear Ephraim bemoaning himself." Jer 31:18. It shows that he has something to mourn over; something to make him groan being burdened; that sin has been opened up to him in its hateful malignancy; that it is a trouble and distress to his soul; that he cannot roll it like a sweet morsel under his tongue; but that it is found out by the penetrating eye, and punished by the chastening hand of God. *J. C. Philpot. 1842.*

Verse 6. *I am troubled. I writhe with pain.* This is the proper sense of the original, which means to "turn out of its proper situation, or course; "thence to be "distorted, writhed, "as a person in pain. Our Bible translation, which says in the text, *I am troubled*, adds in the margin, "wried, "an obsolete word, correctly expressing the Hebrew. *Richard Mant.*

Verse 6. *I go mourning all the day long.* And now was I both a burden and a terror to myself, nor did I ever so know, as now, what it was to be weary of my life, and yet afraid to die. Oh, how gladly now would I have been anybody but myself! Anything but a man! and in any condition but mine own! for there was nothing did pass more frequently over my mind than that it was impossible for me to be forgiven my transgression, and to be saved from wrath to come. *John Bunyan, in "Grace Abounding."*

Verse 6. Let a man see and feel himself under the bonds of guilt, in danger of hell, under the power of his lusts, enmity against God, and God a stranger to him; let but the sense of this condition lie upon his heart, and let him go on in his jollity if he can. What a woeful creature doth a man see himself now to be! He envies the happiness of the beasts that are filled, and play in their pastures. We have heard of him who when he saw a toad, stood weeping, because God had made him a *man*, so excellent a creature, and not a toad, so abominable: the goodness of God, then, it seems, as he apprehended it, made him weep; but this man meets a toad, and he weeps also, but why? because he is a *man* who thinks his estate infinitely worse than the condition of a toad, and if it were possible to attain it, would change states with the toad, that hath no guilt of sin, fears no wrath of God, is not

under power of lusts or creatures; God is not enemy to it, which is his miserable state. *Giles Firmin*, 1617-1697.

Verse 7. *For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease.* The word here used, according to Gesenius (*Lex.*), properly denotes the internal muscles of the loins near the kidneys, to which the fat adheres. The word rendered *loathsome*—the word *disease* being supplied by our translators—is derived from (hlq), *kalah*, a word which means to roast, to parch, as fruit, grain, etc.; and then, in the form used here, it means scorched, burned; hence, a burning or inflammation; and the whole phrase would be synonymous with *an inflammation of the kidneys*. The *word* here used does not imply that there was any eruption, or ulcer, though it would seem from verse five that this was the fact, and that the inflammation had produced this effect. *Albert Barnes*.

Verse 7. *A loathsome disease.* In many things our estimates are extravagant; but we never overestimate the evil of sin. It is as corrupting as it is damning. It covers the soul with plague spots, with the leprosy. Isa 1:5-6. *William S. Plumer*.

Verse 8. *I am feeble*, literally, *I am benumbed*. I have become deadly cold, cold as a corpse; possibly with reference to the burning inflammation in the previous verse, as marking the alternations in the fever fit. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 8. *I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.* Where sin is, there will never be but unquietness of heart; and an unquiet heart will always produce these miserable effects—feebleness of body, dejectedness of mind, and roaring of voice. But how can roaring stand with feebleness, which seems to require a strength of spirits? Is it not, therefore, a roaring, perhaps not so much in loudness as in an inarticulate expressing? that having done actions more like a beast than a man, I am forced to use a voice not so much of a man as of a beast? Or is it perhaps a roaring in spirit, which the heart may send forth though the body be feeble; or rather then most, when it is most feeble; not unlike the blaze of a candle then greatest when going out? Howsoever it be, this is certain: the heart is that unhappy plot of ground, which, receiving into it the accursed seed of sin, brings forth in the body and soul of man these miserable fruits: and how, then, can I be free from these weeds of the fruits, since I have received into me so great a measure of the seed? Oh, vile sin, that I could as well avoid thee as I can see thee, or could as easily resist thee as I deadly hate thee, I should not then complain of either feebleness of body, or dejectedness of mind, or roaring of voice; but I should perfectly enjoy that happy quietness in all my parts, which thou, O God, didst graciously bestow as a blessed dowry on our first parents at their creation. *Sir Richard Baker*.

Verse 8. *I have roared*, etc. It is difficult for a true penitent, in the bitterness of his soul, to go over the life which he has dragged on in sinfulness, without groaning and sighing from the bottom of his heart. But happy are these groans, happy these sighs, happy these sobs, since they flow from the influence of grace, and from the breath of the Holy Spirit, who himself in an ineffable manner groans in us and

with us, and who forms these groans in our hearts by penitence and love! but as the violence of both, that is, of penitence and of love, cannot but burst the narrow limits of a penitent heart, it must make a vent for itself by the eyes and mouth. The eyes shed tears, and the mouth sends forth sighs and groans, which it can no longer restrain; because they are driven on by the fire of divine love, and so these lamentations frame themselves into words and intelligible sentences. *Jean Baptiste Elias Avrillon, 1652-1729.*

Verse 8. *The disquietness of my heart.* David felt pains gather about his heart, and then he cried out. The heart is the mark that God principally aims at when a Christian hath turned aside from his upright course; other outward parts he may hit and deeply wound, but this is but to make holes in the heart, where the seat of unsoundness that principally offends him is. The fire which conscience kindles, it may flash forth into the eyes, and tongue, and hands, and make a man look fearfully, speak desperately, and do bloodily, against the body; but the heat of the fire is principally within, in the furnace, in the spirit; it is but some sparkles and flashes only that you see come forth at the lower holes of the furnace, which you behold in the eyes, words, and deeds of such men. *Nicholas Lockyer.*

Verse 9. There are usually, if not always, pains with desires, especially in desires after the creature, because that oftentimes there is a frustration of our desires, or an elongation of the things, the things are far off, hard to come by; our desires oftentimes are mute, they speak not; or the things that we desire, know not our minds: but our desires after God always speak, they are open unto God, he heareth their voice. *Lord, all my desire is before thee, saith David, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* Therefore it must needs be sweet, when the soul lies thus open unto God. Other desires do not assure and secure a man in the things he desires; a man may wish this and wish that, and go without both; but the soul that thus longs after God is instated in his wish, hath a present enjoyment, and certainly shall have a full enjoyment of him. "He will fulfil the desire of those that fear him: he also will hear their cry." Ps 145:19. *Joseph Symonds.*

Verse 9. *My groaning is not hid from thee.* Secret tears for secret sins are an excellent sign of a holy heart, and a healing balsam for broken spirits. God well understands the language of half words interrupted with sighs, and interprets them as the steams and breathings of a broken heart. As all our foolishness is before him to cover it, so is all our heaviness to ease it; and therefore shall our souls praise and please him more than a bullock with young horns and hoofs upon his altar. Holy mourning keeps out carnal sorrow and produces spirit joy. It stirs up the heart of a saint to beg preventing grace which no false heart can perform without secret reserves. This inward sorrow prevents open shame. God will never give up *such* souls to be trampled on by spiritual enemies, who are already humbled by themselves. In saints' humiliation there's a door opened for secret hope, because of the precious promises that are plighted to it, and especially of preventing future sin by strengthening grace. For as the love of God is the fountain of all true repentance, so it is the attractive of more incomes of divine

love to the soul. *Samuel Lee.*

Verse 10. *My heart panteth.* The verb which David here uses signifies *to travel* or *wander hither and thither*, but here it is taken for the agitation or disquietude which distress of heart engenders when we know not what to do. According as men are disquieted in mind, so do they turn themselves on all sides; and so their heart may be said to turn round, or to run to and fro. *John Calvin.*

Verse 11. *My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.* So miserable am I, that I am left alone as one utterly forsaken; they are all pieces that recoil and fly back at the first voice of the powder. Yet it is not so much me they stand aloof from as my sore; for if it were not for my sore, I should have enough of their company easily enough; but they cannot abide sores, their eyes are too tender to endure to see them, and yet hard enough not to relieve them. Or is it they stand aloof, that is, so near as to show they are willing enough to see them; but yet so far off as to show they have no meaning to come and help them! ...*My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore*, as fearing more my sore than me; but *my kinsmen stand afar off*, as fearing me no less than my sore; and where my lovers and friends by standing aloof do but violate the law of a contracted friendship, my kinsmen by standing afar off violate even the law of natural affection; and is not this a grievous thing, that the law of reason, the law of friendship, the law of nature, shall all be broken rather than I shall be relieved or find assistance? *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 11. *My lovers and my friends stand afar off.* Deserted by false friends, but conqueror through thee, to thee I speed, who though seeming to act the part of an enemy, yet never changest thy love; but lovest for ever him whom thou once hast loved. When you seem afar off, you are near. I conceive this sorrow on account of the treachery of false friends, and the cowardliness of my kinsfolk, who are to me as piercing thorns rather than sweet smelling roses. The proof of affection is seen by deeds. I hear the *name* of kinsman and friend; I see no deed. To thee, therefore, I flee, whose word is deed; for I need thy help. *From the Latin of A. Rivetus.*

Verse 13. *But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.* For why should I hear when I meant not to speak? and why should I speak when I knew beforehand I should not be heard? I knew by contesting I should but provoke them, and make them more guilty that were guilty too much before. I therefore thought it better myself to be silent than to set them a roaring and make them grow outrageous. No doubt a great wisdom in David, to know that to be deaf and dumb was in this case his best course, but yet a far greater virtue that knowing it, he was able to do it. Oh, how happy should we be, if we could always do that which we know is best to be done, and if our wills were as ready to act, as our reason is able to enact; we should then decline many rocks we now run upon, we should then avoid many errors we now run into. To be deaf and dumb are indeed great inabilities and defects, when they be natural; but when they be voluntary, and I may say artificial, they are them great abilities, or rather perfections. *Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 13. *But I, as a deaf man, heard not.* The inspired writer here compares himself to a dumb and deaf man for two reasons. In the first place, he intimates that he was so overwhelmed with the false and wicked judgments of his enemies, that he was not even permitted to open his mouth in his own defence. In the second place, he alleges before God his own patience, as a plea to induce God the more readily to have pity upon him; for such meekness and gentleness, not only with good reason, secures favour to the afflicted and the innocent, but it is also a sign of true piety. *John Calvin.*

Verse 14. *Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.* You, who truly know yourselves; by whom silent suffering, secret grief, and hidden joy are understood; by the knowledge of your own unspoken sorrow, unexpressed, because inexpressible feelings, by the consciousness of the unrevealed depths of your own nature, the earnest, but ever unsatisfied yearnings of your spirit, learn to reverence and love those by whom you are surrounded, whose inner life can never be completely read, but whom you are sure must need sacred sympathy and tender consideration. If a secret grief is constantly gnawing my heart, making my voice falter in the song of praise, may not my brother's downcast eye and heavy heart be occasioned by a similar cause; shall I condemn him for his want of gladness? No: but remember, "the heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." The silent breathings of the spirit are not for our ears; the hot tears which in secret fall, are not for our eyes; in mercy has the veil been drawn round each heart; but by the sacred memory of our own sadness, let our voice be gentle, our look tender, our tread quiet, as we pass amongst the mourners. *Jessie Coombs, in "Thoughts for the Inner Life," 1867.*

Verse 15. A man that is to go down into a deep pit, he does not throw himself headlong into it, or leap down at all adventures, but fastens a rope at top upon a cross beam or some sure place, and so lets himself down by degrees: so let thyself down into the consideration of thy sin, hanging upon Christ; and when thou art gone so low that thou canst endure no longer, but art ready to be overcome with the horror and darkness of thy miserable estate, dwell not too long at the gates of hell, lest the devil pull thee in, but wind thyself up again by renewed acts of faith, and "fly for refuge unto the hope that is set before thee." Heb 6:18. *Thomas Cole (1627-1697), in "Morning Exercises."*

Verse 17. *For I am ready to halt:* to show my infirmity in my trials and afflictions; as Jacob halted after his wrestling with God. Ge 32:31. In the Greek, *I am ready for scourges*, that is, to suffer correction and punishment for my sins: so the Chaldee saith, *for calamity.* *Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 18. Pliny writeth of some families that had private marks on their bodies peculiar to those of that line, and every man hath, as it were, a private sin, which is most justly called his; but if we will confess our sins aright, we must not leave out that sin; nay, our chiefest spite must be against it, according to David's resolve: *I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.* ...David doth not only say, *I will declare*, but, *I will be sorry for my sin.* The people of God 1Sa 7:6 in the day of their

confession not only say, "We have sinned," but draw water, and pour it out before the Lord in token of contrition. We should, in confessing sin, have our hearts so affected, that our eyes, with Job, may "pour tears before God" Job 16:20; that, with David, "rivers of tears may run down our eyes" Ps 119:136; yea, we should wish with Jeremiah, that "our head were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears." Jer 9:1. But, however, *nonne stillabit oculus noster?* if we cannot pour out, shall we not drop a tear? or at least, if we cannot shed a tear, let us breathe forth a sigh for our sins. It is only the heart broken with godly sorrow that sends forth a true confession. *Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 20. *They are mine enemies because I follow the thing that good is.* It is a bold attempt to ding Satan out of his nest. If we conform us to the men of this world we find peace with them; they will not discord with us so long as we go their way; but to shame them by a godly life is an affront they cannot digest; and to rebuke their sin, findeth at their hand all that Satan disappointed or corruption provoked can devise. A sleeping dog is quiet, but being stirred, turneth all in barking and biting. Not to do as they do is matter enough of anger, but a reproof is the highest degree of disgrace in their account. All that hatred which they ought to bear to Satan and his instruments, is turned upon God in his rebuking and reclaiming servants. That anger that in remorse should burn against their own sin is set against their reprovers. *William Struther.*

Verse 22. *O Lord my salvation.* Faith the suppliant is now made faith triumphant. *Franz Delitzsch.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

TITLE. The art of memory. Holy memorabilia. The usefulness of sacred remembrance.

Verse 1. The rebuke of God's wrath.

1. Richly deserved.
2. Reasonably dreaded.
3. Earnestly deprecated.

—*B. Davies.*

Verse 1. The evil consequences of sin in this world. *J. J. Blunt.*

Verse 1. The bitterest of bitters, *thy wrath*; why deprecated; and how escaped.

Verse 2. God sharply chasteneth many of his children, and yet for all that he loves them never a whit the less, nor withholdeth in good time his mercy from them. *Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 3. (*last clause*). Sin causes *unrest*. He who cures it alone gives rest. Dwell on both facts.

Verse 4. (*first clause*). Sin in its relations to us. To the *eye* pleasing. To the *heart* disappointing. In the *bones* vexing. Over the *head* overwhelming.

Verse 4. The confession of an awakened sinner.

Verse 4. (*last clause*). Sin.

1. Heavy—a *burden*.

2. Very heavy—*A heavy burden.*

3. Superlatively heavy—*too heavy for me.*

4. Not immoveable, for though too heavy *for me*, yet Jesus bore it.

Verse 5. *Foolishness.* The folly of sin. Everything that a man has to do with sin shows his folly.

1. Dallying with sin.

2. Committing it.

3. Continuing in it.

4. Hiding it.

5. Palliating it.

—*B. Davies.*

Verse 6. Conviction of sin. Its grief, its depth, its continuance.

Verse 6. *I go mourning.*

1. Unlawful reasons for mourning.

2. Legitimate themes for sorrow.

3. Valuable alleviations of grief.

Verse 9. The many desires of God's children: the fact that God understands them even when unexpressed; and the certainty that he will grant them.

Verse 9. Omniscience, a source of consolation to the desponding.

Verse 13. The wisdom, dignity, power, and difficulty of silence.

Verse 15. Prayer, the offspring of hope. Hope strengthened by confidence in God's answering prayer.

Verse 17. Mr. Ready to halt. His pedigree, and infirmity; his crutches, and his cure; his history, and safe departure.

Verse 18. The excellence of penitent confession.

Verse 18. The twin children of grace—confession and contrition: their mutual revelation and reaction.

Verse 18. (*last clause*). There is good reason for such sorrow, God is well pleased with it. It benefits the mourner.

Verse 19. The terrible energy and industry of the powers of evil.

Verse 22. Faith tried, faith trembling, faith crying, faith grasping, faith conquering.

Psalm 39

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. To the Chief Musician, even to Jeduthun. Jeduthun's name, which signifies praising or celebrating, was a most appropriate one for a leader in sacred psalmody. He was one of those ordained by the King's order "for song in the house of the Lord with cymbals, psalteries, and harps" 1Ch 15:6, and his children after him appear to have remained in the same hallowed service, even so late as the days of Nehemiah. To have a name and a place in Zion is no small honour, and to hold this place by a long entail of grace is an unspeakable blessing. O that our household may never lack a man to stand before the Lord God of Israel to do him service. David left this somewhat sorrowful ode in Jeduthun's hands because he thought him most fit to set it to music, or because he would distribute the sacred honour of song among all the musicians who in their turn presided in the choir. A Psalm of David. Such as his chequered life would be sure to produce; fit effusions for a man so tempted, so strong in his passions, and yet so firm in faith.

DIVISION. The psalmist, bowed down with sickness and sorrow, is burdened with unbelieving thoughts, which he resolves to stifle, lest any evil should come from their expression, Ps 39:1-2. But silence creates an insupportable grief, which at last demands utterance, and obtains it in the prayer of Ps 39:3-6, which is almost a complaint and a sigh for death, or at best a very desponding picture of human life. From Ps 39:7-13 the tone is more submissive, and the recognition of the divine hand more distinct; the cloud has evidently passed, and the mourner's heart is relieved.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *I said.* I steadily resolved and registered a determination. In his great perplexity his greatest fear was lest he should sin; and, therefore, he cast about for the most likely method for avoiding it, and he determined to be silent. It is right excellent when a man can strengthen himself in a good course by the remembrance of a well and wisely formed resolve. "What I have written I have written, "or what I have spoken I will perform, may prove a good strengthener to a man in a fixed course of right. *I will take heed to my ways.* To avoid sin one had need be very circumspect, and keep one's actions as with a guard or garrison. Unguarded ways are generally unholy ones. Heedless is another word for graceless. In times of sickness or other trouble we must watch against the sins peculiar to such trials, especially against murmuring and repining. *That I sin not with my tongue.* Tongue sins are great sins; like sparks of fire ill words spread, and do great damage. If believers utter hard words of God in times of depression, the ungodly will take them up and use them as a justification for their sinful courses. If a man's own children rail at him, no wonder if his enemies' mouths are full of abuse. Our tongue always wants watching, for it is restive as an ill broken horse; but especially must we hold it in when the sharp cuts of the Lord's rod excite it to rebel. *I will keep my mouth with a bridle,* or more accurately, with a muzzle. The original does not so much mean a bridle to check the tongue as a

muzzle to stop it altogether. David was not quite so wise as our translation would make him; if he had resolved to be very guarded in his speech, it would have been altogether commendable; but when he went so far as to condemn himself to entire silence, "even from good, "there must have been at least a little sullenness in his soul. In trying to avoid one fault, he fell into another. To use the tongue against God is a sin of commission, but not to use it at all involves an evident sin of omission. Commendable virtues may be followed so eagerly that we may fall into vices; to avoid Scylla we run into Charybdis. *While the wicked is before me.* This qualifies the silence, and almost screens it from criticism, for bad men are so sure to misuse even our holiest speech, that it is as well not to cast any of our pearls before such swine; but what if the psalmist meant, "I was silent while I had the prosperity of the wicked in my thoughts, "then we see the discontent and questioning of his mind, and the muzzled mouth indicates much that is not to be commended. Yet, if we blame we must also praise, for the highest wisdom suggests that when good men are bewildered with sceptical thoughts, they should not hasten to repeat them, but should fight out their inward battle upon its own battlefield. The firmest believers are exercised with unbelief, and it would be doing the devil's work with a vengeance if they were to publish abroad all their questionings and suspicions. If I have the fever myself, there is no reason why I should communicate it to my neighbours. If any on board the vessel of my soul are diseased, I will put my heart in quarantine, and allow none to go on shore in the boat of speech till I have a clean bill of health.

Verse 2. *I was dumb with silence.* He was as strictly speechless as if he had been tongueless—not a word escaped him. He was as silent as the dumb. *I held my peace, even from good.* Neither bad nor good escaped his lips. Perhaps he feared that if he began to talk at all, he would be sure to speak amiss, and, therefore, he totally abstained. It was an easy, safe, and effectual way of avoiding sin, if it did not involve a neglect of the duty which he owed to God to speak well of his name. Our divine Lord was silent before the wicked, but not altogether so, for before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession, and asserted his kingdom. A sound course of action may be pushed to the extreme, and become a fault. *And my sorrow was stirred.* Inward grief was made to work and ferment by want of vent. The pent up floods are swollen and agitated. Utterance is the natural outlet for the heart's anguish, and silence is, therefore, both an aggravation of the evil and a barrier against its cure. In such a case the resolve to hold one's peace needs powerful backing, and even this is most likely to give way when grief rushes upon the soul. Before a flood gathering in force and foaming for outlet the strongest banks are likely to be swept away. Nature may do her best to silence the expression of discontent, but unless grace comes to her rescue, she will be sure to succumb.

Verse 3. *My heart was hot within me.* The friction of inward thoughts produced an intense mental heat. The door of his heart was shut, and with the fire of sorrow burning within, the chamber of his soul soon grew unbearable with heat. Silence is an awful thing for a sufferer, it is the surest method

to produce madness. Mourner, tell your sorrow; do it first and most fully to God, but even to pour it out before some wise and godly friend is far from being wasted breath. *While I was musing the fire burned.* As he thought upon the ease of the wicked and his own daily affliction, he could not unravel the mystery of providence, and therefore he became greatly agitated. While his heart was musing it was fusing, for the subject was confusing. It became harder every moment to be quiet; his volcanic soul was tossed with an inward ocean of fire, and heaved to and fro with a mental earthquake; and eruption was imminent, the burning lava must pour forth in a fiery stream. *Then spake I with my tongue.* The original is grandly laconic. *I spake.* The muzzled tongue burst all its bonds. The gag was hurled away. Misery, like murder, will out. You can silence praise, but anguish is clamorous. Resolve or no resolve, heed or no heed, sin or no sin, the impetuous torrent forced for itself a channel and swept away every restraint.

Verse 4. *Lord.* It is well that the vent of his soul was toward God and not towards man. Oh! if my swelling heart must speak, Lord let it speak with thee; even if there be too much of natural heat in what I say, thou wilt be more patient with me than man, and upon thy purity it can cast no stain; whereas if I speak to my fellows, they may harshly rebuke me or else learn evil from my petulance. *Make me to know mine end.* Did he mean the same as Elias in his agony, "Let me die, I am no better than my father"? Perhaps so. At any rate, he rashly and petulantly desired to know the end of his wretched life, that he might begin to reckon the days till death should put a finish to his woe. Impatience would pry between the folded leaves. As if there were no other comfort to be had, unbelief would fain hide itself in the grave and sleep itself into oblivion. David was neither the first nor the last who have spoken unadvisedly in prayer. Yet, there is a better meaning: the psalmist would know more of the shortness of life, that he might better bear its transient ills, and herein we may safely kneel with him, uttering the same petition. That there is no end to its misery is the hell of hell; that there is an end to life's sorrow is the hope of all who have a hope beyond the grave. God is the best teacher of the divine philosophy which looks for an expected end. They who see death through the Lord's glass, see a fair sight, which makes them forget the evil of life in foreseeing the end of life. *And the measure of my days.* David would fain be assured that his days would be soon over and his trials with them; he would be taught anew that life is measured out to us by wisdom, and is not a matter of chance. As the trader measures his cloth by inches, and ells, and yards, so with scrupulous accuracy is life measured out to man. *That I may know how frail I am,* or when I shall cease to be. Alas! poor human nature, dear as life is, man quarrels with God at such a rate that he would sooner cease to be than bear the Lord's appointment. Such pettishness in a saint! Let us wait till we are in a like position, and we shall do no better. The ship on the stocks wonders that the barque springs a leak, but when it has tried the high seas, it marvels that its timbers hold together in such storms. David's case is not recorded for our imitation, but for our learning.

Verse 5. *Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth.* Upon consideration, the psalmist finds little room to bewail the length of life, but rather to bemoan its shortness. What changeful creatures we are! One moment we cry to be rid of existence, and the next instant beg to have it prolonged! A handbreadth is one of the shortest natural measures, being the breadth of four fingers; such is the brevity of life, by divine appointment; God hath made it so, fixing the period in wisdom. The *behold* calls us to attention; to some the thoughts of life's hastiness will bring the most acute pain, to others the most solemn earnestness. How well should those live who are to live so little! Is my earthly pilgrimage so brief? then let me watch every step of it, that in the little of time there may be much of grace. *And mine age is as nothing before thee.* So short as not to amount to an entity. Think of eternity, and an angel is as a newborn babe, the world a fresh blown bubble, the sun a spark just fallen from the fire, and man a nullity. Before the Eternal, all the age of frail man is less than one ticking of a clock. *Verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.* This is the surest truth, that nothing about man is either sure or true. Take man at his best, he is but a man, and a man is a mere breath, unsubstantial as the wind. Man is *settled*, as the margin has it, and by divine decree it is settled that he shall not be settled. He is constant only in inconstancy. His vanity is his only verity; his best, of which he is vain, is but vain; and this is verily true of every man, that everything about him is every way fleeting. This is sad news for those whose treasures are beneath the moon; those whose glorying is in themselves may well hang the flag half mast; but those whose best estate is settled upon them in Christ Jesus in the land of unfading flowers, may rejoice that it is no vain thing in which they trust.

Verse 6. *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew.* Life is but a passing pageant. This alone is sure, that nothing is sure. All around us shadows mock us; we walk among them, and too many live for them as if the mocking images were substantial; acting their borrowed parts with zeal fit only to be spent on realities, and lost upon the phantoms of this passing scene. Worldly men walk like travellers in a mirage, deluded, duped, deceived, soon to be filled with disappointment and despair. *Surely they are disquieted in vain.* Men fret, and fume, and worry, and all for mere nothing. They are shadows pursuing shadows, while death pursues them. He who toils and contrives, and wearies himself for gold, for fame, for rank, even if he wins his desire, finds at the end of his labour lost; for like the treasure of the miser's dream, it all vanishes when the man awakes in the world of reality. Read well this text, and then listen to the clamour of the market, the hum of the exchange, the din of the city streets, and remember that all this *noise* (for so the word means), this breach of quiet, is made about unsubstantial, fleeting vanities. Broken rest, anxious fear, over worked brain, failing mind, lunacy, these are the steps in the process of disquieting with many, and all to be rich, or, in other words, to load one's self with the thick clay; clay, too, which a man must leave so soon. *He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.* He misses often the result of his ventures, for there are

many slips between the cup and the lips. His wheat is sheaved, but an interloping robber bears it away—as often happens with the poor Eastern husbandman; or, the wheat is even stored, but the invader feasts thereon. Many work for others all unknown to them. Especially does this verse refer to those all gathering muckrakes, who in due time are succeeded by all scattering forks, which scatter riches as profusely as their sires gathered them parsimoniously. We know not our heirs, for our children die, and strangers fill the old ancestral halls; estates change hands, and entail, though riveted with a thousand bonds, yields to the corroding power of time. Men rise up early and sit up late to build a house, and then the stranger tramps along its passages, laughs in its chambers, and forgetful of its first builder, calls it all his own. Here is one of the evils under the sun for which no remedy can be prescribed.

Verse 7. *And now, Lord, what wait I for?* What is there in these phantoms to enchant me? Why should I linger where the prospect is so uninviting, and the present so trying? It were worse than vanity to linger in the abodes of sorrow to gain a heritage of emptiness. The psalmist, therefore, turns to his God, in disgust of all things else; he has thought on the world and all things in it, and is relieved by knowing that such vain things are all passing away; he has cut all cords which bound him to earth, and is ready to sound "Boot and saddle, up and away." *My hope is in thee.* The Lord is self-existent and true, and therefore worthy of the confidence of men; he will live when all the creatures die, and his fulness will abide when all second causes are exhausted; to him, therefore, let us direct our expectation, and on him let us rest our confidence. Away from sand to rock let all wise builders turn themselves, for if not today, yet surely ere long, a storm will rise before which nothing will be able to stand but that which has the lasting element of faith in God to cement it. David had but one hope, and that hope entered within the veil, hence he brought his vessel to safe anchorage, and after a little drifting all was peace.

Verse 8. *Deliver me from all my transgressions.* How fair a sign it is when the psalmist no longer harps upon his sorrows, but begs freedom from his sins! What is sorrow when compared with sin! Let but the poison of sin be gone from the cup, and we need not fear its gall, for the bitter will act medicinally. None can deliver a man from his transgression but the blessed One who is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins; and when he once works this great deliverance for a man from the cause, the consequences are sure to disappear too. The thorough cleansing desired is well worthy of note: to be saved from some transgressions would be of small benefit; total and perfect deliverance is needed. *Make me not the reproach of the foolish.* The wicked are the foolish here meant: such are always on the watch for the faults of saints, and at once make them the theme of ridicule. It is a wretched thing for a man to be suffered to make himself the butt of unholy scorn by apostasy from the right way. Alas, how many have thus exposed themselves to well deserved reproach! Sin and shame go together, and from both David would fain be preserved.

Verse 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.* This had been far clearer if it had been rendered, "I am silenced, I will not open my mouth." Here we have a nobler silence, purged of all sullenness, and sweetened with submission. Nature failed to muzzle the mouth, but grace achieved the work in the worthiest manner. How like in appearance may two very different things appear! silence is ever silence, but it may be sinful in one case and saintly in another. What a reason for hushing every murmuring thought is the reflection, "because thou didst it."! It is his right to do as he wills, and he always wills to do that which is wisest and kindest; why should I then arraign his dealings? Nay, if it be indeed the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.

Verse 10. *Remove thy stroke away from me.* Silence from all repining did not prevent the voice of prayer, which must never cease. In all probability the Lord would grant the psalmist's petition, for he usually removes affliction when we are resigned to it; if we kiss the rod, our Father always burns it. When we are still, the rod is soon still. It is quite consistent with resignation to pray for the removal of a trial. David was fully acquiescent in the divine will, and yet found it in his heart to pray for deliverance; indeed, it was while he was rebellious that he was prayerless about his trial, and only when he became submissive did he plead for mercy. *I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.* Good pleas may be found in our weakness and distress. It is well to show our Father the bruises which his scourge has made, for peradventure his fatherly pity will bind his hands, and move him to comfort us in his bosom. It is not to consume us, but to consume our sins, that the Lord aims at in his chastisements.

Verse 11. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity.* God does not trifle with his rod; he uses it because of sin, and with a view to whip us from it; hence he means his strokes to be felt, and felt they are. *Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* As the moth frets the substance of the fabric, mars all its beauty, and leaves it worn out and worthless, so do the chastisements of God discover to us our folly, weakness, and nothingness, and make us feel ourselves to be as worn out vestures, worthless and useless. Beauty must be a poor thing when a moth can consume it and a rebuke can mar it. All our desires and delights are wretched moth eaten things when the Lord visits us in his anger. *Surely every man is vanity.* He is as Trapp wittily says "a curious picture of nothing." He is unsubstantial as his own breath, a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. *Selah.* Well may this truth bring us to a pause, like the dead body of Amasa, which, lying in the way, stopped the hosts of Joab.

Verse 12. *Hear my prayer, O Lord.* Drown not my pleadings with the sound of thy strokes. Thou hast heard the clamour of my sins, Lord; hear the laments of my prayers. *And give ear unto my cry.* Here is an advance in intensity: a cry is more vehement, pathetic, and impassioned, than a prayer. The main thing was to have the Lord's ear and heart. *Hold not thy peace at my tears.* This is a yet higher degree of importunate pleading. Who can withstand tears, which are the irresistible weapons of

weakness? How often women, children, beggars, and sinners, have betaken themselves to tears as their last resort, and therewith have won the desire of their hearts!—"This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul, "falls not in vain. Tears speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues; they act as keys upon the wards of tender hearts, and mercy denies them nothing, if through them the weeper looks to richer drops, even to the blood of Jesus. When our sorrows pull up the sluices of our eyes, God will ere long interpose and turn our mourning into joy. Long may he be quiet as though he regarded not, but the hour of deliverance will come, and come like the morning when the dewdrops are plentiful. *For I am a stranger with thee.* Not *to* thee, but *with* thee. Like thee, my Lord, a stranger among the sons of men, an alien from my mother's children. God made the world, sustains it, and owns it, and yet men treat him as though he were a foreign intruder; and as they treat the Master, so do they deal with the servants. "It is no surprising thing that we should be unknown." These words may also mean, "I share the hospitality of God, "like a stranger entertained by a generous host. Israel was bidden to deal tenderly with the stranger, and the God of Israel has in much compassion treated us poor aliens with unbounded liberality. *And a sojourner, as all my fathers were.* They knew that this was not their rest; they passed through life in pilgrim guise, they used the world as travellers use an inn, and even so do I. Why should we dream of rest on earth when our fathers' sepulchres are before our eyes? If they had been immortal, their sons would have had an abiding city this side the tomb; but as the sires were mortal, so must their offspring pass away. All of our lineage, without exception, were passing pilgrims, and such are we. David uses the fleeting nature of our life as an argument for the Lord's mercy, and it is such a one as God will regard. We show pity to poor pilgrims, and so will the Lord.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

TITLE.—"To Jeduthun." A Levite of the family of Merari, and one of the great masters of the temple music. The department superintended by Jeduthun and his colleagues in the temple service was that of the "instruments of the song of God, "by which are intended the nebel or psaltery, the kinnor or harp, and the metsiltaim or cymbals. In 2Ch 35:15, Jeduthun is called "the king's seer, " which would seem to indicate that he was the medium of divine guidance to David. The name occurs in the title of Psalms 39, 62, 77; where some have thought that it indicates some special kind of composition, and others some instrument of music, but without reason. *William Lindsay Alexander, in Kitto's Cyclopaedia.*

Whole Psalm. The most beautiful of all the elegies in the psalter. *H. Ewald.*

Verse 1. *I said.* It was to himself that he said it; and it is impossible for any other to prove a good or a wise man, without much of this kind of speech to himself. It is one of the most excellent and distinguishing faculties of a reasonable creature; much beyond vocal speech, for in that, some birds

may imitate us; but neither bird nor beast has anything of this kind of language, of reflecting or discoursing with itself. It is a wonderful brutality in the greatest part of men, who are so little conversant in this kind of speech, being framed and disposed for it, and which is not only of itself excellent, but of continual use and advantage; but it is a common evil among men to go abroad, and out of themselves, which is a madness, and a true distraction. It is true, a man hath need of a well set mind, when he speaks to himself; for otherwise, he may be worse company to himself than if he were with others. But he ought to endeavour to have a better with him, to call in God to his heart to dwell with him. If thus we did, we should find how sweet this were to speak to ourselves, by now and then intermixing our speech with discourses unto God. For want of this, the most part not only lose their time in vanity, in their converse abroad with others, but do carry in heaps of that vanity to the stock which is in their own hearts, and do converse with them in secret, which is the greatest and deepest folly in the world. *Robert Leighton.*

Verse 1. No lesson so hard to be learned of us here, as the wise and discreet government of the tongue. David promised a singular care of this, *I said, I will take heed*, etc. Socrates reports of one Pambo, an honest, well meaning man, who came to his friend, desiring him to teach him one of David's Psalms, he read to him this verse. He answered: this one verse is enough, if I learn it well. Nineteen years after, he said, in all that time, he had hardly learned that one verse. *Samuel Page.*

Verse 1. *That I sin not with my tongue.* Man's mouth, though it be but a little hole, will hold a world full of sin. For there is not any sin forbidden in the law or gospel which is not spoken by the tongue, as well as thought in the heart, or done in the life. Is it not then almost as difficult to rule the tongue as to rule the world? *Edward Reyner.*

Verse 1. *I will keep a muzzle on my mouth, whilst a wicked man is before me.* *New Translation, by Charles Carter,*

Verse 1. *While the wicked is before me.* It is a vexation to be tied to hear so much impertinent babbling in the world, but profitable to discern and abhor it. A wonder that men can cast out so much wind, and the more they have to utter, the more they are prodigal of their own breath and of the patience of others, and careless of their own reckoning. If they believe to give account of every idle word, they would be more sparing of foolish speaking. I like either to be silent, or to speak that that may edify. At tables or meetings, I cannot stop the mouth of others, yet may I close mine own ears, and by a heavenly soul speech with God divert my mind from fruitless talking. Though I be among them I shall as little partake their prattling as they do my meditation. *William Struther.*

Verse 2. *I was dumb with silence*, etc. That is, for a while I did what I resolved; I was so long wholly silent, that I seemed in a manner to be dumb, and not able to speak. *I held my peace, even from good*; that is, I forbore to speak what I might well and lawfully enough have spoken, as from alleging anything that I might have said in mine own defence, from making my complaint to God, and desiring

justice at his hands, and such like; to wit, lest by degrees I should have been brought to utter anything that was evil, and whilst I intended only to speak that which was good, some unseemly word might suddenly slip from me; or lest mine enemies should misconstrue anything I spake. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 2. *I was dumb with silence.* We shall enquire what kind of *dumbness* or *silence* this of the psalmist was, which he is commended for, and which would so well beseem us when we smart under the rod of God, and then the doctrine will be, in a great measure, evident by its own light. We shall proceed to our inquiry, 1. Negatively, to prevent mistakes. 2. Positively, and show you what it doth import.

First, negatively. 1. This dumbness doth not import any such thing, as if the prophet had been brought to that pass that he had nothing to say to God by way of prayer and supplication. He was not so dumb, but that he could *pray and cry too*. Ps 39:8,10-11. 2. Nor was he so dumb, as that he could not frame to the confession and bewailing of his sins. 3. Nor was it a dumbness of stupidity and senselessness. It doth not imply any such thing, as if by degrees he grew to that pass, he cared not for, or made no matter of his affliction, but set, as the proverb is, an hard heart against his hard hap. No, he did make his moan to God, and as he smarted, so he did lament under the sense of his afflicting hand. 4. Neither was he so dumb as not to answer God's voice in the rod that was upon him. 5. Much less was he dumb, and kept silence in any such sort as they did of whom Amos speaks Am 6:10, that in their misery they took up a resolution *to mention the name of God no more*, in whom they had gloried formerly.

Secondly, affirmatively. 1. He was dumb so as neither to complain of, nor quarrel with God's providence, nor to entertain any hard thoughts against him. Complain *to* God he did; but *against* him he durst not. 2. He neither did nor durst quarrel, or fall out with the ways of holiness for all his sufferings, a thing we are naturally prone unto. 3. He was dumb, so as not to defend himself, or justify his own ways before God, as if they were righteous, and he had not deserved what he suffered. 4. He was dumb, so as to hearken to the voice of the rod. "I will (saith he in another place) hear what God the Lord will speak." Ps 85:8. Now a man cannot listen to another while he will have all the talk and discourse to himself. 5. Lastly, the prophet was dumb, that is, he did acquiesce, and rest satisfied with God's dispensation; and that not only as good, but as best. *Condensed from a Funeral Sermon by Thomas Burroughes, B.D., entitled, "A Sovereign Remedy for all kinds of Grief," 1657.*

Verse 2. *I held my peace.* A Christian being asked what fruit he had by Christ: Is not this fruit, said he, not to be moved at your reproaches? In cases of this nature, we must refer all to God; *si tu tacueris, Deus loquitur*; if thou hold thy peace, God speaks for thee; and if God speaks for us, it is better than we can speak for yourselves. David saith, *Obmutui, quia tu fecisti. I held my peace, for it was thy doing.* *Christopher Sutton, B.D.,—1629, in Disce Vicere.*

Verses 2-9. An invalid who had been ordered a couple of pills, took them very absurdly, for, in place of swallowing them at once, he rolled them about in his mouth, ground them to pieces, and so tasted their full bitterness. Gotthold was present, and thus mused. The insults and calumnies of a slanderer and adversary are bitter pills, and all do not understand the art of swallowing without chewing them. To the Christian, however, they are wholesome in many ways. They remind him of his guilt, they try his meekness and patience, they show him what he needs to guard against, and at last they redound to his honour and glory in the sight of him for whose sake they were endured. In respect of the pills of slander, however, as well as the others, it is advisable not to roll them about continually in our minds, or judge of them according to the flesh, and the world's opinion. This will only increase their bitterness, spread the savour of it to the tongue, and fill the heart with proportional enmity. The true way is to *swallow, keep silence, and forget*. We must inwardly devour our grief, and say, *I will be dumb, and not open my mouth, because thou didst it*. The best antidotes to the bitterness of slander, are the sweet promises and consolations of Scripture, of which not the least is this, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Mt 5:11-12. Alas, my God! how hard it is to swallow the pills of obloquy, to bless them that curse me, to do good to them that hate me, and to pray for them that despitefully use me! *But, Lord, as thou wilt have it so, give it as thou wilt have it*, for it is a matter in which, without thy grace, I can do nothing! *Christian Scriver*.

Verse 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it*. See David's carriage here; it was a patience not constrained, but from satisfaction of spirit: he saw love in his affliction, and that sweetened his soul. *Joseph Symonds*.

Verse 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it*. God is training up his children here. This is the true character of his dealings with them. The education of his saints is the object he has in view. It is training for the kingdom; it is education for eternity...It is the discipline of love. Every step of it is kindness. There is no wrath nor vengeance in any part of the process. The discipline of the school may be harsh and stern; but that of the family is love. We are sure of this; and the consolation which it affords is unutterable. Love will not wrong us. There will be no needless suffering. Were this but kept in mind there would be fewer hard thoughts of God amongst men, even when his strokes are most severe. I know not a better illustration of what the feelings of a saint should be, in the hour of bitterness, than the case of Richard Cameron's father. The aged saint was in prison "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." The bleeding head of his martyred son was brought to him by his unfeeling persecutors, and he was asked derisively if he knew it. "I know it, I know it,"—said the father, as he kissed the mangled forehead of his fair haired son—"it is my son's, my own dear son's! It is the Lord! good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me or mine, but who hath made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days." *Horatius Bonar, in "The Night of Weeping,*

"1847.

Verse 9. *Because thou didst it.* This holy man had a breach made both at his body and spirit at this time; he was sick and sad; yet he remembers from whose hand the blow came. Thou, Lord, didst it; thou, whom I love dearly, and so can take it kindly; thou whom I have offended, and so take it patiently; yea, thou, who mightest have cast me into a bed of flames, instead of my bed of sickness, and therefore I accept thy correction thankfully. Thus he catches at the blow without retorting it back upon God by any quarrelling discontented language. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 9. *Because thou didst it.* We digest not a blow from our equals, but a blow from our king we can well digest. If the King of kings lays his hand on our backs, let us, beloved, lay our hands on our mouths. I am sure this stopped David's mouth from venting fretful speeches. "I held my tongue and said nothing." Why didst thou so, David? *Because thou, Lord, didst it;* and God gives this testimony of such an one; that he is a prudent man that keeps silence at an evil time. Am 5:13. *Nicholas Estwick, B.D., 1644.*

Verse 9. Perkins, in his *"Salve for a Sick Man,* "gives the "last words" of many holy men, among others of Calvin:—"I held my tongue, because thou, Lord, hast done it—I mourned as a dove—Lord, you ground me to powder, but it suffices me because it is thy hand."

Verse 9. I wondered once at providence, and called white providence black and unjust, that I should be smothered in a town where no soul will take Christ off my hand. But providence hath another lustre (shining; appearance) with God than with my bleared eyes. I proclaim myself a blind body, who knoweth not black and white, in the unco (strange) course of God's providence. Suppose that Christ should set hell where heaven is, and devils up in glory beside the elect angels (which yet cannot be), I would I had a heart to acquiesce in his way, without further dispute. I see that infinite wisdom is the mother of his judgments, and that his ways pass finding out. I cannot learn, but I desire to learn, to bring my thoughts, will, and lusts in under (close under) Christ's feet, that he may trample upon them. But, alas! I am still upon Christ's wrong side. *Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 9. A little girl, in the providence of God, was born deaf and dumb. She was received, and instructed, at an institution established for these afflicted ones. A visitor was one day requested to examine the children thus sadly laid aside from childhood's common joys. Several questions were asked, and quickly answered by means of a slate and pencil. At length the gentleman wrote, *Why were you born deaf and dumb?* A look of anguish clouded for the moment the expressive face of the little girl; but it quickly passed, as she took her slate, and wrote, *"Even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight."* *Mrs. Rogers, in "The Shepherd King."*

Verse 10. *Remove thy plague away from me:* thy plague and mine; thine by affliction, mine by passion; thine because thou didst send it, mine because I endure it; thine because it comes from thy justice, mine because it answers my injustice; remit what I have done, and remove what thou hast

done. But whosoever laid it on, the Lord will take it off. *Thomas Adams.*

Verse 10. *Remove*, etc. Having first prayed off his sin, he would now pray off his pain, though it less troubled him; and for ease he repairs to *Jehovah that healeth*, as well as woundeth. Ho 6:1. *John Trapp.*

Verse 11. *Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* The meaning may be, As the moth crumbles into dust under the slightest pressure, or the gentlest touch, so man dissolves with equal ease, and vanishes into darkness, under the finger of the Almighty. *Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture.*

Verse 11. *Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* Moths I must not omit naming. I once saw some knives, the black bone hafts of which were said to have been half consumed by them. I also saw the remains of a hair seated sofa which had been devoured. It is no uncommon thing to find dresses consumed in a single night. In Isa 51:6, "wax old" probably refers to a garment that is moth eaten. So in Ps 6:7 31:9, *consumed* means moth eaten; and again in Ps 39:11. *John Gadsby.*

Verse 11. *Like a moth.* The moths of the East are very large and beautiful, but short lived. After a few showers these splendid insects may be seen fluttering in every breeze, but the dry weather, and their numerous enemies, soon consign them to the common lot. Thus the beauty of man consumes away like that of this gay rover, dressed in his robes of purple, and scarlet, and green. *John Kitto.*

Verse 11. The body of man is as a "garment" to the soul: in this garment sin hath lodged a "moth," which, by degrees, fretteth and weareth away, first, the beauty, then the strength, and finally, the contexture of its parts. Whoever has watched the progress of a consumption, or any other lingering distemper, nay, the slow and silent devastations of time alone, in the human frame, will need no farther illustration of this just and affecting similitude; but will discern at once the propriety of the reflection which follows upon it. *Surely every man is vanity. George Horne.*

Verse 11. *Surely every man is vanity.* What is greatness? Can we predicate it of man, independently of his qualities as an immortal being? or of his actions, independently of principles and motives? Then the glitter of nobility is not superior to the plumage of the peacock; nor the valour of Alexander to the fury of a tiger; nor the sensual delights of Epicurus to those of any animal that roams the forest. *Ebenezer Porter, D.D., in Lectures on Homiletics, 1834.*

Verse 12. *Hear my prayer, O Lord*, etc. Now, in this prayer of David, we find three things, which are the chief qualifications of all acceptable prayers. The first is *humility*. He humbly confesses his sins, and his own weakness and worthlessness. We are not to put on a stoical, flinty kind of spirit under our affliction, that so we may seem to shun womanish repinings and complaints, lest we run into the other evil, of *despising the hand of God*, but we are to humble our proud hearts, and break our unruly passions...The second qualification of this prayer is, *fervency* and *importunity*, which appears in the elegant gradation of the words, *Hear my prayer*, my words; if not that, yet, *Give ear to my cry*, which

is louder; and if that prevail not, yet, *Hold not thy peace at my tears*, which is the loudest of all; so David, elsewhere, calls it *the voice of weeping*. ...The third qualification is *faith*. "He who comes to God must believe that he is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb 11:6. And, certainly, as he that comes to God must believe this, so he that believes this, cannot but come to God; and if he be not presently answered, "he that believes makes no haste, "he resolves patiently to wait for the Lord, and go to no other. *Condensed from Robert Leighton*.

Verse 12. *Hold not thy peace at my tears*. We may, in all humility, plead our heart breakings and weepings in sense of want of mercies which we crave, and our pantings and faintings after the same. *Thomas Cobbett*.

Verse 12. *For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were*. Both in thy judgment expressed Le 25:23, and in their own opinion Heb 11:13. Upon which account thou didst take a special care of them, and therefore do so to me also. *Matthew Poole*.

Verse 12. *I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner*. How settled soever their condition be, yet this is the temper of the saints upon earth—to count themselves but strangers. All men indeed are strangers and sojourners, but the saints do best discern it, and most freely acknowledge it. Wicked men have no firm dwelling upon earth, but that is against their intentions; their inward thought and desire is that they may abide for ever; they are strangers against their wills, their abode is uncertain in the world, and they cannot help it. And pray mark, there are two distinct words used in this case, *strangers* and *sojourners*. A stranger is one that hath his abode in a foreign country, that is not a native and a denizen of the place, though he liveth there, and in opposition to the natives he is called a stranger: as if a Frenchman should live in England, he is a stranger. But a *sojourner* is one that intends not to settle, but only passes through a place, and is in motion travelling homeward. So the children of God in relation to a country of their own in another place, namely, heaven, they are denizens there, but strangers in the world; and they are sojourners and pilgrims in regard of their motion and journey towards their country. *Thomas Manton*.

Verse 12. *A Stranger*. 1. A stranger is one that is absent from his country, and from his father's house: so are we, heaven is our country, God is there, and Christ is there. 2. A stranger in a foreign country is not known, nor valued according to his birth and breeding: so the saints walk up and down in the world like princes in disguise. 3. Strangers are liable to inconveniences: so are godly men in the world. Religion, saith Tertullian, is like a strange plant brought from a foreign country, and doth not agree with the nature of the soil, it thrives not in the world. 4. A stranger is patient, standeth not for ill usage, and is contented with pilgrim's fare and lodging. We are now abroad and must expect hardship. 5. A stranger is wary, that he may not give offence, and incur the hatred and displeasure of the natives. 6. A stranger is thankful for the least favour; so we must be thankfully contented with the things God hath bestowed upon us: anything in a strange country is much. 7. A stranger, that hath a

journey to go, would pass over it as soon as he can, and so we, who have a journey to heaven desire to be dissolved. 8. A stranger buyeth not such things as he cannot carry with him; he doth not buy trees, house, household stuff, but jewels and pearls, and such things as are portable. Our greatest care should be to get the jewels of the covenant, the graces of God's Spirit, those things that will abide with us. 9. A stranger's heart is in his country; so is a saint's. 10. A stranger is inquisitive after the way, fearing lest he should go amiss, so is a Christian. 11. A stranger provides for his return, as a merchant, that he may return richly laden. So we must appear before God in Sion. What manner of persons ought we to be? Let us return from our travel well provided. *Condensed from Thomas Manton.*

Verse 13. *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.* Man in his corrupt state is like Nebuchadnezzar, he hath a beast's heart, that craves no more than the satisfaction of his sensual appetite; but when renewed by grace, then his understanding returns to him, by which he is enabled in praying for temporals to elevate his desires to a nobler end. Doth David pray that some farther time may be added to his temporal life? It is not out of a fond love for this world, but to prepare himself the better for another. Is he comforted with hopes of a longer stay here? It is not this world's carnal pleasures that kindle this joy in his holy breast, but the advantage that thereby he shall have for praising God in the land of the living... *O spare me, that I may recover strength.* David was not yet recovered out of that sin which had brought him exceeding low as you may perceive, Ps 39:10-11. And the good man cannot think of dying with any willingness till his heart be in a holier frame: and for the peace of the gospel, serenity of conscience, and inward joy; alas! all unholiness is to it as poison is to the spirits which drink them up. *William Gurnall.*

Verse 13. *O spare me, etc.* Attachment to life, the feeling cherished by the psalmist, when he thus appealed to the Sovereign of the universe, varies in its character with the occasions and the sentiments by which it is elicited and confirmed. Take one view of it, and you pronounce it *criminal*; take another, and you pronounce it *innocent*; take a third, and you pronounce it *laudable*.

1. Life may inspire a *criminal* attachment, warranting our censure. The most obvious and aggravated case is that in which the attachment has its foundations in the opportunities which life affords, of procuring "the wages of unrighteousness, "and "the pleasures of sin."

2. Life may inspire an *innocent* attachment, awakening our sympathy...Life is a scene in which we often descry a verdant and luxuriant spot, teeming with health, and ease, and harmony, and joy. We have beheld the husbands and the wives whose interwoven regards have, from year to year, alleviated all their afflictions, and heightened all their privileges. We have beheld the parents and the children whose fellowship has yielded them, through the shifting seasons, a daily feast. There are indulgent masters, and faithful servants; some neighbourhoods are undisturbed; some Christian societies are exquisitely attractive; here and there we have intercourse with those individuals in

whom are seen the beauties of high character irradiated by the beams of general prosperity. You would pronounce no censure on a man thus happily connected, were he, when beginning to languish, as one "going the way of all the earth, to cry, "*O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*

3. The last view which it has been proposed to take of human life, shows that it may inspire a *laudable* attachment, at once challenging our approbation, and urging us to bring our minds under its influence. The language before us admits of being illustrated as the prayer of a *penitent*, a *saint*, and a *philanthropist*.

(a). Commend him who pleads for life as a *penitent*. Was it recently that the Holy Spirit first wounded him with the arrows of conviction? Perhaps, he doubts the source, the quality, and the result, of his powerful feelings. He knows that we may be solemnly impressed, without being converted. There are many considerations which entitle to favourable opinion those who, not having arrived at a view of their moral state, at once evident and encouraging, wish earnestly to live till grace shall have carried them from victory to victory, and enabled them "to make" their "calling and election sure." Even they may fall from their steadfastness; and these words, "O spare me, that I may recover strength, "may proceed from the lips of a backslider, once more blushing, trembling, and petitioning to be restored.

(b). Commend him, in the next place, who pleads for life, as a *saint*. ...The distinguishing office of pleading, acting, and suffering, for the advancement of the divine honour among the profane, the sensual, the formal, and the worldly is delegated, exclusively, to "the saints which are upon the earth." Yet, surely he whose attachment to life is strongly enhanced by a commission which dooms him to the contradiction of sinners, and defers "the fulness of joy, "a saint so magnanimous and devoted, puts forth the expressions of a piety which the very angels are compelled to revere.

(c). Commend him, finally, who pleads for life as a *philanthropist*. I refer to the generous *patron*, a man intent on doing good. I would also refer to a fond *parent*. I would now refer to "*a preacher of righteousness*," "a good minister of Jesus Christ."

Outline of a Sermon entitled "Attachment to Life, "preached by *Joseph Hughes, M.A., as a Funeral Sermon for Rev. John Owen, M.A., 1822.*

Verse 13. May not the very elect and faithful themselves fear the day of judgment, and be far from fetching comfort at it? I answer, he may. First, at his first conversion and soon after, before he have gotten a full persuasion of the remission of his sins. And again, in some spiritual desertion, when the Lord seems to leave a man to himself, as he did David and others, he may fear to think of the same. And lastly, when he hath fallen into some great sin after he is a strong man in Christ, he may fear death and judgment, and be constrained to pray with Job and David, *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.* *John Barlow's Sermon, 1618.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verses 1-2. I was dumb, etc.

1. There is a time to be silent. He had been enabled to do this when reproached and unjustly accused by others. He did it for good; others might attribute it to sullenness, or pride, or timidity, or conscious guilt; but he did it for good. Breathe upon a polished mirror and it will evaporate and leave it brighter than before; endeavour to wipe it off, and the mark will remain.

2. There is a time to meditate in silence. The greater the silence without, often the greater commotion within. "*His heart was hot.*" The more he thought, the warmer he grew. The fire of pity and compassion, the fire of love, the fire of holy zeal burned within him.

3. There is a time to speak. "*Then spake I.*" The time to speak is when the truth is clear and strong in the mind, and the feeling of the truth is burning in the heart. The emotions burst forth as from a volcano. Jer 20:8-9. The language should always be a faithful representation of the mind and the heart. *G. Rogers, Tutor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle College.*

Verse 2. There is a sevenfold silence.

1. A *stoical* silence.
2. A *politic* silence.
3. A *foolish* silence.
4. A *sullen* silence.
5. A *forced* silence.
6. A *despairing* silence.
7. A *prudent, a holy, a gracious* silence.

—Thomas Brooks' "Mute Christian."

Verse 4. *Make me to know mine end.*

1. *What we may desire to know about our end. Not its date, place, circumstances, but*

(a). *Its nature.* Will it be the end of saint or sinner?

(b). *Its certainty.*

(c). *Its nearness.*

(d). *Its issues.*

(e). *Its requirements.* In the shape of attention, preparation, passport.

2. *Why ask God to make us know it? Because the knowledge is important, difficult to acquire, and can be effectually imparted by the Lord only.* *W. Jackson.*

Verse 4. David prays,

1. That he may be enabled continually to keep in view the end of life: all things should be judged by their *end*. "Then understood I their end." Life may be honourable, and cheerful, and virtuous here; but the *end!* What will it be?

2. That he may be diligent in the performance of all the duties of this life. The measure of his days, how short, how much to be done, how little time to do it in!

3. He prays that he may gain much instruction and benefit from the frailties of life. *That I may know*, etc. My frailties may make me more humble, more diligent, while I am able for active service; more dependent upon divine strength, more patient and submissive to the divine will, more ripe for heaven. —G. Rogers.

Verse 5. (*last clause*). Man is vanity, *i.e.*, he is mortal, he is mutable. Observe how emphatically this truth is expressed here.

1. *Every man is vanity*, without exception, high and low, rich and poor.

2. He is so at his *best estate*; when he is young, and strong, and healthful, in wealth and honour, etc.

3. He is *altogether* vanity, as vain as you can imagine.

4. *Verily* he is so.

5. *Selah* is annexed, as a note commanding observation. —Matthew Henry.

Verse 6. The vanity of man, as mortal, is here instanced in three things, and the vanity of each shown.

1. The vanity of our joys and honours: *Surely every man walketh in a vain show*.

2. The vanity of our griefs and fears: *Surely they are disquieted in vain*.

3. The vanity of our cares and toils: *He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them*. —Matthew Henry.

Verse 6. The world's trinity consists, 1. In fruitless honours: what appears to them to be substantial honours are but *a vain show*. 2. In needless cares. *They are disquieted in vain*. Imaginary cares are substituted for real ones. 3. In useless riches; such as yield no lasting satisfaction to themselves, or in their descent to others. G. Rogers.

Verse 7. *What wait I for?* 1. *For what salvation as a sinner?* Of works or grace—from Sinai or Calvary? 2. *For what consolation as a sufferer?* Earthly or heavenly? 3. *For what supply as a suppliant?* Meagre or bountiful? Present or future? 4. *For what communication as a servant?* Miraculous or ordinary? Pleasing or unacceptable? 5. *For what instruction as a pupil?* Mental or spiritual? Elating or humbling? Ornamental or useful? 6. *For what inheritance as an heir?* Sublunary or celestial? W. Jackson.

Verse 7.

1. An urgent occasion. *And now Lord*, etc. There are seasons that should lead us specially to look up to God, and say, *Now, Lord*. "Father, the hour is come."

2. A devout exclamation, *Now, Lord, what wait I for?* Where is my expectation? where my confidence? To whom shall I look? I am nothing, the world is nothing, all earthly sources of confidence and consolation fail: *What wait I for?* In life, in death, in a dying world, in a coming

judgment, in an eternity at hand; what is it that I need? —G. Rogers.

Verse 8.

1. Prayer should be *general*: *Deliver me from all my transgressions*. We often need anew to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Afflictions should remind us of our sins. If we pray to be delivered from all transgressions, we are sure to be delivered from the one for which affliction was sent.

2. Prayer should be *particular*: *Make me not the reproach of the foolish*. Suffer me not so to speak or show impatience in affliction as to give occasion even to the foolish to blaspheme. The thought that many watch for our halting should be a preservative from sin. —G. Rogers.

Verse 9.

1. The *occasion* referred to. *I was dumb*, etc. We are not told what the particular trial was, that each one may apply it to his own affliction, and because all are to be viewed in the same light.

2. The *conduct* of the psalmist upon that particular occasion: *I opened not my mouth*. (a) Not in anger and rebellion against God in murmurs or complaints. (b) Not in impatience, or complaining, or angry feelings against men. (c) The *reason* he assigns for this conduct: *Because thou didst it*. G. Rogers.

Verse 10.

1. *Afflictions are sent by God*. *Thy strokes*. They are strokes of *his* hand, not of the rod of the law, but of the shepherd's rod. Every affliction is *his* stroke.

2. *Afflictions are removed by God*. *Remove*. He asks not for miracles, but that God in his own way, in the use of natural means, would interpose for his deliverance. We should seek his blessing upon the means employed for our deliverance both by ourselves and others. "*Cause to remove*," etc.

3. *Afflictions have their end from God*. *I am consumed by the conflict*, etc. God hath a controversy with his people. It is a conflict between his will and their wills. The psalmist owns himself conquered and subdued in the struggle. We should be more anxious that this end should be accomplished than that the affliction should be removed, and when this is accomplished the affliction will be removed. G. Rogers.

Verse 10.

1. The *cause* of our trials: "*for iniquity*." Oh, this trial is come to take away my comforts, my peace of mind, and the divine smile! No, this is all the fruit to take away their sin—the dross, none of the gold—sin, nothing but sin.

2. The *effect* of our trials. All that he counted desirable in this life, but not for his real good, is *consumed*. His robes which are beautiful in men's esteem are moth eaten, but the robe of righteousness upon his soul cannot decay.

3. The *design* of our trials. They are not penal inflictions, but friendly *rebukes* and fatherly *corrections*. On Christ our Surety the penal consequences were laid, upon us their paternal chastisements only.

4. The *reasonableness* of our trials. "*Surely every man is vanity*." How in a world like this could any

expect to be exempt from trials! The world is the same to the Christian as before, and his body is the same. He has a converted soul in an unconverted body, and how can he escape the external ills of life? *G. Rogers.*

Verse 12. David pleads the good impressions made upon him by his affliction.

1. It had set him a weeping.
2. It had set him a praying.
3. It had helped to wean him from the world.

—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 12. (*last clause*). Am I a stranger and a sojourner with God? Let me realise, let me exemplify the condition.

1. Let me look for *the treatment* such characters commonly meet with.
2. And surely if any of my own nation be near me, I shall *be intimate with them.*
3. Let me *not be entangled* in the affairs of this life.
4. Let my affection be *set on things that are above*, and my conversation be always *in heaven.*
5. Let me be *not impatient for home*; but *prizing* it. —*W. Jay.*

Verse 13.

1. The *subject* of his petition—not that he may escape death and live always in this life, because he knows that he must go hence; but 1. That he may be recovered from his afflictions; and, 2. That he may continue longer in this life. Such a prayer is lawful when offered in submission to the will of God.
2. The *reasons* for this petition. 1. That he may remove by his future life, the calumnies that had been heaped upon him. 2. That he may have brighter evidences of his interest in the divine favour. 3. That he may become a blessing to others, his family and nation. 4. That he might have greater peace and comfort in death; and, 5. That he might "have an entrance ministered more abundantly, "etc. —*G. Rogers.*

Psalm 40

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. To the Chief Musician. Well might so exceedingly precious a Psalm be specially committed to the most skilled of the sacred musicians. The noblest music should be made tributary to a subject so incomparable. The dedication shows that the song was intended for public worship, and was not a merely personal hymn, as its being in the first person singular might lead us to suppose. A Psalm of

David. This is conclusive as to the authorship: lifted by the Holy Spirit into the region of prophecy, David was honoured to write concerning a far greater than himself.

SUBJECT. Jesus is evidently here, and although it might not be a violent wresting of language to see both David and his Lord, both Christ and the church, the double comment might involve itself in obscurity, and therefore we shall let the sun shine even though this should conceal the stars. Even if the New Testament were not so express upon it, we should have concluded that David spoke of our Lord in Ps 40:6-9, but the apostle in Heb 10:5-9, puts all conjecture out of court, and confines the meaning to him who came into the world to do the Father's will.

DIVISION. From Ps 40:1-3, is a personal thanksgiving, followed by a general declaration of Jehovah's goodness to his saints, Ps 40:4-5. In Ps 40:6-10, we have an avowal of dedication to the Lord's will; Ps 40:11-17, contains a prayer for deliverance from pressing trouble, and for the overthrow of enemies.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *I waited patiently for the Lord.* Patient waiting upon God was a special characteristic of our Lord Jesus. Impatience never lingered in his heart, much less escaped his lips. All through his agony in the garden, his trial of cruel mockings before Herod and Pilate, and his passion on the tree, he waited in omnipotence of patience. No glance of wrath, no word of murmuring, no deed of vengeance came from God's patient Lamb; he waited and waited on; was patient, and patient to perfection, far excelling all others who have according to their measure glorified God in the fires. Job on the dunghill does not equal Jesus on the cross. The Christ of God wears the imperial crown among the patient. Did the Only Begotten wait, and shall we be petulant and rebellious? *And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.* Neither Jesus the head, nor any one of the members of his body, shall ever wait upon the Lord in vain. Mark the figure of inclining, as though the suppliant cried out of the lowest depression, and condescending love stooped to hear his feeble moans. What a marvel is it that our Lord Jesus should have to cry as we do, and wait as we do, and should receive the Father's help after the same process of faith and pleading as must be gone through by ourselves! The Saviour's prayers among the midnight mountains and in Gethsemane expound this verse. The Son of David was brought very low, but he rose to victory; and here he teaches us how to conduct our conflicts so as to succeed after the same glorious pattern of triumph. Let us arm ourselves with the same mind; and panoplied in patience, armed with prayer, and girt with faith, let us maintain the Holy War.

Verse 2. *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit.* When our Lord bore in his own person the terrible curse which was due to sin, he was so cast down as to be like a prisoner in a deep, dark, fearful dungeon, amid whose horrible glooms the captive heard a noise as of rushing torrents, while overhead resounded the tramp of furious foes. Our Lord in his anguish was like a captive in the

oubliettes, forgotten of all mankind, immured amid horror, darkness, and desolation. Yet the Lord Jehovah made him to ascend from all his abasement; he retraced his steps from that deep hell of anguish into which he had been cast as our substitute. He who thus delivered our surety *in extremis*, will not fail to liberate us from our far lighter griefs. *Out of the miry clay*. The sufferer was as one who cannot find a foothold, but slips and sinks. The figure indicates not only positive misery as in the former figure, but the absence of solid comfort by which sorrow might have been rendered supportable. Once give man a good foothold, and a burden is greatly lightened, but to be loaded and to be placed on slimy, slippery clay, is to be tried doubly. Reader, with humble gratitude, adore the dear Redeemer who, for thy sake, was deprived of all consolation while surrounded with every form of misery; remark his gratitude at being born up amid his arduous labours and sufferings, and if thou too hast experienced the divine help, be sure to join thy Lord in this song. *And set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings*. The Redeemer's work is done. He reposes on the firm ground of his accomplished engagements; he can never suffer again; for ever does he reign in glory. What a comfort to know that Jesus our Lord and Saviour stands on a sure foundation in all that he is and does for us, and his goings forth in love are not liable to be cut short by failure in years to come, for God has fixed him firmly. He is for ever and eternally able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing that in the highest heavens he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Jesus is the true Joseph taken from the pit to be Lord of all. It is something more than a "sip of sweetness" to remember that if we are cast like our Lord into the lowest pit of shame and sorrow, we shall by faith rise to stand on the same elevated, sure, and everlasting rock of divine favour and faithfulness.

Verse 3. *And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.* At the passover, before his passion, our Lord sang one of the grand old Psalms of praise; but what is the music of his heart now, in the midst of his redeemed! What a song is that in which his glad heart for ever leads the chorus of the elect! Not Miriam's tabor nor Moses' triumphant hymn over Miriam's chivalry can for a moment rival that ever new and exulting song. Justice magnified and grace victorious; hell subdued and heaven glorified; death destroyed and immortality established; sin overthrown and righteousness resplendent; what a theme for a hymn in that day when our Lord drinketh the red wine new with us all in our heavenly Father's kingdom! Even on earth, and before his great passion, he foresaw the joy which was set before him, and was sustained by the prospect. *Our God*. The God of Jesus, the God of Israel, "my God and your God." How will we praise him, but ah! Jesus will be the chief player on our stringed instruments; he will lead the solemn hallelujah which shall go up from the sacramental host redeemed by blood. *Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord*. A multitude that no man can number shall see the griefs and triumphs of Jesus, shall tremble because of their sinful rejection of him, and then through grace shall receive faith and become trusters in Jehovah. Here is

our Lord's reward. Here is the assurance which makes preachers bold and workers persevering. Reader, are you one among the many? Note the way of salvation, a sight, a fear, a trust! Do you know what these mean by possessing and practising them in your own soul? Trusting in the Lord is the evidence, nay, the essence of salvation. He who is a true believer is evidently redeemed from the dominion of sin and Satan.

Verse 4. Blessed. This is an exclamation similar to that of the first Psalm, "Oh, the happiness of the man." God's blessings are emphatic, "I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, "indeed and in very truth. *Is that man that maketh the Lord his trust.* Faith obtaineth promises. A simple single eyed confidence in God is the sure mark of blessedness. A man may be as poor as Lazarus, as hated as Mordecai, as sick as Hezekiah, as lonely as Elijah, but while his hand of faith can keep its hold on God, none of his outward afflictions can prevent his being numbered among the blessed; but the wealthiest and most prosperous man who has no faith is accursed, be he who he may. *And respecteth not the proud.* The proud expect all men to bow down and do them reverence, as if the worship of the golden calves were again set up in Israel; but believing men are too noble to honour mere money bags, or cringe before bombastic dignity. The righteous pay their respect to humble goodness, rather than to inflated self consequence. Our Lord Jesus was in this our bright example. No flattery of kings and great ones ever fell from his lips; he gave no honour to dishonourable men. The haughty were never his favourites. *Nor such as turn aside to lies.* Heresies and idolatries are lies, and so are avarice, worldliness, and pleasure seeking. Woe to those who follow such deceptions. Our Lord was ever both the truth and the lover of truth, and the father of lies had no part in him. We must never pay deference to apostates, time servers, and false teachers; they are an ill leaven, and the more we purge ourselves of them the better; they are blessed whom God preserves from all error in creed and practice. Judged by this verse, many apparently happy persons must be the reverse of blessed, for anything in the shape of a purse, a fine equipage, or a wealthy establishment, commands their reverence, whether the owner be a rake or a saint, an idiot or a philosopher. Verily, were the arch fiend of hell to start a carriage and pair, and live like a lord, he would have thousands who would court his acquaintance.

Verse 5. Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done. Creation, providence, and redemption, teem with wonders as the sea with life. Our special attention is called by this passage to the marvels which cluster around the cross and flash from it. The accomplished redemption achieves many ends, and compasses a variety of designs; the outgoings of the atonement are not to be reckoned up, the influences of the cross reach further than the beams of the sun. Wonders of grace beyond all enumeration take their rise from the cross; adoption, pardon, justification, and a long chain of godlike miracles of love proceed from it. Note that our Lord here speaks of the Lord as "my God." The man Christ Jesus claimed for himself and us a covenant

relationship with Jehovah. Let our interest in our God be ever to us our peculiar treasure. *And thy thoughts which are toward us.* The divine thoughts march with the divine acts, for it is not according to the God's wisdom to act without deliberation and counsel. All the divine thoughts are good and gracious towards his elect. God's thoughts of love are very many, very wonderful, very practical! Muse on them, dear reader; no sweeter subject ever occupied your mind. God's thoughts of you are many, let not yours be few in return. *They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee.* Their sum is so great as to forbid alike analysis and numeration. Human minds fail to measure, or to arrange in order, the Lord's ways and thoughts; and it must always be so, for he hath said, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." No maze to lose oneself in like the labyrinth of love. How sweet to be outdone, overcome and overwhelmed by the astonishing grace of the Lord our God! *If I would declare and speak of them,* and surely this should be the occupation of my tongue at all seasonable opportunities, *they are more than can be numbered;* far beyond all human arithmetic they are multiplied; thoughts from all eternity, thoughts of my fall, my restoration, my redemption, my conversion, my pardon, my upholding, my perfecting, my eternal reward; the list is too long for writing, and the value of the mercies too great for estimation. Yet, if we cannot show forth all the works of the Lord, let us not make this an excuse for silence; for our Lord, who is in this our best example, often spake of the tender thoughts of the great Father.

Verse 6. Here we enter upon one of the most wonderful passages in the whole of the Old Testament, a passage in which the incarnate Son of God is seen not through a glass darkly, but as it were face to face. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire.* In themselves considered, and for their own sakes, the Lord saw nothing satisfactory in the various offerings of the ceremonial law. Neither the victim pouring forth its blood, nor the fine flour rising in smoke from the altar, could yield content to Jehovah's mind; he cared not for the flesh of bulls or of goats, neither had he pleasure in corn and wine, and oil. Typically these offerings had their worth, but when Jesus, the Antitype, came into the world, they ceased to be of value, as candles are of no estimation when the sun has arisen. *Mine ears hast thou opened.* Our Lord was quick to hear and perform his Father's will; his ears were as if excavated down to his soul; they were not closed up like Isaac's wells, which the Philistines filled up, but clear passages down to the fountains of his soul. The prompt obedience of our Lord is here the first idea. There is, however, no reason whatever to reject the notion that the digging of the ear here intended may refer to the boring of the ear of the servant, who refused out of love to his master to take his liberty, at the year of jubilee; his perforated ear, the token of perpetual service, is a true picture of our blessed Lord's fidelity to his Father's business, and his love to his Father's children. Jesus irrevocably gave himself up to be the servant of servants for our sake and God's glory. The Septuagint, from which Paul quoted, has translated this passage, "A body hast thou prepared me:"

how this reading arose it is not easy to imagine, but since apostolical authority has sanctioned the variation, we accept it as no mistake, but as an instance of various readings equally inspired. In any case, the passage represents the Only Begotten as coming into the world equipped for service; and in a real and material body, by actual life and death, putting aside all the shadows of the Mosaic law. *Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.* Two other forms of offerings are here mentioned; tokens of gratitude and sacrifices for sin as typically presented are set aside; neither the general nor the private offerings are any longer demanded. What need of mere emblems when the substance itself is present? We learn from this verse that Jehovah values far more the obedience of the heart than all the imposing performances of ritualistic worship; and that our expiation from sin comes not to us as the result of an elaborate ceremonial, but as the effect of our great Substitute's obedience to the will of Jehovah.

Verse 7. *Then said I.* That is to say, when it was clearly seen that man's misery could not be remedied by sacrifices and offerings. It being certain that the mere images of atonement, and the bare symbols of propitiation were of no avail, the Lord Jesus, *in propria persona*, intervened. O blessed "then said I." Lord, ever give us to hear and feed on such living words as these, so peculiarly and personally thine own. *Lo, I come.* Behold, O heavens, and thou earth, and ye places under the earth! Here is something worthy of your most intense gaze. Sit ye down and watch with earnestness, for the invisible God comes in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an infant the Infinite hangs at a virgin's breast! Immanuel did not send but *come*; he came in his own personality, in all that constituted his essential self he came forth from the ivory palaces to the abodes of misery; he came promptly at the destined hour; he came with sacred alacrity as one freely offering himself. *In the volume of the book it is written of me.* In the eternal decree it is thus recorded. The mystic roll of predestination which providence gradually unfolds, contained within it, to the Saviour's knowledge, a written covenant, that in the fulness of time the divine I should descend to earth to accomplish a purpose which hecatombs of bullocks and rams could not achieve. What a privilege to find our names written in the book of life, and what an honour, since the name of Jesus heads the page! Our Lord had respect to his ancient covenant engagements, and herein he teaches us to be scrupulously just in keeping our word; have we so promised, it is so written in the book of remembrance? then let us never be defaulters.

Verse 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God.* Our blessed Lord alone could completely do the will of God. The law is too broad for such poor creatures as we are to hope to fulfil it to the uttermost: but Jesus not only did the Father's will, but found a delight therein; from old eternity he had desired the work set before him; in his human life he was straitened till he reached the baptism of agony in which he magnified the law, and even in Gethsemane itself he chose the Father's will, and set aside his own. Herein is the essence of obedience, namely, in the soul's cheerful devotion to God: and our

Lord's obedience, which is our righteousness, is in no measure lacking in this eminent quality. Notwithstanding his measureless griefs, our Lord found delight in his work, and for "the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame." *Yea, thy law is within my heart.* No outward, formal devotion was rendered by Christ; his heart was in his work, holiness was his element, the Father's will his meat and drink. We must each of us be like our Lord in this, or we shall lack the evidence of being his disciples. Where there is no heart work, no pleasure, no delight in God's law, there can be no acceptance. Let the devout reader adore the Saviour for the spontaneous and hearty manner in which he undertook the great work of our salvation.

Verse 9. *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation.* The purest morality and the highest holiness were preached by Jesus. Righteousness divine was his theme. Our Lord's whole life was a sermon, eloquent beyond compare, and it is heard each day by myriads. Moreover, he never shunned in his ministry to declare the whole counsel of God; God's great plan of righteousness he plainly set forth. He taught openly in the temple, and was not ashamed to be a faithful and a true witness. He was the great evangelist; the master of itinerant preachers; the head of the clan of open air missionaries. O servants of the Lord, hide not your lights, but reveal to others what your God has revealed to you; and especially by your lives testify for holiness, be champions for the right, both in word and deed. *Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest.* Never either from love of ease, of fear of men, did the Great Teacher's lips become closed. He was instant in season and out of season. The poor listened to him, and princes heard his rebuke; Publicans rejoiced at him, and Pharisees raged, but to them both he proclaimed the truth from heaven. It is well for a tried believer when he can appeal to God and call him to witness that he has not been ashamed to bear witness for him; for rest assured if we are not ashamed to confess our God, he will never be ashamed to own us. Yet what a wonder is here, that the Son of God should plead, just as we plead, and urge just such arguments as would befit the mouths of his diligent ministers! How truly is he "made like unto his brethren."

Verse 10. *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart.* On the contrary, "Never man spake like this man." God's divine plan of making men righteous was well known to him, and he plainly taught it. What was in our great Master's heart he poured forth in holy eloquence from his lips. The doctrine of righteousness by faith he spake with great simplicity of speech. Law and gospel equally found in him a clear expositor. *I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation.* Jehovah's fidelity to his promises and his grace in saving believers were declared by the Lord Jesus on many occasions, and are blessedly blended in the gospel which he came to preach. God, faithful to his own character, law and threatenings, and yet saving sinners, is a peculiar revelation of the gospel. God faithful to the saved ones evermore is the joy of the followers of Christ Jesus. *I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.* The tender as well as the stern attributes of God, our Lord

Jesus fully unveiled. Concealment was far from the Great Apostle of our profession. Cowardice he never exhibited, hesitancy never weakened his language. He who as a child of twelve years spake in the temple among the doctors, and afterward preached to five thousand at Gennesaret, and to the vast crowds at Jerusalem on that great day, the last day of the feast, was always ready to proclaim the name of the Lord, and could never be charged with unholy silence. He could be dumb when so the prophecy demanded and patience suggested, but otherwise, preaching was his meat and his drink, and he kept back nothing which would be profitable to his disciples. This in the day of his trouble, according to this Psalm, he used as a plea for divine aid. He had been faithful to his God, and now begs the Lord to be faithful to him. Let every dumb professor, tongue tied by sinful shame, bethink himself how little he will be able to plead after this fashion in the day of his distress.

Verse 11. *Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord.* Alas! these were to be for awhile withheld from our Lord while on the accursed tree, but meanwhile in his great agony he seeks for gentle dealing; and the coming of the angel to strengthen him was a clear answer to his prayer. He had been blessed aforetime in the desert, and now at the entrance of the valley of the shadow of death, like a true, trustful, and experienced man, he utters a holy, plaintive desire for the tenderness of heaven. He had not withheld his testimony to God's truth, now in return he begs his Father not to withhold his compassion. This verse might more correctly be read as a declaration of his confidence that help would not be refused; but whether we view this utterance as the cry of prayer, or the avowal of faith, in either case it is instructive to us who take our suffering Lord for an example, and it proves to us how thoroughly he was made like unto his brethren. *Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.* He had preached both of these, and now he asks for an experience of them, that he might be kept in the evil day and rescued from his enemies and his afflictions. Nothing endears our Lord to us more than to hear him thus pleading with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save. O Lord Jesus, in our nights of wrestling we will remember thee.

Verse 12. *For innumerable evils have compassed me about.* On every side he was beset with evils; countless woes environed the great Substitute for our sins. Our sins were innumerable, and so were his griefs. There was no escape for us from our iniquities, and there was no escape for him from the woes which we deserved. From every quarter evils accumulated about the blessed One, although in his heart evil found no place. *Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.* He had no sin, but sins were laid on him, and he took them as if they were his. "He was made sin for us." The transfer of sin to the Saviour was real, and produced in him as man the horror which forbade him to look into the face of God, bowing him down with crushing anguish and woe intolerable. O my soul, what would thy sins have done for thee eternally if the Friend of sinners had not condescended to take them all upon himself? Oh, blessed Scripture! "The Lord hath made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all." Oh, marvellous depth of love, which could lead the perfectly

immaculate to stand in the sinner's place, and bear the horror of great trembling which sin must bring upon those conscious of it. *They are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.* The pains of the divine penalty were beyond compute, and the Saviour's soul was so burdened with them, that he was sore amazed, and very heavy even unto a sweat of blood. His strength was gone, his spirits sank, he was in an agony.

Verse 13. *Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me.* How touching! How humble! How plaintive! The words thrill us as we think that after this sort our Lord and Master prayed. His petition is not so much that the cup should pass away undrained, but that he should be sustained while drinking it, and set free from its power at the first fitting moment. He seeks deliverance and help; and he entreats that the help may not be slow in coming; this is after the manner of our pleadings. Is it not? Note, reader, how our Lord was heard in that he feared, for there was after Gethsemane a calm endurance which made the fight as glorious as the victory.

Verse 14. *Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it.* Whether we read this as a prayer or a prophecy it matters not, for the powers of sin, and death, and hell, may well be ashamed as they see the result of their malice for ever turned against themselves. It is to the infinite confusion of Satan that his attempts to destroy the Saviour destroyed himself; the diabolical conclave who plotted in council are now all alike put to shame, for the Lord Jesus has met them at all points, and turned all their wisdom into foolishness. *Let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.* It is even so; the hosts of darkness are utterly put to the rout, and made a theme for holy derision for ever and ever. How did they gloat over the thought of crushing the seed of the woman! but the Crucified has conquered, the Nazarene has laughed them to scorn, the dying Son of Man has become the death of death and hell's destruction. For ever blessed be his name.

Verse 15. *Let them be desolate,* or amazed; even as Jesus was desolate in his agony, so let his enemies be in their despair when he defeats them. The desolation caused in the hearts of evil spirits and evil men by envy, malice, chagrin, disappointment, and despair, shall be a fit recompense for their cruelty to the Lord when he was in their hands. *For a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.* Did the foul fiend insult over our Lord? Behold how shame is now his reward! Do wicked men today pour shame upon the name of the Redeemer? Their desolation shall avenge him of his adversaries! Jesus is the gentle Lamb to all who seek mercy through his blood; but let despisers beware, for he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and "who shall rouse him up?" The Jewish rulers exulted and scornfully said, "Aha, aha; "but when the streets of Jerusalem ran like rivers deep with gore, "and the temple was utterly consumed, "then their house was left unto them desolate, and the blood of the last of the prophets, according to their own desire, came upon themselves and upon their children. O ungodly reader, if such a person glance over this page, beware of persecuting Christ and his people, for God will surely avenge his own elect. Your "ahas" will cost you dear. It is hard for you

to kick against the pricks.

Verse 16. *Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee.* We have done with Ebal and turn to Gerizim. Here our Lord pronounces benedictions on his people. Note who the blessed objects of his petition are: not all men, but some men, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world." He pleads for seekers: the lowest in the kingdom, the babes of the family; those who have true desires, longing prayers, and consistent endeavours after God. Let seeking souls pluck up heart when they hear of this. What riches of grace, that in his bitterest hour Jesus should remember the lambs of the flock! And what does he entreat for them? it is that they may be doubly glad, intensely happy, emphatically joyful, for such the repetition of terms implies. Jesus would have all seekers made happy, by finding what they seek after, and by winning peace through his grief. As deep as were his sorrows, so high would he have their joys. He groaned that we might sing, and was covered with a bloody sweat that we might be anointed with the oil of gladness. *Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.* Another result of the Redeemer's passion is the promotion of the glory of God by those who gratefully delight in his salvation. Our Lord's desire should be our directory; we love with all our hearts his great salvation, let us then, with all our tongues proclaim the glory of God which is resplendent therein. Never let his praises cease. As the heart is warm with gladness let it incite the tongue to perpetual praise. If we cannot do what we would for the spread of the kingdom, at least let us desire and pray for it. Be it ours to make God's glory the chief end of every breath and pulse. The suffering Redeemer regarded the consecration of his people to the service of heaven as a grand result of his atoning death; it is the joy which was set before him; that God is glorified as the reward of the Saviour's travail.

Verse 17. *But I am poor and needy.* The man of sorrows closes with another appeal, based upon his affliction and poverty. *Yet the Lord thinketh upon me.* Sweet was this solace to the holy heart of the great sufferer. The Lord's thoughts of us are a cheering subject of meditation, for they are ever kind and never cease. His disciples forsook him, and his friends forgot him, but Jesus knew that Jehovah never turned away his heart from him, and this upheld him in the hour of need. *Thou art my help and my deliverer.* His unmoved confidence stayed itself alone on God. O that all believers would imitate more fully their great Apostle and High Priest in his firm reliance upon God, even when afflictions abounded and the light was veiled. *Make no tarrying, O my God.* The peril was imminent, the need urgent, the suppliant could not endure delay, nor was he made to wait, for the angel came to strengthen, and the brave heart of Jesus rose up to meet the foe. Lord Jesus, grant that in all our adversities we may possess like precious faith, and be found like thee, more than conquerors.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Whole Psalm. *David's Psalm, or, a Psalm of David;* but David's name is here set first, which

elsewhere commonly is last: or *A Psalm concerning David*, that is *Christ*, who is called *David* in the prophets: Ho 3:5 Jer 30:9 Eze 34:23 32:24. Of him this Psalm entreateth as the apostle teacheth, Heb 10:5-6, etc. *Henry Ainsworth*.

Whole Psalm. It is plain, from Ps 40:6-8 of this Psalm, compared with Heb 10:5, that the prophet in speaking in the person of Christ, who, Ps 40:1-5, celebrates the deliverance wrought for his mystical body, the church, by his resurrection from the grave, effecting that of his members from the guilt and dominion of sin; for the abolition of which he declareth, Ps 40:6-8, the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices, and mentions his own inclination to do the will of his Father, and Ps 40:9-10, to preach righteousness to the world. Ps 40:11-13. He represents himself as praying, while under his sufferings, for his own, and his people's salvation; he foretells, Ps 40:14-15, the confusion and desolation of his enemies, and, Ps 40:16, the joy and thankfulness of his disciples and servants; for the speedy accomplishment of which, Ps 40:17, he prefers a petition. *George Horne*.

Verse 1. *I waited patiently for the Lord: and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.* I see that the Lord, suppose he drifts and delays the effect of his servant's prayer, and grants not his desire at the first, yet he hears him. I shall give a certain argument, whereby thou may know that the Lord heareth thee, suppose he delay the effect of thy prayers. Do you continue in prayer? Hast thou his strength given thee to persevere in suing (petitioning for or praying for) anything? Thou may be assured he heareth; for this is one sure argument that he heareth thee, for naturally our impatience carrieth us to desperation; our suddenness is so great, specially in spiritual troubles, that we cannot continue in suing. When thou, therefore, continues in suing, thou may be sure that this strength is furnished of God, and cometh from heaven, and if thou have strength, he letteth thee see that he heareth thy prayer; and suppose he delay the effect and force thereof, yet pray continually. This doctrine is so necessary for the troubled conscience, that I think it is the meetest bridle in the Scripture to refrain our impatience; it is the meetest bit to hold us in continual exercise of patience; for if the heart understand that the Lord hath rejected our prayer altogether, it is not possible to continue in prayer; so when we know that the Lord heareth us, suppose he delay, let us crave patience to abide his good will. *Robert Bruce, 1559-1631*.

Verse 1. *I waited for the Lord.* The infinitive (hwq) being placed first brings the action strongly out: *I waited*. This strong emphasis on the waiting, has the force of an *admonition*; it suggests to the sufferer that everything depends on *waiting*. *E. W. Hengstenberg*.

Verse 1. *I waited patiently:* rather *anxiously*; the original has it, *waiting I waited*; a Hebraism which signifies vehement solicitude. *Daniel Cresswell*.

Verse 1. *I waited.* The Saviour endureth his sufferings *waitingly*, as well as patiently and prayerfully. He "waited for the Lord." He expected help from Jehovah; and he waited for it until it came. *James Frame, in "Christ and his Work: an Exposition of Psalm 40." 1869.*

Verse 1. *Patiently.* Our Lord's patience under suffering was an element of perfection in his work. Had he become impatient as we often do, and lost heart, his atonement would have been vitiated. Well may we rejoice that in the midst of all his temptations, and in the thickest of the battle against sin and Satan, he remained patient and willing to finish the work which his Father had given him to do. *James Frame.*

Verse 1. *Heard my cry.* Our Saviour endured his sufferings *prayerfully* as well as *patiently*. *James Frame.*

Verse 2. *An horrible pit.* Some of the pits referred to in the Bible were prisons, one such I saw at Athens, and another at Rome. To these there were no openings, except a hole at the top, which served for both door and window. The bottoms of these pits were necessarily in a filthy and revolting state, and sometimes deep in mud. *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay;* one of these filthy prisons being in the psalmist's view, in Isa 38:17, called "the pit of corruption, "or putrefaction and filth. *John Gadsby.*

Verse 2. *An horrible pit;* or, as it is in the Hebrew, *a pit of noise;* so called because of waters that falling into it with great violence, make a roaring dreadful noise; or because of the strugglings and outcries they make that are in it; or because when anything is cast into deep pits, it will always make a great noise; and where he stuck fast in *miry clay*, without seeming possibility of getting out. And some refer this to the greatness of Christ's terrors and sufferings, and his deliverance from them both. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 2. Three things are stated in verse two. First, resurrection as the act of God, *He brought me up*, etc. Secondly, the justification of the name and title of the Sufferer, *and set my feet upon a rock*. Jesus is set up, as alive from the dead, upon the basis of accomplished truth. Thirdly, there is his ascension, *He establisheth my goings*. The Son of God having trodden, in gracious and self-renouncing obedience the passage to the grave, now enters finally as Man the path of life. "He is gone into heaven," says the Spirit. And again, "He ascended on high, and led captivity captive." *Arthur Pridham in "Notes and Reflections on the Psalms," 1869.*

Verse 3. *A new song.* See Notes on Ps 33:3.

Verse 3. *Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.* The terms *fear*, and *hope*, or *trust*, do not seem at first view to harmonise; but David has not improperly joined them together, for no man will ever entertain the *hope* of the favour of God but he whose mind is first imbued with the *fear* of God. I understand *fear*, in general, to mean the feeling of piety which is produced in us by the knowledge of the power, equity, and mercy of God. *John Calvin.*

Verse 3. *Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.* First of all they see. Their eyes are opened; and their opened eyes see and survey *what* they are, *where* they are, *whence* they came, and *whither* they are going...When the attention of sinners is really and decisively arrested by the

propitiation of Jesus, not only are their eyes opened to their various moral relations, not only do they "see" but they *fear* too. They "see" and "fear." ...Conviction follows illumination...But while the sinner only sees and fears, he is but in the initial stage of conversion, only in a state of readiness to flee from the city of destruction. He may have set out on his pilgrimage, but he has not yet reached his Father to receive the kiss of welcome and forgiveness. The consummating step has not yet been taken. He has seen indeed; he has feared too; but he still requires to *trust*, to trust in the Lord, and banish all his fears. This is the culminating point in the great change; and, unless this be reached, the other experiences will either die away, like an untimely blossom, or they will only be fuel to the unquenchable fire. *James Frame.*

Verse 5. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done,* etc. Behold God in the magnificence and wisdom of the works which his hands have made, even this immense universe, which is full of his glory. What art and contrivance! What regularity, harmony, and proportion, are to be seen in all his productions, in the frame of our own bodies, or those that are about us! And with what beams of majestic glory do the sun, moon, and stars proclaim how august and wonderful in knowledge their Maker is! And ought not all these numberless beauties wherewith the world is stored, which the minds of inquisitive men are ready to admire, lead up our thoughts to the great Parent of all things, and inflame our amorous souls with love to him, who is infinitely brighter and fairer than them all? Cast abroad your eyes through the nations, and meditate on the mighty acts which he hath done, and the wisdom and power of his providence, which should charm all thy affections. Behold his admirable patience, with what pity he looks down on obstinate rebels; and how he is moved with compassion when he sees his creatures polluted in their blood, and bent upon their own destruction; how long he waits to be gracious; how unwillingly he appears to give up with sinners, and execute deserved vengeance on his enemies; and then with what joy he pardons, for "with him is plenteous redemption." And what can have more force than these to win thy esteem, and make a willing conquest of thy heart? so that every object about thee is an argument of love, and furnishes fuel for this sacred fire. And whether you behold God in the firmament of his power, or the sanctuary of his grace, you cannot miss to pronounce him "altogether lovely." *William Dunlop.*

Verse 5. *Thy thoughts which are toward us, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee:* i.e., there is no one can digest them in order; for although that may be attempted according to the comprehension and meaning of men, yet *not before thee*, every attempt of that nature being infinitely beneath thy immeasurable glory. *Victorinus Bythner's "Lyre of David; "translated by T. Dee: new edition, by N. L. Benmohel, 1847.*

Verse 5. *Toward us.* It is worthy of notice that while addressing his Father, as Jehovah and his God, our Saviour speaks of the members of the human family as his fellows. This is implied in the expression "toward us." He regarded himself as most intimately associated with the children of men.

James Frame.

Verse 5. *They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee.* They are "in order" in themselves, and if they could be "reckoned up" as they are, they would be "reckoned in order." Created mind may not be able to grasp the principle of order that pervades them, but such a principle there is. And the more we study the whole series in its interrelations, the more shall we be convinced that as to time and place all the preparations for the mediatorial work of Christ, all the parts of its accomplishment, and all the divinely appointed consequences of its acceptation throughout all time into eternity, are faultlessly in order; they are precisely what and where and when they should be. *James Frame.*

Verse 5. *They are more than can be numbered.* The pulses of Providence are quicker than those of our wrists or temples. The soul of David knew right well their multiplicity, but could not multiply them aright by any skill in arithmetic; nay, the very sum or chief heads of divine kindnesses were innumerable. His "wonderful works" and "thoughts" towards him could not be reckoned up in order by him, they were *more than could be numbered.* *Samuel Lee (1625-1691), in The Triumph of Mercy in the Chariot of Praise.*

Verse 5. It is Christ's speech, of whom the Psalm is made, and that relating unto his Father's resolved purposes and contrivings from eternity, and those continued unto his sending Christ into the world to die for us, as Ps 40:6-7. It follows so, as although his thoughts and purposes were but one individual act at first, and never to be altered; yet they became many, through a perpetuated reiteration of them, wherein his constancy to himself is seen...My brethren, if God have been thinking thoughts of mercy from everlasting to those that are his, what a stock and treasury do these thoughts arise to, besides those that are in his nature and disposition! This is in his actual purposes and intentions, which he hath thought, and doth think over, again and again, every moment. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are toward us,* saith Jesus Christ; for Psalm 40 is a Psalm of Christ, and quoted by the apostle, and applied unto Christ in Hebrews 10, *How many are thy thoughts toward us!*—he speaks it in the name of the human nature—that is, to me and mine. *If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.* And what is the reason? Because God hath studied mercies, mercies for his children, even from everlasting. And then, "He renews his mercies every morning; "not that any mercies are new, but he actually thinketh over mercies again and again, and so he brings out of his treasury, mercies both new and old, and old are always new. What a stock, my brethren, must this needs amount unto! *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 6. *Sacrifice and offering...burnt offering and sin offering.* Four kinds are here specified, both by the psalmist and apostle: namely, *sacrifice* (xbz) *zebhach, yusia*; *offering*, (hxnm) *minchah, prosfora*; *burnt offering*, (hlwe) *olah, olokautwma*; *sin offering*, (hajx) *chataah, peri amartias*. Of all these we may say with the apostle, it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats, etc., should take away

sin. *Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6. *Mine ears hast thou opened.* The literal translation is, *mine ears hast thou digged (or pierced) through;* which may well be interpreted as meaning, "Thou hast accepted me as thy slave, " in allusion to the custom Ex 21:6 of masters boring the ear of a slave, who had refused his offered freedom, in token of retaining him. *Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 6. John Calvin, in treating upon the interpretation, "mine ears hast thou bored, "says, "this mode of interpretation appears to be too forced and refined."

Verse 6. *Mine ears hast thou opened.* If it is to be said that the apostle to the Hebrews read this differently, I answer, this does not appear to me. It is true, he found a different, but corrupted translation (*wtia, ears,* as the learned have observed, having been changed into *swma, body*) in the LXX, which was the version then in use; and he was obliged to quote it as he found it, under the penalty, if he altered it, of being deemed a false quoter. He therefore took the translation as he found it, especially as it served to illustrate his argument equally well. Upon this quotation from the LXX the apostle argues, Ps 40:9, "He, (Christ) taketh away the first (namely, legal sacrifices), that he may establish the second" (namely, obedience to God's will), in offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of mankind; and thus he must have argued upon a quotation for the Hebrew text as it stands at present. *Green, quoted in S. Burder's "Scripture Expositor."*

Verse 6. The apostle's reading Heb 10:5, though it be far distant from the letter of the Hebrew, and in part from the LXX (as I suppose it to have been originally), yet is the most perspicuous interpretation of the meaning of it: *Christ's body* comprehended the *ears*, and that assumed on purpose to perform in it the utmost degree of obedience to the will of God, to be obedient even to death, and thereby to be as the priest. *Henry Hammond.*

Verse 6.

Nor sacrifice thy love can win,
Nor offerings from the stain of sin
Obnoxious man shall clear:
Thy hand my mortal frame prepares,
(Thy hand, whose signature it bears,)
And opens my willing ear.

—*James Merrick, M.A., 1720-1769.*

Verses 6-7. In these words an allusion is made to a custom of the Jews *to bore the ears* of such as were to be their perpetual servants, and *to enrol their names in a book*, or make some instrument of the covenant. "Sacrifices and burnt offerings thou wouldst not have; "but because I am thy vowed servant, bored with an awl, and enrolled in thy book, *I said, Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God.* These words of the Psalm are alleged by S. Paul, Hebrews 10. But the first of them with a most

strange difference. For whereas the psalmist hath, according to the Hebrew verity, *Sacrifice and burnt offering thou wouldst not: mine ears thou hast bored or digged*, (tyrn); S. Paul reads with the LXX, *swma kathrtisw moi*, "A body thou hast prepared or fitted me." What equipollency can be in sense between these two? This difficulty is so much the more augmented because most interpreters make the life of the quotation to lie in those very words where the difference is, namely, That the words, "A body thou hast prepared me," are brought by the apostle to prove our Saviour's incarnation; whereunto the words in the Psalm itself (*Mine ears hast thou bored, or digged, or opened*), take them how you will in no wise suit. I answer, therefore, That the life of the quotation lies not in the words of difference, nor can do, because this epistle was written to the Hebrews, and so first in the Hebrew tongue, where this translation of the LXX could have no place. And if the life of the quotation lay here, I cannot see how it can possibly be reconciled. It lies therefore in the words where there is no difference, namely, That Christ was such a High Priest as came to sanctify us, not with the legal offerings and sacrifices, but by his obedience in doing like a devoted servant the will of his Father. Thus, the allegation will not depend at all upon the words of difference, and so they give us liberty to reconcile them: *Mine ears hast thou bored*, saith the psalmist, *i.e.*, Thou hast accepted me for a perpetual servant, as masters are wont, according to the law, to bore such servants' ears as refuse to part from them. Now the LXX, according to whom the apostle's epistle readeth, thinking perhaps the meaning of this speech would be obscure to such as knew not that custom, chose rather to translate it generally *swma de katertisw moi*, "Thou hast fitted my body," namely, to be thy servant, in such a manner as servants' bodies are wont to be. And so the sense is all one, though not specified to the Jewish custom of boring the ear with an awl, but left indifferently applicable to the custom of any nation in marking and stigmatising their servants' bodies. *Joseph Mede, B.D., 1586-1638.*

Verses 6-10. Here we have in Christ for our instruction, and in David also (his type) for our example; 1. A firm purpose of obedience, in a *bored ear*, and a yielding heart. 2. A ready performance thereof: *Lo, I come*. 3. A careful observance of the word written: *In the volume of the Book it is written of me*, Ps 40:7. 4. A hearty delight in that observance, Ps 40:8. 5. A public profession and communication of God's goodness to others, Ps 40:9-10. Now, we should labour to express Christ to the world, to walk as he walked 1Jo 2:6: our lives should be in some sense parallel with his life, as the transcript with the original: he left us a copy to write by, saith St. Peter, 1Pe 2:21. *John Trapp.*

Verse 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come.* As his name is above every name, so this coming of his is above every coming. We sometimes call our own births, I confess, a coming into the world; but properly, none ever came into the world but he. For, 1. He only truly can be said to come, who is before he comes; so were not we, only he so. 2. He only strictly comes who comes willingly; our crying and struggling at our entrance into the world, shows how unwillingly we come into it. He alone it is that

sings out, *Lo, I come*. 3. He only properly comes who comes from some place or other. Alas! we had none to come from but the womb of nothing. *He* only had a place to be in before he came. *Mark Frank*.

Verse 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come*, to wit, as surety, to pay the ransom, and to do thy will, O God. Every word carrieth a special emphasis as 1. The time, *then*, even so soon as he perceived that his Father had prepared his body for such an end, then, without delay. This speed implies forwardness and readiness; he would lose no opportunity. 2. His profession in this word, *said I*; he did not closely, secretly, timorously, as being ashamed thereof, but he maketh profession beforehand. 3. This note of observation, *Lo*, this is a kind of calling angels and men to witness, and a desire that all might know his inward intention, and the disposition of his heart; wherein was as great a willingness as any could have to anything. 4. An offering of himself without any enforcement or compulsion; this he manifests in this word, *I come*. 5. That very instant set out in the present tense, *I come*; he puts it not off to a future and uncertain time, but even in that moment, he saith, *I come*. 6. The first person twice expressed, thus, "*I said, ""I come.*" He sends not another person, nor substitutes any in his room; but he, even he himself in his own person, comes. All which do abundantly evidence Christ's singular readiness and willingness, as our surety, to do his Father's will, though it were by suffering, and by being made a sacrifice for our sins. *Thomas Brooks*.

Verse 7. *Lo, I come*, i.e., to appear before thee; a phrase used to indicate the coming of an inferior into the presence of a superior, or of a slave before his master, Nu 22:38 2Sa 19:20: as in the similar expression, "Behold, here I am," generally expressive of willingness. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 7. *Lo, I come*. Christ's coming in the spirit is a *joyful* coming. I think this, *Lo, I come*, expresses 1. *Present* joy. 2. It expresses *certain* joy: the *Lo*, is a note of certainty; the thing is certain and true; and his joy is certain; certain, true, solid joy. 3. It expresses *communicative* joy; designing his people shall share of his joy, *Lo, I come!* The joy that Christ has as Mediator is a fulness of joy, designed for his people's use, that *out of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace*, and joy for joy; grace answering grace in Jesus, and joy answering joy in him. 4. It expresses *solemn* joy. He comes with a solemnity; *Lo, I come!* according to the council of a glorious Trinity. Now, when the purpose of heaven is come to the birth, and the decree breaks forth, and the fulness of time is come, he makes heaven and earth witness, as it were, to his solemn march on the errand: he says it with a loud, *Lo!* that all the world of men and angels may notice, *Lo, I come!* And, indeed, all the elect angels brake forth into joyful songs of praise at this solemnity; when he came in the flesh, they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards man." *Ralph Erskine, 1685-1752*.

Verse 7. *Lo, I come*, or, *am come*, to wit, *into the world* Heb 10:5, and particularly *to Jerusalem*, to give myself a sacrifice for sin. *Henry Ainsworth*.

Verse 7. *The volume of the book*. What book is meant, whether the Scripture, or the book of life, is

not certain, probably the latter. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 7. *The volume of the book.* But what volume of manuscript roll is here meant? Plainly, the one which was already extant when the psalmist was writing. If the psalmist was David himself (as the title of the Psalm seems to affirm), the only parts of the Hebrew Scriptures then extant, and of course, the only part to which he could refer, must have been the Pentateuch, and perhaps the book of Joshua. Beyond any reasonable doubt, then, the kefalisi biblion (רְפוּ תִּנְמ) was the Pentateuch...But I apprehend the meaning of the writer to be, that the *book of the law*, which prescribes sacrifices that were merely *skiai* or *parabolai* of the great atoning sacrifice by Christ, did itself teach, by the use of these, that something of a higher and better nature was to be looked for than Levitical rites. In a word, it pointed to the Messiah; or, some of the contents of the *written law* had respect to him. *Moses Stuart, M.A., in "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews," 1851.*

Verse 7. *The volume of the book* etc. When I first considered Ro 5:14, and other Scriptures in the New Testament which make the first Adam, and the whole story of him both before and after, and in his sinning or falling, to be the type and lively shadow of Christ, the second Adam; likewise observing that the apostle Paul stands admiring at the greatest of this mystery or mystical type, the Christ, the second Adam should so wonderfully be shadowed forth therein, as Eph 5:32, he cries out, "This is a great mystery, "which he speaks applying and fitting some passages about Adam and Eve unto Christ and his church; it made me more to consider an interpretation of a passage in Heb 10:7, out of Ps 40:7, which I before had not only not regarded, but wholly rejected, as being too like a postil (A marginal note) gloss. The passage is, that "when Christ came into the world, "to take our nature on him, he alleged the reason of it to be the fulfilling of a Scripture written in "the beginning of God's book, "en kefalisi Biblion, so out of the original the words may be, and are by many interpreters, translated, though our translation reads them only thus, *In the volume of the book it is written of me.* It is true, indeed, that in the fortieth Psalm, whence they are quoted, the words in the Hebrew may signify no more than that in God's book (the manner of writing which was anciently in rolls of parchment, folded up in a volume) Christ was everywhere written and spoken of. Yet the word kefalisi which out of the Septuagint's translation the apostle took, signifying, as all know, the beginning of a book; and we finding such an emphasis set by the apostle in the fifth chapter of the Ephesians, upon the history of Adam in the beginning of Genesis, as containing the mystery, yea, the great mystery about Christ, it did somewhat induce, though not so fully persuade, me to think, that the Holy Ghost in those words might have some glance at the story of Adam in the first of the first book of Moses. And withal the rather because so, the words so understood do intimate a higher and further inducement to Christ to assume our nature, the scope of the speech, Hebrews 10, being to render the reason why he so willingly took man's nature: not only because God liked not sacrifice and burnt offering, which came in but upon occasion of sin, and after the fall, and could not take sin away, but further, that he

was prophesied of, and his assuming a body prophetically foresighted, as in the fortieth Psalm, so even by Adam's story before the fall, recorded in the very beginning of Genesis, which many other Scriptures do expressly apply it unto. *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 10. *I have not hid.* This intimates, that whoever undertook to preach the gospel of Christ would be in great temptation to hide it, and conceal it, because it must be preached with great contention, and in the face of great opposition. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 10. *I have not hid,* etc. What God has done for us, or for the church, we should lay to heart; but not lock up in our heart. *Carl Bernhard Moll in Lange's "Bibelwerk."* 1869.

Verse 11. *Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me.* Do not hinder them from coming showering down upon me. *Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me;* or, do thou employ them in preserving me. *John Diodati.*

Verse 12. *For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head.* We lose ourselves when we speak of the sins of our lives. It may astonish any considering man to take notice how many sins he is guilty of any one day; how many sins accompany any one single act; nay, how many bewray themselves in any one religious duty. Whensoever ye do anything forbidden, you omit the duty at that time commanded; and whenever you neglect that which is enjoined, the omission is joined with the acting of something forbidden; so that the sin, whether omission or commission, is always double; nay, the apostle makes every sin tenfold. Jas 2:10. That which seems one to us, according to the sense of the law, and the account of God, is multiplied by ten. He breaks every command by sinning directly against one, and so sins ten times at once; besides that swarm of sinful circumstances and aggravations which surround every act in such numbers, as atoms use to surround your body in a dusty room; you may more easily number these than those. And though some count these but fractions, incomplete sins, yet even from hence it is more difficult to take an account of their number. And, which is more for astonishment, pick out the best religious duty that ever you performed, and even in that performance you may find such a swarm of sins as cannot be numbered. In the best prayer that ever you put up to God, irreverence, lukewarmness, unbelief, spiritual pride, self seeking, hypocrisy, distractions, etc., and many more, that an enlightened soul grieves and bewails; and yet there are many more that the pure eye of God discerns, than any man does take notice of. *David Clarkson.*

Verse 12. *Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me.* They seized him as the sinner's substitute, to deal with him as regards their own penalty, according to the sinner's desert. *James Frame.*

Verse 13. The remaining verses of this Psalm are almost exactly identical with Psalm 70.

Verse 14. *Let them be ashamed and confounded,* etc. Even this prayer carried benevolence in its bosom. It sought from the divine Father, such a manifestation of what was glorious and like God as

might unnerve each rebel arm, and overawe each rebel heart in the traitor's company. If each arm were for a little unnerved, if each heart were for a little unmanned, there might be time for the better principles of their nature to rise and put an arrest upon the prosecution of their wicked design. Such being the benevolent aim of the prayer, we need not wonder that it issued from the same heart that by and by exclaimed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do; "neither need we marvel that it was answered to the very letter, and that as soon as he said to the traitor band, "I am he, " they went backward and fell to the ground. *James Frame*.

Verse 15. *Aha, aha.* An exclamation which occurs three times in the Psalms; and in each case there seems to be reference to the mockery at the Passion. See Ps 35:21 70:3, which appear to belong to the same time as the present Psalm. *Christopher Wordsworth*.

Verse 16. *Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee.* As every mercy to every believer giveth a proof of God's readiness to show the like mercy to all believers, when they stand in need; so should every mercy shown to any of the number, being known to the rest, be made the matter and occasion of magnifying the Lord. *David Dickson*.

Verse 16. *Such as love thy salvation.* To love God's salvation is to love God himself, the Saviour, or Jesus. *Martin Geier*.

Verse 16. *Such as love thy salvation.* One would think that self love alone should make us love salvation. Aye, but they love it because it is his, "that love *thy* salvation." It is the character of a holy saint to love salvation itself; not as his own only, but as God's, as God's that saves him. *Thomas Goodwin*.

Verse 16. *Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.* Jesus who gave us our capacity of happiness and our capacity of speaking, realised the relation which he had established between them; and hence in praying for his friends, he prayed that in the joy and gladness of their souls they might say, "The Lord be magnified." He desired them to speak of their holy happiness; and it was his wish that when they did speak of it they should speak in terms of praise of Jehovah, for he was the source of it. He desired them to say continually, *The Lord be magnified.* *James Frame*.

Verse 17. In Dr. Malan's memoir, the editor, one of his sons, thus writes of his brother Jocelyn, who was for some years prior to his death, the subject of intense bodily sufferings:—"One striking feature in his character was his holy fear of God, and reverence for his will." One day I was repeating a verse from the Psalms, 'As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me: thou art my helper and deliverer; O Lord, make no long tarrying.' He said, 'Mamma, I love that verse, all but the last bit, it looks like a murmur against God. He never 'tarryes' in my case.' *From "The Life, Labours, and Writings of Caesar Malan" (1787-1864): By one of his sons, 1869.*

Verse 17. *Yet the Lord thinketh upon me.* Sacred story derives from heaven the kindness of

Abimelech to Abraham, of Laban and Esau to Jacob, of Ruth to Naomi, of Boaz to Ruth, and Jonathan to David. When others think of kindness to us, let us imitate David, it is the Lord that thinketh upon me, and forms those thoughts within their hearts. This should calm our spirits when a former friend's heart is alienated by rash admissions of false suggestions, or when any faithful Jonathan expires his spirit into the bosom of God. It should not be lost what Hobson, the late noted carrier of Cambridge, said to a young student receiving a letter of the sad tidings of his uncle's decease (who maintained him at the University), and weeping bitterly, and reciting the cause of his grief, he replied, *Who gave you that friend?* Which saying did greatly comfort him, and was a sweet support to him afterwards in his ministry. The Ever living God is the portion of a living faith, and *he* can never want that hath *such* an ocean. He that turns the hearts of kings like rivers at his pleasure, turns all the little brooks in the world into what scorched and parched ground he pleases. *Samuel Lee.*

Verse 17. *The Lord thinketh upon me.* There are three things in *God's thinking upon us*, that are solacing and delightful. Observe the *frequency* of his thoughts. Indeed, they are incessant. You have a friend, whom you esteem and love. You wish to live in his mind. You say when you part, and when you write, "Think of me." You give him, perhaps, a token to revive his remembrance. How naturally is Selkirk, in his solitary island, made to say:—

"My friends, do they now and then send

A wish or a *thought* after me?

O tell me, I yet have a friend,

Though a friend I am never to see."

"Ye winds, that have made me your sport,

Convey to this desolate shore

Some cordial, endearing report

Of a land I shall visit no more."

But the dearest connexion in the world cannot be always thinking upon you. Half his time he is in a state of unconsciousness; and how much during the other half is he engrossed! But there is no remission in the Lord's thoughts...Observe in the next place, the *wisdom* of his thoughts. You have a dear child, absent from you, and you follow him in your mind. But you know not his present circumstances. You left him in such a place; but where is he now? You left him in such a condition. But what is he now? Perhaps while you are thinking upon his health, he is groaning under a bruised limb, or a painful disorder. Perhaps, while you are thinking of his safety, some enemy is taking advantage of his innocency. Perhaps, while you are rejoicing in his prudence, he is going to take a step that will involve him for life. But when God thinketh upon you, he is perfectly acquainted with your situation, your dangers, your wants. He knows all your walking through this great wilderness,

and can afford you the seasonable succour you need. For again, observe the *efficiency* of his thoughts. You think upon another, and you are anxious to guide, or defend, or relieve him. But in how many cases can you think only? Solicitude cannot control the disease of the body, cannot dissipate the melancholy of the mind. But with God all things are possible. He who thinks upon you is a God at hand and not afar off; he has all events under his control; he is the God of all grace. If, therefore, he does not immediately deliver, it is not because he is unable to redress, but because he is waiting to be gracious. *William Jay.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1.

1. *My part*—praying and waiting.
2. *God's part*—condescension and reply.

Verse 2.

1. The *depth* of God's goodness to his people. It finds them often in a horrible pit and miry clay. There is a certain spider which forms a pit in sand, and lies concealed at the bottom, in order to seize upon other insects that fall into it. Thus David's enemies tried to bring him into a pit.
2. The *height* of his goodness. He brought me out and set my feet upon a rock. That rock is Christ. Those feet are faith and hope.
3. The *breadth* of his goodness establisheth my *goings*, restored me to my former place in his love, showing me still to have been his during my low estate. He was the same to me, though I felt not the same to him. My *goings* refer both to the past and the future.
4. The *strength* of his goodness *established* my *goings*, making me stand firmer after every fall. —George Rogers.

Verses 2-3. The sinner's position by nature, and his rescue by grace.

Verses 2-3. By one and the same act the Lord works our salvation, our enemies' confusion, and the church's edification. *J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 3. The new song, the singer, the teacher.

Verse 4. (*last clause*).

1. Find out who turn aside to lies—Atheists, Papists, self righteous, lovers of sin.
2. Show their folly in turning aside from God and truth, and in turning to fallacies which lead to death.
3. Show how to be preserved from the like folly, by choosing truth, truthful persons, and above all the service of God.

Verse 5.

1. *There are works of God in his people and for his people.* There are his works of creation, of providence, and of redemption, and also his works of grace, wrought in them by his Spirit, and

around them by his providence, as well as for them by his Son.

2. *These are wonderful works*; wonderful in their variety, their tenderness, their adaptation to their need, their cooperation with outward means and their power.

3. *They are the result of the divine thoughts respecting us*. They come not by chance, not by men, but by the hand of God, and that hand is moved by his will, and that will by his thought respecting us. Every mercy, even the least, represents some kind thought in the mind of God respecting us. God thinks of each one of his people, and every moment.

4. They are innumerable. *They cannot be reckoned up*. Could we see all the mercies of God to us and his wonderful works wrought for us individually, they would be countless as the sands, and all these countless mercies represent countless thoughts in the mind and heart of God to each one of his people. —George Rogers.

Verse 5. The multitude of God's thoughts, and deeds of grace; beginning in eternity, continuing for ever; and dealing with this life, heaven, hell, sin, angels, devils, and indeed all things.

Verse 6. Here David goes beyond himself, and speaks the language of David's Son. This was naturally suggested by God's wonderful works, and innumerable thoughts of love to man.

1. *The sacrifices that were not required*. These were the sacrifices and burnt offerings under the law. (a) When required? From Adam to the coming of Christ. (b) When not required? (c) Why required before? As types of the one method of redemption. (d) Why not now required? Because the great Antitype had come.

2. *The sacrifice that was required*. This was the sacrifice offered on Calvary. (a) It was required by God by his justice, his wisdom, his faithfulness, his love, his honour, his glory. (b) It was required by man to give him salvation and confidence in that salvation. (c) It was required for the honour of the moral government of God throughout the universe.

3. *The person by whom this sacrifice was offered. Mine ears hast thou opened*. This is the language of Christ, prospectively denoting—(a) Knowledge of the sacrifice required. (b) Consecration of himself as a servant for that end. —George Rogers.

Verse 6. *Mine ears hast thou opened*. Readiness to hear, fixity of purpose, perfection of obedience, entireness of consecration.

Verses 6-8. The Lord gives an ear to hear his word, a mouth to confess it, a heart to love it, and power to keep it. —James Merrick, M.A., 1720-1769.

Verses 6-8. The Lord gives an ear to hear his word, a mouth to confess it, a heart to love it, and power to keep it.

Verse 7.

1. The time of Christ's coming. *Then said I*. When types were exhausted, when prophecies looked for their fulfilment, when worldly wisdom had done its utmost, when the world was almost entirely united

under one empire, when the time appointed by the Father had come.

2. The design of his coming. *In the volume* was written—(a) The constitution of his person. (b) His teaching. (c) The manner of his life. (d) The design of his death. (e) His resurrection and ascension. (f) The kingdom he would establish.

3. The voluntariness of his coming, *Lo, I come*. Though sent by the Father, he came of his own accord. "Christ Jesus came into the world." Men do not come into the world, they are sent into it. *Lo, I come*, denotes pre-existence, pre-determination, pre-operation. —George Rogers.

Verses 6-8. The Lord gives an ear to hear his word, a mouth to confess it, a heart to love it, and power to keep it.

Verse 8. *To do thy will, O God.*

1. The will of God is seen in the fact of salvation. It has its origin in the will of God.

2. The will of God is seen in the plan of salvation. All things have proceeded, are proceeding, and will proceed according to that plan.

3. It is seen in the provision of salvation, in the appointment of his own Son to become the mediator, the atoning sacrifice, the law fulfiller, the head of the church, that his plan required.

4. It is seen in the accomplishment of salvation.

Verse 9. Referring to our Lord; a great preacher, a great subject, a great congregation, and his great faithfulness in the work.

Verse 10. (*first clause*).

1. The righteousness *possessed* by God.

2. The righteousness *prescribed* by God.

3. The righteousness *provided* by God. *James Frame.*

Verse 10.

1. The preacher must reveal his whole message. 2. He must not conceal any part: (a) Not of the righteousness of the law or the gospel; (b) Not of the lovingkindness of grace; (c) Not of any portion of the truth with flowers of rhetoric; (d) To give a partial representation; (e) To put one truth in the place of another; (f) To give the letter without the spirit. *G.R.*

Verse 10. The great sin of concealing what we know of God.

Verse 11. Enrichment and preservation sought. The true riches are from God, gifts of his sovereignty, fruits of his mercy, marked with his tenderness. The best preservations are divine love and faithfulness.

Verses 11-13. As an instance of clerical ingenuity, it may be well to mention that Canon Wordsworth has a sermon from these verses upon "the duty of making responses in public prayer."

"Came at length the dreadful night.

Vengeance with its iron rod

Stood, and with collected might
Bruised the harmless Lamb of God,
See, my soul, thy Saviour see,
Prostrate in Gethsemane!"

"There my God bore all my guilt,
This through grace can be believed;
But the horrors which he felt
Are too vast to be conceived.

None can penetrate through thee,
Doleful, dark Gethsemane."

"Sins against a holy God;
Sins against his righteous laws;
Sins against his love, his blood;
Sins against his name and cause;
Sins immense as is the sea—
Hide me, O Gethsemane!"

Verses 11-13. As an instance of clerical ingenuity, it may be well to mention that Canon Wordsworth has a sermon from these verses upon "the duty of making responses in public prayer."

Verse 12. Compare this with Ps 40:5. The number of our sins, and the number of his thoughts of love.

Verse 12. (*second clause*).

1. The soul arrested—"taken hold."
2. The soul bewildered—"cannot look up."
3. The soul's only refuge—prayer, Ps 40:13.

Verses 11-13. As an instance of clerical ingenuity, it may be well to mention that Canon Wordsworth has a sermon from these verses upon "the duty of making responses in public prayer."

Verse 13.

1. The language of believing prayer—deliver me, help me; looking for deliverance and help to God only.
2. Of earnest prayer—make haste to help me.
3. Of submissive prayer—be pleased, O Lord, if according to thy good pleasure.
4. Of consistent prayer. Help me, which implies efforts for his own deliverance, putting his own shoulder to the wheel.

Verse 14. *Honi soit mal y pense*; or, the reward of malignity.

Verse 16. (*last clause*). An everyday saying. Who can use it? What does it mean? Why should *they*

say it? Why say it continually?

Verse 17. The humble *But*, and the believing *Yet*. The little *I am*, and the great *Thou art*. The fitting prayer.

Verse 17. *The Lord thinketh upon me.* Admire the condescension, and then consider that this is—

1. A promised blessing.
2. A practical blessing—he thinks upon us to supply, protect, direct, sanctify, &c.
3. A precious blessing—kind thoughts, continual, greatly good. He thinks of us as his creatures with pity, as his children with love, as his friends with pleasure.
4. A present blessing—promises, providences, visitations of grace.

Verse 17.

1. The less we think of ourselves the more God will think upon us.
2. The less we put trust in ourselves the more we may trust in God for help and deliverance.
3. The less delay in prayer and active efforts the sooner God will appear for us.

Psalm 41

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. This title has frequently occurred before, and serves to remind us of the value of the Psalm, seeing that it was committed to no mean songster; and also to inform us as to the author who has made his own experience the basis of a prophetic song, in which a far greater than David is set forth. How wide a range of experience David had! What power it gave him to edify future ages! And how full a type of our Lord did he become! What was bitterness to him has proved to be a fountain of unfailling sweetness to many generations of the faithful.

Jesus Christ betrayed by Judas Iscariot is evidently the great theme of this Psalm, but we think not exclusively. He is the antitype of David, and all his people are in their measure like him; hence words suitable to the Great Representative are most applicable to those who are in him. Such as receive a vile return for long kindness to others, may read this song with much comfort, for they will see that it is alas! too common for the best of men, to be rewarded for their holy charity with cruelty and scorn; and when they have been humbled by falling into sin, advantage has been taken of their low estate, their good deeds have been forgotten and the vilest spite has been vented upon them.

DIVISION. The psalmist in Ps 41:1-3, describes the mercies which are promised to such as consider the poor, and this he uses as a preface to his own personal plea for succour: from Ps 41:4-9 he

states his own case, proceeds to prayer in Ps 41:10, and closes with thanksgiving, Ps 41:11-13.

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor.* This is the third Psalm opening with a benediction, and there is a growth in it beyond the first two. To search the word of God comes first, pardoned sin is second, and now the forgiven sinner brings forth fruit unto God available for the good of others. The word used is as emphatic as in the former cases, and so is the blessing which follows it. The poor intended, are such as are poor in substance, weak in bodily strength, despised in repute, and desponding in spirit. These are mostly avoided and frequently scorned. The worldly proverb bequeaths the hindmost to one who has no mercy. The sick and the sorry are poor company, and the world deserts them as the Amalekite left his dying servant. Such as have been made partakers of divine grace receive a tenderer nature, and are not hardened against their own flesh and blood; they undertake the cause of the downtrodden, and turn their minds seriously to the promotion of their welfare. They do not toss them a penny and go on their way, but enquire into their sorrows, sift out their cause, study the best ways for their relief, and practically come to their rescue: such as these have the mark of the divine favour plainly upon them, and are as surely the sheep of the Lord's pasture as if they wore a brand upon their foreheads. They are not said to have considered the poor years ago, but they still do so. Stale benevolence, when boasted of, argues present churlishness. First and foremost, yea, far above all others put together in tender compassion for the needy is our Lord Jesus, who so remembered our low estate, that though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor. All his attributes were charged with the task of our uplifting. He weighed our case and came in the fulness of wisdom to execute the wonderful work of mercy by which we are redeemed from our destructions. Wretchedness excited his pity, misery moved his mercy, and thrice blessed is he both by his God and his saints for his attentive care and wise action towards us. He still considereth us; his mercy is always in the present tense, and so let our praises be.

The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The compassionate lover of the poor thought of others, and therefore God will think of him. God measures to us with our own bushel. Days of trouble come even to the most generous, and they have made the wisest provision for rainy days who have lent shelter to others when times were better with them. The promise is not that the generous saint shall have no trouble, but that he shall be preserved in it, and in due time brought out of it. How true was this of our Lord! never trouble deeper nor triumph brighter than his, and glory be to his name, he secures the ultimate victory of all his blood bought ones. Would that they all were more like him in putting on bowels of compassion to the poor. Much blessedness they miss who stint their alms. The joy of doing good, the sweet reaction of another's happiness, the approving smile of heaven upon the heart, if not upon the estate; all these the niggardly soul knows nothing of. Selfishness bears in itself

a curse, it is a cancer in the heart; while liberality is happiness, and maketh fat the bones. In dark days we cannot rest upon the supposed merit of alms giving, but still the music of memory brings with it no mean solace when it tells of widows and orphans whom we have succoured, and prisoners and sick folk to whom we have ministered.

Verse 2. *The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive.* His noblest life shall be immortal, and even his mortal life shall be sacredly guarded by the power of Jehovah. Jesus lived on till his hour came, nor could the devices of crafty Herod take away his life till the destined hour had struck; and even then no man took his life from him, but he laid it down of himself, to take it again. Here is the portion of all those who are made like their Lord, they bless and they shall be blessed, they preserve and shall be preserved, they watch over the lives of others and they themselves shall be precious in the sight of the Lord. The miser like the hog is of no use till he is dead—then let him die; the righteous like the ox is of service during life—then let him live. *And he shall be blessed upon the earth.* Prosperity shall attend him. His cruse of oil shall not be dried up because he fed the poor prophet. He shall cut from his roll of cloth and find it longer at both ends.

"There was a man, and some did count him mad,
The more he gave away the more he had."

If temporal gains be not given him, spirituals shall be doubled to him. His little shall be blessed, bread and water shall be a feast to him. The liberal are and must be blessed even here; they have a present as well as a future portion. Our Lord's real blessedness of heart in the joy that was set before him is a subject worthy of earnest thought, especially as it is the picture of the blessing which all liberal saints may look for. *And thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.* He helped the distressed, and now he shall find a champion in his God. What would not the good man's enemies do to him if they had him at their disposal? Better be in a pit with vipers than to be at the mercy of persecutors. This sentence sets before us a sweet negative, and yet it were not easy to have seen how it could be true of our Lord Jesus, did we not know that although he was exempted from much of blessing, being made a curse for us, yet even he was not altogether nor for ever left of God, but in due time was exalted above all his enemies.

Verse 3. *The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing.* The everlasting arms shall stay up his soul as friendly hands and downy pillows stay up the body of the sick. How tender and sympathising is this image; how near it brings our God to our infirmities and sicknesses! Whoever heard this of the old heathen Jove, or of the gods of India or China? This is language peculiar to the God of Israel; he it is who deigns to become nurse and attendant upon good men. If he smites with one hand he sustains with the other. Oh, it is blessed fainting when one falls upon the Lord's own bosom, and is borne up thereby! Grace is the best of restoratives; divine love is the noblest stimulant for a languishing patient; it makes the soul strong as a giant, even when the aching bones are

breaking through the skin. No physician like the Lord, no tonic like his promise, no wine like his love. *Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* What, doth the Lord turn bed maker to his sick children? Herein is love indeed. Who would not consider the poor if such be the promised reward? A bed soon grows hard when the body is weary with tossing to and fro upon it, but grace gives patience, and God's smile gives peace, and the bed is made soft because the man's heart is content; the pillows are downy because the head is peaceful. Note that the Lord will make *all* his bed, from head to foot. What considerate and indefatigable kindness! Our dear and ever blessed Lord Jesus, though in all respects an inheritor of this promise, for our sakes condescended to forego the blessing, and died on a cross and not upon a bed; yet, even there, he was after awhile upheld and cheered by the Lord his God, so that he died in triumph.

We must not imagine that the benediction pronounced in these three verses belongs to all who casually give money to the poor, or leave it in their wills, or contribute to societies. Such do well, or act from mere custom, as the case may be, but they are not here alluded to. The blessing is for those whose habit it is to love their neighbour as themselves, and who for Christ's sake feed the hungry and clothe the naked. To imagine a man to be a saint who does not consider the poor as he has ability, is to conceive the fruitless fig tree to be acceptable; there will be sharp dealing with many professors on this point in the day when the King cometh in his glory.

Verses 4-9. Here we have a controversy between the pleader and his God. He has been a tender friend to the poor, and yet in the hour of his need the promised assistance was not forthcoming. In our Lord's case there was a dark and dreary night in which such arguments were well befitting himself and his condition.

Verse 4. *I said*—said it in earnest prayer—*Lord, be merciful unto me.* Prove now thy gracious dealings with my soul in adversity, since thou didst aforetime give me grace to act liberally in my prosperity. No appeal is made to justice; the petitioner but hints at the promised reward, but goes straightforward to lay his plea at the feet of mercy. How low was our Redeemer brought when such petitions could come from his reverend mouth, when his lips like lilies dropped such sweet smelling but bitter myrrh! *Heal my soul.* My time of languishing is come, now do as thou hast said, and strengthen me, especially in my soul. We ought to be far more earnest for the soul's healing than for the body's ease. We hear much of the cure of souls, but we often forget to care about it. *For I have sinned against thee.* Here was the root of sorrow. Sin and suffering are inevitable companions. Observe that by the psalmist sin was felt to be mainly evil because directed against God. This is of the essence of true repentance. The immaculate Saviour could never have used such language as this unless there be here a reference to the sin which he took upon himself by imputation; and for our part we tremble to apply words so manifestly indicating personal rather than imputed sin. Applying the petition to David and other sinful believers, how strangely evangelical is the argument: heal me,

not for I am innocent, but *I have sinned*. How contrary is this to all self righteous pleading! How consonant with grace! How inconsistent with merit! Even the fact that the confessing penitent had remembered the poor, is but obliquely urged, but a direct appeal is made to mercy on the ground of great sin. O trembling reader, here is a divinely revealed precedent for thee, be not slow to follow it.

Verse 5. *Mine enemies speak evil of me*. It was their nature to do and speak evil; it was not possible that the child of God could escape them. The viper fastened on Paul's hand: the better the man the more likely, and the more venomous the slander. Evil tongues are busy tongues, and never deal in truth. Jesus was traduced to the utmost, although no offence was in him. *When shall he die, and his name perish?* They could not be content till he was away. The world is not wide enough for evil men to live in while the righteous remain, yea, the bodily presence of the saints may be gone, but their memory is an offence to their foes. It was never merry England, say they, since men took to Psalm singing. In the Master's case, they cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live." If persecutors could have their way, the church should have but one neck, and that should be on the block. Thieves would fain blow out all candles. The lights of the world are not the delights of the world. Poor blind bats, they fly at the lamp, and try to dash it down; but the Lord liveth, and preserveth both the saints and their names.

Verse 6. *And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity*. His visits of sympathy are visitations of mockery. When the fox calls on the sick lamb his words are soft, but he licks his lips in hope of the carcass. It is wretched work to have spies haunting one's bedchamber, calling in pretence of kindness, but with malice in their hearts. Hypocritical talk is always fulsome and sickening to honest men, but especially to the suffering saint. Our divine Lord had much of this from the false hearts that watched his words. *His heart gathereth iniquity to itself*. Like will to like. The bird makes its nest of feathers. Out of the sweetest flowers chemists can distil poison, and from the purest words and deeds malice can gather groundwork for calumnious report. It is perfectly marvellous how spite spins webs out of no materials whatever. It is no small trial to have base persons around you lying in wait for every word which they may pervert into evil. The Master whom we serve was constantly subject to this affliction. *When he goeth abroad, he telleth it*. He makes his lies, and then vends them in open market. He is no sooner out of the house than he outs with his lie, and this against a sick man whom he called to see as a friend—a sick man to whose incoherent and random speeches pity should be showed. Ah, black hearted wretch! A devil's cub indeed. How far abroad men will go to publish their slanders! They would fain placard the sky with their falsehoods. A little fault is made much of; a slip of the tongue is a libel, a mistake a crime, and if a word can bear two meanings the worse is always fathered upon it. Tell it in Gath, publish it in Askelon, that the daughters of the uncircumcised may triumph. It is base to strike a man when he is down, yet such is the meanness of mankind towards a Christian hero should he for awhile chance to be under a cloud.

Verse 7. *All that hate me whisper together against me.* The spy meets his comrades in conclave and sets them all a whispering. Why could they not speak out? Were they afraid of the sick warrior? Or were their designs so treacherous that they must needs be hatched in secrecy? Mark the unanimity of the wicked—all. How heartily the dogs unite to hunt the stag! Would God we were half as united in holy labour as persecutors in their malicious projects, and were half as wise as they are crafty, for their whispering was craft as well as cowardice, the conspiracy must not be known till all is ready. *Against me do they devise my hurt.* They lay their heads together, and scheme and plot. So did Ahithophel and the rest of Absalom's counsellors, so also did the chief priests and Pharisees. Evil men are good at devising; they are given to meditation, they are deep thinkers, but the mark they aim at is evermore the hurt of the faithful. Snakes in the grass are never there for a good end.

Verse 8. *An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him.* They whisper that some curse has fallen upon him, and is riveted to him. They insinuate that a foul secret stains his character, the ghost whereof haunts his house, and never can be laid. An air of mystery is cast around this doubly dark saying, as if to show how indistinct are the mutterings of malice. Even thus was our Lord accounted "smitten of God and afflicted." His enemies conceived that God had forsaken him, and delivered him for ever into their hands. *And now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.* His sickness they hoped was mortal, and this was fine news for them. No more would the good man's holiness chide their sin, they would now be free from the check of his godliness. Like the friars around Wycliffe's bed, their prophesyings were more jubilant than accurate, but they were a sore scourge to the sick man. When the Lord smites his people with his rod of affliction for a small moment, their enemies expect to see them capitally executed, and prepare their *jubilates* to celebrate their funerals, but they are in too great a hurry, and have to alter their ditties and sing to another tune. Our Redeemer eminently foretokened this, for out of his lying in the grave he has gloriously risen. Vain the watch, the stone, the seal! Rising he pours confusion on his enemies.

Verse 9. *Yea.* Here is the climax of the sufferer's woe, and he places before it the emphatic affirmation, as if he thought that such villainy would scarcely be believed. *Mine own familiar friend.* "The man of my peace, "so runs the original, with whom I had no differences, with whom I was in league, who had aforetime ministered to my peace and comfort. This was Ahithophel to David, and Iscariot with our Lord. Judas was an apostle, admitted to the privacy of the Great Teacher, hearing his secret thoughts, and, as it were, allowed to read his very heart. *"Et tu Brute?"* said the expiring Caesar. The kiss of the traitor wounded our Lord's heart as much as the nail wounded his hand. *In whom I trusted.* Judas was the treasurer of the apostolic college. Where we place great confidence an unkind act is the more severely felt. *Which did eat of my bread.* Not only as a guest but as a dependant, a pensioner at my board. Judas dipped in the same dish with his Lord, and hence the more accursed was his treachery in his selling his Master for a slave's price. *Hath lifted up his heel*

against me. Not merely turned his back on me, but left me with a heavy kick such as a vicious horse might give. Hard is it to be spurned in our need by those who formerly fed at our table. It is noteworthy that the Redeemer applied only the last words of this verse to Judas, perhaps because, knowing his duplicity, he had never made a familiar friend of him in the fullest sense, and had not placed implicit trust in him. Infernal malice so planned it that every circumstance in Jesus' death should add wormwood to it; and the betrayal was one of the bitterest drops of gall. We are indeed, wretched when our *quondam* friend becomes our relentless foe, when confidence is betrayed, when all the rites of hospitality are perverted, and ingratitude is the only return for kindness; yet in so deplorable a case we may cast ourselves upon the faithfulness of God, who, having, delivered our Covenant Head, is in verity engaged to be the very present help of all for whom that covenant was made.

Verse 10. *But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me.* How the hunted and affrighted soul turns to her God! How she seems to take breath with a "but, thou!" How she clings to the hope of mercy from God when every chance of pity from man is gone! *And raise me up.* Recover me from my sickness, give me to regain my position. Jesus was raised up from the grave; his descent was ended by an ascent. *That I may requite them.* This as it reads is a truly Old Testament sentence, and quite aside from the spirit of Christianity, yet we must remember that David was a person in magisterial office, and might without any personal revenge, desire to punish those who had insulted his authority and libelled his public character. Our great Apostle and High Priest had no personal animosities, but even he by his resurrection has requited the powers of evil, and avenged on death and hell all their base attacks upon his cause and person. Still the strained application of every sentence of this Psalm to Christ is not to our liking, and we prefer to call attention to the better spirit of the gospel beyond that of the old dispensation.

Verse 11. We are all cheered by tokens for good, and the psalmist felt it to be an auspicious omen, that after all his deep depression he was not utterly given over to his foe. *By this I know that thou favourest me.* Thou hast a special regard to me, I have the secret assurance of this in my heart, and, therefore, thine outward dealings do not dismay me, for I know that thou lovest me in them all. *Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.* What if the believer has no triumph over his foes, he must be glad that they do not triumph over him. If we have not all we would we should praise God for all we have. Much there is in us over which the ungodly might exult, and if God's mercy keeps the dog's mouths closed when they might be opened, we must give him our heartiest gratitude. What a wonder it is that when the devil enters the lists with a poor, erring, bedridden, deserted, slandered saint, and has a thousand evil tongues to aid him, yet he cannot win the day, but in the end slinks off without renown.

"The feeblest saint shall win the day

Though death and hell obstruct the way, "

Verse 12. *And as for me*, despite them all and in the sight of them all, *thou upholdest me in mine integrity*; thy power enables me to rise above the reach of slander by living in purity and righteousness. Our innocence and consistency are the result of the divine upholding. We are like those glasses without feet, which can only be upright while they are held in the hand; we fall, and spill, and spoil all, if left to ourselves. The Lord should be praised every day if we are preserved from gross sin. When others sin they show us what we should do but for grace. "He today and I tomorrow," was the exclamation of a holy man, whenever he saw another falling into sin. Our integrity is comparative as well as dependent, we must therefore be humbled while we are grateful. If we are clear of the faults alleged against us by our calumniators, we have nevertheless quite enough of actual blameworthiness to render it shameful for us to boast. *And settest me before thy face for ever.* He rejoiced that he lived under the divine surveillance; tended, cared for, and smiled upon by his Lord; and yet more, that it would be so world without end. To stand before an earthly monarch is considered to be a singular honour, but what must it be to be a perpetual courtier in the palace of the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible?

Verse 13. The Psalm ends with a doxology. *Blessed be the Lord*, i.e., let him be glorified. The blessing at the beginning from the mouth of God is returned from the mouth of his servant. We cannot add to the Lord's blessedness, but we can pour out our grateful wishes, and these he accepts, as we receive little presents of flowers from children who love us. Jehovah is the personal name of our God. *God of Israel* is his covenant title, and shows his special relation to his elect people. *From everlasting and to everlasting.* The strongest way of expressing endless duration. *We die*, but the glory of God goes on and on without pause. *Amen and amen.* So let it surely, firmly, and eternally be. Thus the people joined in the Psalm by a double shout of holy affirmation; let us unite in it with all our hearts. This last verse may serve for the prayer of the universal church in all ages, but none can sing it so sweetly as those who have experienced as David did the faithfulness of God in times of extremity.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. The *Syriac* says, "It was a Psalm of David, when he appointed overseers to take care of the poor." *Adam Clarke.*

Whole Psalm. A prophecy of Christ and the traitor Judas. *Eusebius of Caesarea, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 1. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor.* Interpreters are generally of opinion that the exercise of kindness and compassion, manifested in taking care of the miserable, and helping them, is here commended. Those, however, who maintain that the psalmist here commends the considerate candour of those who judge wisely and charitably of men in adversity, form a better

judgment of his meaning. Indeed, the participle, (lksm), *maskil*, cannot be explained in any other way. At the same time it ought to be observed on what account it is that David declares those to be blessed who form a wise and prudent judgment concerning the afflictions by which God chastises his servants...Doubtless it happened to him as it did to the holy patriarch Job, whom his friends reckoned to be one of most wicked of men, when they saw God treating him with great severity. And certainly it is an error which is by far too common among men, to look upon those who are oppressed with afflictions as condemned and reprobate...For the most part, indeed, we often speak rashly and indiscriminately concerning others, and, so to speak, plunge even into the lowest abyss those who labour under affliction. To restrain such a rash and unbridled spirit, David says, that they are blessed who do not suffer themselves, by speaking at random, to judge harshly of their neighbours; but discerning aright the afflictions by which they are visited, mitigate, by the wisdom of the spirit, the severe and unjust judgments to which we naturally are so prone. *John Calvin*.

Verse 1. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor.* As Christ considered us in our state of poverty, so ought we most attentively to consider him in his; to consider what he suffered in his own person; to discern him suffering in his poor afflicted members; and to extend to them the mercy which he extended to us. He, who was "blessed" of Jehovah, and "delivered in the evil day" by a glorious resurrection, will "bless" and "deliver" in like manner, such as for his sake, love and relieve their brethren. *George Horne*.

Verse 1. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor.* Not the poor of the world in common, nor poor saints in particular, but some single poor man; for the word is in the singular number, and designs our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the last verse of the preceding Psalm, is said to be *poor and needy*. *John Gill*.

Verse 1. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor.* I call your attention to the way in which the Bible enjoins us to take up the care of the poor. It does not say in the text before us, Commiserate the poor; for, if it said no more than this, it would leave their necessities to be provided for by the random ebullitions of an impetuous and unreflecting sympathy. It provided them with a better security than the mere feeling of compassion—a feeling which, however useful to the purpose of excitement, must be controlled and regulated. Feeling is but a faint and fluctuating security. Fancy may mislead it. The sober realities of life may disgust it. Disappointment may extinguish it. Ingratitude may embitter it. Deceit, with its counterfeit representations, may allure it to the wrong object. At all events, Time is the little circle in which it in general expatiates. It needs the impression of sensible objects to sustain it; nor can it enter with zeal or with vivacity into the wants of the abstract and invisible soul. The Bible, then, instead of leaving the relief of the poor to the mere instinct of sympathy, makes it a subject for *consideration*—"Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor, "a grave and prosaic exercise, I do allow, and which makes no figure in those high wrought descriptions, where the exquisite tale of

benevolence is made up of all the sensibilities of tenderness on the one hand, and of all the ecstasies of gratitude on the other. The Bible rescues the cause from the mischief to which a heedless or unthinking sensibility would expose it. It brings it under the cognisance of a higher faculty—a faculty of sturdier operation than to be weary in well doing, and of sturdier endurance than to give it up in disgust. It calls you to *consider* the poor. It makes the virtue of relieving them a matter of computation, as well as of sentiment, and in so doing puts you beyond the reach of the various delusions, by which you are at one time led to prefer the indulgence of pity to the substantial interest of its object; at another, are led to retire chagrined and disappointed from the scene of duty, because you have not met with the gratitude or the honesty that you laid your account with; at another, are led to expend all your anxieties upon the accommodation of time, and to overlook eternity. It is the office of *consideration* to save you from all these fallacies. Under its tutorage attention to the wants of the poor ripens into principle...

It must be obvious to all of you, that it is not enough that you give money, and add your name to the contributions of charity. You must give it with judgment. You must give your time and your attention. You must descend to the trouble of examination. You must rise from the repose of contemplation, and make yourself acquainted with the object of your benevolent exercises...To give money is not to do all the work and labour of benevolence. You must go to the poor man's sick bed. You must lend your hand to the work of assistance. This is true and unsophisticated goodness. It may be recorded in no earthly documents; but, if done under the influence of Christian principle, in a word, if done unto Jesus, it is written in the book of heaven, and will give a new lustre to that crown to which his disciples look forward in time, and will wear through eternity. *From a Sermon preached before the Society for Relief of the Destitute Sick, in St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, by Thomas Chalmers, D.D. and L.L.D. (1780-1847.)*

Verse 1. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor.* A Piedmontese nobleman into whose company I fell, at Turin, told me the following story: "I was weary of life, and after a day such as few have known, and none would wish to remember, was hurrying along the street to the river, when I felt a sudden check, I turned and beheld a little boy, who had caught the skirt of my cloak in his anxiety to solicit my notice. His look and manner were irresistible. No less so was the lesson he had learnt—'There are six of us, and we are dying for want of food.' 'Why should I not, 'said I, to myself, 'relieve this wretched family? I have the means, and it will not delay me many minutes. But what if it does?' The scene of misery he conducted me to I cannot describe. I threw them my purse, and their burst of gratitude overcame me. It filled my eyes, it went as a cordial to my heart. 'I will call again tomorrow, 'I cried. 'Fool that I was to think of leaving a world where such pleasure was to be had, and so cheaply!'" *Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) in "Italy."*

Verse 1. *He that considereth the poor.*

An ardent spirit dwells with Christian love,
The eagle's vigour in the pitying dove.
It is not enough that we with sorrow sigh,
That we the wants of pleading man supply,
That we in sympathy with sufferers feel,
Nor hear a grief without a wish to heal:
Not these suffice—to sickness, pain, and woe,
The Christian spirit loves with aid to go:
Will not be sought, waits not for want to plead,
But seeks the duty—nay, prevents the need;
Her utmost aid to every ill applies,
And plants relief for coming miseries.

—George Crabbe, 1754-1832.

Verse 1. How foolish are they that fear to lose their wealth by giving it, and fear not to lose themselves by keeping it! He that lays up his gold may be a good *jailer*, but he that lays it out is a good *steward*. Merchants traffic thither with a commodity where it is precious in regard of scarcity. We do not buy wines in England to carry them to France, spices in France to carry them to the Indies; so for labour and work, repentance and mortification, there is none of them in heaven, there is peace and glory, and the favour of God indeed. A merchant without his commodity hath but a sorry welcome. God will ask men that arrive at heaven's gates, *ubi opera?* Re 22:12. His reward shall be according to our works. Thou hast riches here, and here be objects that need thy riches—the poor; in heaven there are riches enough but no poor, therefore, by faith in Christ make over to them thy moneys in this world, that by bill of exchange thou mayest receive it in the world to come; that only you carry with you which you send before you. Do good while it is in your power; relieve the oppressed, succour the fatherless, while your estates are your own; when you are dead your riches belong to others. One light carried before a man is more serviceable than twenty carried after him. In your compassion to the distressed, or for pious uses, let your hands be your executors, and your eyes your overseers. *Francis Raworth, Teacher to the Church at Shore-ditch, in a Funeral Sermon, 1656.*

Verses 1, 3. It is a blessed thing to receive when a man hath need; but it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive. *Blessed* (saith the prophet David) *is he that considereth the poor*. What? to say, alas, poor man! the world is hard with him, I would there were a course taken to do him good? No, no; but to so consider him as to give; to give till the poor man be satisfied, to draw out one's sheaf, aye, one's very soul to the hungry. But what if troubles should come? were it not better to keep money by one? Money will not deliver one. It may be an occasion to endanger one, to bring one into, rather

than help one out of trouble; but if a man be a merciful man, *God will deliver him*, either by himself, or by some other man or matter. Aye, but what if *sickness* come? Why, *the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing*; and, which is a great ease and kindness; God, as it were, himself *will make all his bed in his sickness*. Here poor people have the advantage: such must not say, Alas, I am a poor woman, what work of mercy can I do? for they are they who best can make the beds of sick folk, which we see is a great act of mercy, in that it is said, that *the Lord himself will make their bed in their sickness*. And there are none so poor, but they may *make the beds* of the sick. *Richard Capel*.

Verses 1, 5. He that considereth. Mine enemies. Strigelius has observed, there is a perpetual antithesis in this Psalm between the few who have a due regard to the poor in spirit, and the many who afflict or desert them. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 2. *The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive.* It is worthy of remark, that *benevolent persons*, who "*consider the poor*," and especially the *sick poor*; who search cellars, garrets, back lanes, and such abodes of misery, to find them out (even in the places where contagion keeps its seat), very seldom fall a prey to their own benevolence. The Lord, in an especial manner, keeps them *alive*, and preserves them; while many, who endeavour to keep far from the contagion, are assailed by it, and fall victims to it. God loves the merciful man. *Adam Clarke*.

Verse 2. *He shall be blessed upon the earth.* None of the godly man's afflictions shall hinder or take away his begun blessedness, even in this world. *David Dickson*.

Verse 3. *Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* Into what minuteness of exquisite and touching tenderness does the Lord condescend to enter! One feels almost as we may suppose Peter felt when the Saviour came to him and would have washed his feet, "Lord! thou shalt never wash my feet; "thou shalt never make my bed. And yet, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me; "if the Lord make not our bed in our sickness, there is no peace nor comfort there. We have had David calling on God to bow down his ear, like a loving mother listening to catch the feeblest whisper of her child; and the image is full of the sweetest sympathy and condescension; but here the Lord, the great God of heaven, he that said when on earth, "I am among you as one that serveth, "does indeed take upon him the form, and is found in fashion as a servant, fulfilling all the loving and tender offices of an assiduous nurse. *Barton Bouchier*.

Verse 3. *Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* The meaning rather is, "it is no longer a sick bed, for thou hast healed him of his disease." *J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 3. When a good man is ill at ease, God promises to make all his bed in his sickness. Pillow, bolster, head, feet, sides, all his bed. Surely that God who made him knows so well his measure and temper as to make his bed to please him. Herein his art is excellent, not fitting the bed to the person, but the person to the bed; infusing patience into him. But, oh! how shall God make my bed, who have no bed of mine own to make. Thou fool, he can make thy not having a bed to be a bed unto thee.

When Jacob slept on the ground, who would not have had his hard lodging, therewithal to have his heavenly dream? *Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 3. Sure that bed must need be soft which God will make. *T. Watson.*

Verse 3. We must not forget that Oriental beds needed not to be made in the same sense as our own. They were never more than mattresses or quilts thickly padded, and were turned when they became uncomfortable, and that is just the word here used. *C. H. S.*

Verse 3. When I visited one day, as he was dying, my beloved friend Benjamin Parsons, I said, "How are you today, Sir?" He said, "My head is resting very sweetly on three pillows—infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom." Preaching in the Canterbury Hall, in Brighton, I mentioned this some time since; and many months after I was requested to call upon a poor but holy young woman, apparently dying. She said, "I felt I must see you before I died." I heard you tell the story of Benjamin Parsons and his three pillows; and when I went through a surgical operation, and it was very cruel, I was leaning my head on pillows, and as they were taking them away I said, "May I keep them?" The surgeon said, "No, my dear, we must take them away." "But," said I, "you cannot take away Benjamin Parsons three pillows. I can lay my head on infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom." *Paxton Hood, in "Dark Sayings on a Harp," 1865.*

Verses 3-4. What saith David from the very bottom of his heart, in his sickness? Not, take away this death only. No; but David being sick, first comforts himself with this promise, *The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;* and then adds, *I said, Lord, be merciful unto me, and heal my soul;* that is, destroy my lusts, which are the diseases of my soul, Lord; and heal my soul, and renew life and communion with thee, which is the health and strength of my soul. Do not take this sickness and death only away; but this sin away, that hath dishonoured thee, hath separated between me and thee: *Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.* *Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 4. *I said, Lord, be merciful.* Mercy, not justice! The extreme of mercy for the extreme of misery. Righteousness as filthy rags; a flesh in which dwelleth no good thing, on the one side; on the other, it is "neither herb nor mollifying plaster that restored" to health; "but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things." *Wisdom 16:12. Thomas Aquinas, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 4. God is the strength of a Christian's heart, by healing and restoring him when the infused habits of grace fail, and sin grows strong and vigorous. A Christian never fails in the exercise of grace, but sin gives him a wound; and therefore David prayed, *Lord, heal my soul, for I have sinned.* And what David prayed for, God promises to his people: "I will heal their backsliding." *Ho 14:4.* The weakness and decay of grace, brings a Christian presently to the falling sickness; and so it did in David and Ephraim; aye, but God will be a physician to the soul in this case, and will heal their diseases; and so he did David's falling sickness, for which he returned the tribute of praise. *Ps 103:3.*

Samuel Blackerby.

Verse 4. (*last clause*). Saul and Judas each said, "I have sinned; "but David says," I have sinned *against thee.*" *William S. Plumer.*

Verses 1, 5. He that considereth. Mine enemies. Strigelius has observed, there is a perpetual antithesis in this Psalm between the few who have a due regard to the poor in spirit, and the many who afflict or desert them. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 5. *Mine enemies speak evil of me.* To speak is here used in the sense of *to imprecate.* *John Calvin.*

Verse 5. *His name.* It is the *name*, the character, and privileges of a true servant of God, that calls out the hatred of ungodly men, and they would gladly extirpate him from their sight. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 6. *If he come to see me, he speaketh vanity:* many fair words, but none of them true. *David Dickson.*

Verse 6. I remember a pretty apologue that Bromiard tells:—A fowler, in a sharp, frosty morning, having taken many little birds for which he had long watched, began to take up his nets, and nipping the birds on the head laid them down. A young thrush, espying the tears trickling down his cheek by reason of the extreme cold, said to her mother, that certainly the man was very merciful and compassionate, who wept so bitterly over the calamity of the poor birds. But her mother told her more wisely, that she might better judge of the man's disposition by his hand than by his eye; and if the hands do strike treacherously, he can never be admitted to friendship, who speaks fairly and weeps pitifully. *Jeremy Taylor.*

Verse 6. *His heart gathereth iniquity to itself.*

1. By adding sin to sin, in that he covers over his malice with such horrid hypocrisy.
2. By inventing or contriving all the several ways he can to ensnare me, or do me some mischief, thereby seeking to satisfy and please his corrupt lusts and affections;
3. (Which I like best), by observing all he can in me, and drawing what he can from me, and so laying all up together in his mind, as the ground of his unjust surmises and censures concerning me. *Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 8. *An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him.* An evil deed of Belial cleaveth fast to him. Grammarians maintain that the word *Belial* is compounded of (y**l**b), *beli*, and (l**e**y), *yaa*l, which signify "*not to rise*" the expression, "*thing of Belial*" (for so it is literally in the Hebrew), I understand in this place as meaning an extraordinary and hateful crime which as we commonly say can never be expiated, and from which there is no possibility of escape; unless perhaps some would rather refer it to the affliction itself under which he laboured, as if his enemies had said that he was seized by some incurable malady. *John Calvin.*

Verse 8. *An evil disease,* etc. What is here meant by (l**e**y**l**b-r**k**d) is matter of some difficulty. The

ancient interpreters generally render it a *perverse* or *mischievous*, or *wicked word*; the Chaldee, a *perverse word*; the Syriac, a *word of iniquity*; the LXX *logon paranomon*; the Latin, *iniquum verbum*, a *wicked word*; the Arabic, *words contrary to the law*. And so in all probability it is set to signify a *great slander*, or *calumny*—that as "men of Belial" are *slandering* persons, so the *speech of Belial* shall signify a *slandering* speech. And this is said to "*cleave*" to him on whom it is fastened, it being the nature of calumnies, when strongly affixed on any, to *cleave* fast, and leave some *evil mark* behind them. *Henry Hammond*.

Verse 9. *Yea, mine own familiar friend*, etc. The sufferings of the church, like those of her Redeemer, generally begin at home: her open enemies can do her no harm, until her pretended friends have delivered her into their hands; and, unnatural as it may seem, they who have waxed fat upon her bounty, are sometimes the first to *lift the heel* against her. *George Horne*.

Verse 9. *Mine own familiar friend*. He who, on visiting me, continually saluted me with the kiss of love and veneration, and the usual address: peace be to thee. *Hermann Venema*.

Verse 9. *Which did eat of my beard*. If the same sentiment prevailed among the Hebrews, which prevails at the present day among the Bedouin Arabs, of sacred regard to the person and property of one with whom they have eaten bread and salt, the language is very forcible. *Hath lifted up his heel*: a metaphor drawn from the horse, which attacks with its heel. This language may well have been used by our Saviour, in Joh 13:18, in the way of rhetorical illustration or emphasis. *George R. Noyes, D.D.*

Verse 9. *Hath lifted up his heel against me*. In this phrase he seems to allude to a beast's kicking at his master by whom he is fed, or the custom of men's spurning at or trampling upon those that are cast down on the ground, in a way of despite and contempt. *Arthur Jackson*.

Verse 9. *Hath lifted up his heel against me*; i.e., hath spurned me, hath kicked at me, as a vicious beast of burden does; hath insulted me in my misery. *Daniel Cresswell*.

Verse 10. *That I may requite them*. Either (1), kindness for injuries (as in Ps 35:13): it is the mark of a good and brave man to do good to all in his power, to hurt no one, even though provoked by wrong: or, (2), punishment for wrong doing—*that I may punish them*; for am I not their magistrate, and the executioner of God's justice! *Martin Geier*.

Verse 10. *That I may requite them*. David was not as one of the common people, but a king appointed by God and invested with authority, and it is not from an impulse of the flesh, but in virtue of the nature of his office, that he is led to denounce against his enemies the punishment which they had merited. *John Calvin*.

Verse 11. *By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me*: not because I have no enemies, or because I have no trouble which would overcome me. Therefore when he wrote down *many troubles*, he blotted it (as it were) with his pen again, as a merchant razes

his book when the debt is discharged; and instead of *many troubles*, he putteth in, *the Lord delivereth*. Because he forgiveth all sins, he is said to deliver from all troubles, to show that we have need of no Saviour, no helper, no comforter, but him. *Henry Smith*.

Verse 11. *By this I know that thou favourest me.* In this text we see two things. 1. How David assures himself of God's love towards him. 2. How thankful he is to God for assuring him of his love. The first he doth by two arguments; one is taken from his enemies, they were prevented of their expectation—"Therefore thou lovest me." The other is taken from his own estate, which was not one whit hurt, or impaired, but bettered by them...Here the prophet speaketh of his knowledge, and telleth us that though he knew not all things, yet he knew that God loved him, and so long as he knoweth that, he careth not greatly for other matters, how the world goeth with him, etc. And, to say the truth, he need not, for he that is sure of that, is sure of all. God loveth all his creatures as a good God, and hateth nothing that he made, but he loveth his elect children with a more especial love than the rest, as a Father in Christ Jesus, and he that is sure that God doth so favour him, is sure, I say, of all. For to him whom God loveth, he will deny no good thing, no, not his own Son; and if he gave us his Son, because he loved us, how shall he not with him give us all things else?

When the child is persuaded that his father loveth him, he is bold to ask this and that of his father: so may we be bold to ask anything of God our heavenly Father that is good for us, when we be sure that he loveth us. As Mary and Martha put Christ in mind but of two things; the first was, that Christ loved their brother Lazarus; the second was, that Lazarus was sick; "He whom thou lovest is sick:" it was no need to tell him what he should do, for they knew he would do what might be done for him, because he loved him. So we may say to the Lord, when we are sure that he loveth us: Lord, he whom thou lovest wanteth this or that for his body or his soul. We need not then appoint him what to do, or when, or how; for look what he seeth most convenient for us, and for his own glory, he will surely do it. Therefore whatsoever David knoweth, he will be sure to know this; and whatsoever he is ignorant of, yet of this he will not be ignorant; to teach is that whatsoever we seek to make sure, this must first be made sure, or else nothing is sure. Peter bids us make our election sure; Job, when he saith, "I am sure that my Redeemer liveth," teacheth us to make our redemption sure. And here David teacheth us to make *God's favour* sure: now if we make that sure, then our election is sure, our redemption is sure, our vocation is sure, and our salvation is sure. *William Barton, 1602.*

Verse 11. *Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.* When God doth deliver us from the hands of our enemies, or any trouble else, we may persuade ourselves thereby, he hath a favour unto us, as David did. But then it may be demanded, If God doth love his church, why doth he suffer his church to be troubled and molested with enemies? The reason is this, because by this means his love may be made more manifest in saving and delivering them. For as a sure friend is not known but in time of need, so God's goodness and love is never so well perceived as it is in helping of us when

we cannot help ourselves. As Adam's fall did serve to manifest God's justice and mercy, the one in punishing, the other is pardoning of sin, which otherwise we had never known: so the troubles of the church serve to manifest, first, our deserts by reason of our sins; secondly, our weakness and inability to help ourselves; and, thirdly, the lovingkindness of the Lord our God, in saving and defending, that so we might be truly thankful, and return all the praise and glory to God, and none to ourselves. So that the church of God may have enemies, and yet be still the beloved of God, as Lazarus was beloved of Christ, although he was sick; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and therefore he correcteth them because he loveth them. *William Burton.*

Verse 11. God preserves his own, and bringeth their foes to nought: after Passion week comes Easter. *J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 12. Integrity. This same integrity is like Noah's ark, wherein he was preserved, when others perished, being without it. It is like the red thread, which the spies of Joshua gave to Rahab, it was a charter whereby she claimed her life when the rest were destroyed, which had not the like. So is this integrity of small reckoning, I confess, with the men of this world, which think that there is no other heaven but earth; but as Rahab's thread was better to her than all her goods and substance when the sword came, so this is better to God's children than all the world when death comes. If they have this within they care not, nay, they need not care what can come without. If Satan's buffeting come, this is a helmet of proof; if Satan's darts fly out, this is a shield to quench them; if floods of crosses come to carry us away, this is a boat to bear us up; if all the world cast mire and filth in our faces, we are never a whit the more deformed, but still beautiful for all that, for "the king's daughter," (saith Solomon, Ps 45:13), that is, the church of Christ, "is all glorious within." *William Burton.*

Verse 12. *Settest me before thy face for ever, or hast confirmed or established me in thy presence;* i.e, either under thine eye and special care, or to minister to thee, not only in thy temple, but as a king over thy people, or in that land where thou art peculiarly present. *Matthew Poole.*

Verse 13. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.* We are here taught, 1. To give glory to God, as *the Lord God of Israel*, a God in covenant with his people; that has done great and kind things for them, and has more and better in reserve. 2. To give him glory as an eternal God, that has both his being and his blessedness *from everlasting and to everlasting*. 3. To do this with great affection and fervour of spirit, intimated in a double seal set to it, *Amen, and Amen.* We say Amen to it, and let all others say Amen too. *Matthew Henry.*

Verse 13. Amen and Amen. As the Psalms were not written by one man, so neither do they form one book. The Psalter is, in fact, a Pentateuch, and the lines of demarcation, which divide the five books one from another, are clear and distinct enough. At the end of the 41st Psalm, of the 72nd, of the 89th, and of the 106th, we meet with the solemn, *Amen*, single or redoubled, following on a doxology, which indicates that one book ends and that another is about to begin. A closer study of the Psalms

shows that each book possesses characteristics of its own. Jehovah ("the Lord") for example, is prominent as the divine name in the first book, Elohim ("God") in the second. *E. H. Plumptre, M.A., in "Biblical Studies," 1870.*

Verse 13. There is also another observable difference between the two books. In the first, all those Psalms which have any inscription at all are expressly assigned to David as their author, whereas in the second we find a whole series attributed to some of the Levitical singers. *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 13. How ancient the division is cannot now be clearly ascertained. Jerome, in his epistle to Marcella, and Epiphanius speak of the Psalms as having been divided by the Hebrews into five books, but when this division was made they do not inform us. The forms of ascription of praise, added at the end of each of the five books, are in the Septuagint version, from which we may conclude that this distribution had been made before that version was executed. It was probably made by Ezra, after the return of the Jews from Babylon to their own country, and the establishment of the worship of God in the new temple, and it was perhaps made in imitation of a similar distribution of the books of Moses. In making this division of the Hebrew Psalter, regard appears to have been paid to the subject matter of the Psalms. *John Calvin.*

Verse 13. These forty-one Psalms, it has been observed, forming the first book, relate chiefly to the ministry of Christ upon earth, preparing those who were looking for the consolation of Israel, for his appearing amongst them. Accordingly, the second book, commencing with Psalm 42, may refer chiefly to the infant church of Christ. *W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 13. May not the growth of the Book of Psalms be illustrated by the case of our Modern Hymn Books which in the course of years require first one appendix and then another, so as to incorporate the growing psalmody of the church? In this case the purely Davidic Psalms of the first division formed the nucleus to which other sacred songs were speedily added. *C. H. S.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. (first clause). The incidental blessings resulting from considering the pious poor.

1. We learn gratitude.
2. We see patience.
3. We often remark the triumphs of great grace.
4. We obtain light on Christian experience.
5. We have their prayers.
6. We feel the pleasure of beneficence.
7. We enter into communion with the lowly Saviour.

Verse 1. The support of the Small pox Hospitals recommended. *Bishop Squire, 1760.* Scores of sermons of this kind have been preached from this text.

Verse 2. *Blessed upon the earth.* What blessings of an earthly character godly character secures, and in general what it is to be blessed with regard to this life.

Verse 2. (*second clause*). What it is to be delivered *in* trouble. From impatience, from despair, from sinful expedients, from violent attacks, from losing fellowship with God.

Verse 3. Strength in weakness. Inward strength, divinely given, continuously sustained, enduring to the end, triumphant in death, glorifying to God, proving the reality of grace, winning others to the faith.

Verse 3. (*last clause*). The heavenly bed making.

Verse 4. (*first clause*). A saying worth repeating: *I said*. It expresses penitence, humility, earnestness, faith, importunity, fear of God, etc.

Verse 4. *Heal my soul.*

1. The hereditary disease, breaking out in many disorders—open sin, unbelief, decline of grace, etc.

2. Spiritual health struggling with it; shown in spiritual pain, desire, prayer, effort.

3. The well proved Physician. Has healed, and will, by his word, his blood, his Spirit, &c.

Verse 4. *I have sinned against thee.* This confession is personal, plain, without pretence of excuse, comprehensive and intelligent, for it reveals the very heart of sin—"against thee."

Verse 5. What we may expect. What our enemies desire. What we may therefore prize, *i.e.*, the power of Christian life and name. What we should do—tell the Lord all in prayer. What good will then come of the evil.

Verse 6. (*first clause*). The folly and sin of frivolous visits.

Verse 6. (*second and third clauses*). Like to like, or the way in which character draws its like to itself. The same subject might be treated under the title of *The Chiffonnier*, or the rag collector. What he gathers; where he puts it—in his *heart*; what he does with it; what he gets for it; and what will become of him.

Verses 7-12. On a sick bed a man discovers not only his enemies and his friends, but himself and his God, more intimately.

Verse 9. The treachery of Judas.

Verse 11. Deliverance from temptation a token of divine favour.

Verse 12. This text reveals the insignia of those whom grace has distinguished.

1. Their integrity is manifest.

2. Their character is divinely sustained.

3. They dwell in the favour of God.

4. Their position is stable and continues.

5. Their eternal future is secure.

Verse 13.

1. The object of praise—Jehovah, the covenant God.

2. The nature of the praise—without beginning or end.

3. Our participation in the praise—"Amen and Amen."

The ancient rabbins saw in the Five Books of the Psalter the image of the Five Books of the Law. This way of looking on the Psalms as a second Pentateuch, the echo of the first, passed over into the Christian church, and found favour with some early fathers. It has commended itself to the acceptance of good recent expositors, like Dr. Delitzsch, who calls the Psalter "the congregation's five fold word to the Lord, even as the *Thora* (the Law) is the Lord's five fold word to the Congregation." This may be mere fancy, but its existence from ancient times shows that the five fold division attracted early notice. *William Binnie, D.D.*

God presented Israel with the Law, a Pentateuch, and grateful Israel responded with a Psalter, a Pentateuch of praise. *F.L.K.*

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-FIRST PSALM

"David's Evidence; or, the Assurance of God's Love: declared in seven Sermons upon the three last verses of the Forty-first Psalme. By WILLIAM BURTON. Minister of the Word at Reading in Berkshire ...1602." 4to.

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God presented Israel with the Law, a Pentateuch, and grateful Israel responded with a Psalter, a Pentateuch of praise, in acknowledgment of the divine gift. *J. L. K.*

Psalm 42

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

TITLE. To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah. Dedicated to the Master of Music, this Psalm is worthy of his office; he who can sing best can have nothing better to sing. It is called, Maschil, or an instructive ode; and full as it is of deep experimental expressions, it is eminently

calculated to instruct those pilgrims whose road to heaven is of the same trying kind as David's was. It is always edifying to listen to the experience of a thoroughly gracious and much afflicted saint. That choice band of singers, the sons of Korah, are bidden to make this delightful Psalm one of their peculiars. They had been spared when their father and all his company, and all the children of his associates were swallowed up alive in their sin. Numbers 26:11. They were the spared ones of sovereign grace. Preserved, we know not why, by the distinguishing favour of God, it may be surmised that after their remarkable election to mercy, they became so filled with gratitude that they addicted themselves to sacred music in order that their spared lives might be consecrated to the glory of God. At any rate, we who have been rescued as they were from going down into the pit, out of the mere good pleasure of Jehovah, can heartily join in this Psalm, and indeed in all the songs which show forth the praises of our God and the pantings of our hearts after him. Although David is not mentioned as the author, this Psalm must be the offspring of his pen; it is so Davidic, it smells of the son of Jesse, it bears the marks of his style and experience in every letter. We could sooner doubt the authorship of the second part of Pilgrim's Progress than question David's title to be the composer of this Psalm.

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

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

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.* As after a long drought the poor fainting hind longs for the streams, or rather as the hunted hart instinctively seeks after the river to lave its smoking flanks and to escape the dogs, even so my weary, persecuted soul pants after the Lord my God. Debarred from public worship, David was heartsick. Ease he did not seek, honour he did not covet, but the enjoyment of communion with God was an urgent need of his soul; he viewed it not merely as the sweetest of all luxuries, but as an absolute necessity, like water to a stag. Like the parched traveller in the wilderness, whose skin bottle is empty, and who finds the wells dry, he must drink or die—he must have his God or faint. His *soul*, his very self, his deepest life, was insatiable for a sense of the divine presence. As the hart brays so his soul prays. Give him his God and he is as content as the poor deer which at length slakes its thirst

and is perfectly happy; but deny him his Lord, and his heart heaves, his bosom palpitates, his whole frame is convulsed, like one who gasps for breath, or pants with long running. Dear reader, dost thou know what this is, by personally having felt the same? It is a sweet bitterness. The next best thing to living in the light of the Lord's love is to be unhappy till we have it, and to pant hourly after it—hourly, did I say? thirst is a perpetual appetite, and not to be forgotten, and even thus continual is the heart's longing after God. When it is as natural for us to long for God as for an animal to thirst, it is well with our souls, however painful our feelings. We may learn from this verse that the eagerness of our desires may be pleaded with God, and the more so, because there are special promises for the importunate and fervent.

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

Verse 3. *My tears have been my meat day and night.* Salt meats, but healthful to the soul. When a man comes to tears, constant tears, plenteous tears, tears that fill his cup and trencher, he is in earnest indeed. As the big tears stand in the stag's eyes in her distress, so did the salt drops glitter in the eyes of David. His appetite was gone, his tears not only seasoned his meat, but became his only meat, he had no mind for other diet. Perhaps it was well for him that the heart could open the safety valves; there is a dry grief far more terrible than showery sorrows. His tears, since they were shed

because God was blasphemed, were "honourable dew, "drops of holy water, such as Jehovah putteth into his bottle. *While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?* Cruel taunts come naturally from coward minds. Surely they might have left the mourner alone; he could weep no more than he did—it was a supererogation of malice to pump more tears from a heart which already overflowed. Note how incessant was their jeer, and how artfully they framed it! It cut the good man to the bone to have the faithfulness of his God impugned. They had better have thrust needles into his eyes than have darted insinuations against his God. Shimei may here be alluded to who after this fashion mocked David as he fled from Absalom. He roundly asserted that David was a bloody man, and that God was punishing him for supplanting Saul and his house; his wish was father to his thought. The wicked know that our worst misfortune would be to lose God's favour, hence their diabolical malice leads them to declare that such is the case. Glory be to God, they lie in their throats, for our God is in the heavens, aye, and in the furnace too, succouring his people.

Verse 4. *When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.* When he harped upon his woes his heart melted into water and was poured out upon itself. God hidden, and foes raging, a pair of evils enough to bring down the stoutest heart! Yet why let reflections so gloomy engross us, since the result is of no value: merely to turn the soul on itself, to empty it from itself into itself is useless, how much better to pour out the heart before the Lord! The prisoner's tread wheel might sooner land him in the skies than mere inward questioning raise us nearer to consolation. *For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.* Painful reflections were awakened by the memory of past joys; he had mingled in the pious throng, their numbers had helped to give him exhilaration and to awaken holy delight, their company had been a charm to him as with them he ascended the hill of Zion. Gently proceeding with holy ease, in comely procession, with frequent strains of song, he and the people of Jehovah had marched in reverent ranks up to the shrine of sacrifice, the dear abode of peace and holiness. Far away from such goodly company the holy man pictures the sacred scene and dwells upon the details of the pious march. *With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.* The festive noise is in his ears, and the solemn dance before his eyes. Perhaps he alludes to the removal of the ark and to the glorious gatherings of the tribes on that grand national holy day and holiday. How changed his present place! For Zion, a wilderness; for the priests in white linen, soldiers in garments of war; for the song, the sneer of blasphemy; for the festivity, lamentation; for joy in the Lord, a mournful dirge over his absence.

Verse 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* As though he were two men, the psalmist talks to himself. His faith reasons with his fears, his hope argues with his sorrows. These present troubles, are they to last forever? The rejoicings of my foes, are they more than empty talk? My absence from the solemn feasts, is that a perpetual exile? Why this deep depression, this faithless fainting, this chicken hearted melancholy? As Trapp says, "David chides David out of the dumps; "and herein he is

an example for all desponding ones. To search out the cause of our sorrow is often the best surgery for grief. Self ignorance is not bliss; in this case it is misery. The mist of ignorance magnifies the causes of our alarm; a clearer view will make monsters dwindle into trifles. *Why art thou disquieted within me?* Why is my quiet gone? If I cannot keep a public Sabbath, yet wherefore do I deny my soul her indoor Sabbath? Why am I agitated like a troubled sea, and why do my thoughts make a noise like a tumultuous multitude? The causes are not enough to justify such utter yielding to despondency. Up, my heart! What aileth thee? Play the man, and thy castings down shall turn to up liftings, and thy disquietudes to calm. *Hope thou in God.* If every evil be let loose from Pandora's box, yet is there hope at the bottom. This is the grace that swims, though the waves roar and be troubled. God is unchangeable, and therefore his grace is the ground for unshaken hope. If everything be dark, yet the day will come, and meanwhile hope carries stars in her eyes; her lamps are not dependent on oil from without, her light is fed by secret visitations of God, which sustain the spirit. *For I shall yet praise him.* Yet will my sighs give place to songs, my mournful ditties shall be exchanged for triumphal paeans. A loss of the present sense of God's love is not a loss of that love itself; the jewel is there, though it gleams not on our breast; hope knows her title good when she cannot read it clear; she expects the promised boon though present providence stands before her with empty hands. *For I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.* Salvations come from the propitious face of God, and he will yet lift up his countenance upon us. Note well that the main hope and chief desire of David rest in the smile of God. His face is what he seeks and hopes to see, and this will recover his low spirits, this will put to scorn his laughing enemies, this will restore to him all the joys of those holy and happy days around which memory lingers. This is grand cheer. This verse, like the singing of Paul and Silas, looses chains and shakes prison walls. He who can use such heroic language in his gloomy hours will surely conquer. In the garden of hope grow the laurels for future victories, the roses of coming joy, the lilies of approaching peace.

Verse 6. *O my God, my soul is cast down within me.* Here the song begins again upon the bass. So sweet an ending deserves that for the sake of a second hopeful close the Psalm should even begin again. Perhaps the psalmist's dejection continued, the spasm of despondency returned; well, then, he will down with his harp again, and try again its power upon himself, as in his younger days, he saw its influence upon Saul when the evil spirit came upon him. With God the song begins a second time more nearly than at first. The singer was also a little more tranquil. Outward expression of desire was gone; there was no visible panting; the sorrow was not all restrained within doors. Within or upon himself he was cast down; and, verily, it may well be so, while our thoughts look more within than upward. If self were to furnish comfort, we should have but poor provender. There is no solid foundation for comfort in such fickle frames as our heart is subject to. It is well to tell the Lord how we feel, and the more plain the confession the better: David talks like a sick child to its mother, and we

should learn to imitate him. *Therefore will I remember thee.* It is well to fly to our God. Here is *terra firma*. Blessed down casting which drives us to so sure a rock of refuge as thee, O Lord! *From the hill Mizar.* He recalls his seasons of choice communion by the river and among the hills, and especially that dearest hour upon the little hill, where love spake her sweetest language and revealed her nearest fellowship. It is great wisdom to store up in memory our choice occasions of converse with heaven; we may want them another day, when the Lord is slow in bringing back his banished ones, and our soul is aching with fear. "His love in times past" has been a precious cordial to many a fainting one; like soft breath it has fanned the smoking flax into a flame, and bound up the bruised reed. Oh, never to be forgotten valley of Achor, thou art a door of hope! Fair days, now gone, ye have left a light behind you which cheers our present gloom. Or does David mean that even where he was he would bethink him of his God; does he declare that, forgetful of time and place, he would count Jordan as sacred as Siloa, Hermon as holy as Zion, and even Mizar, that insignificant rising ground as glorious as the mountains which are round about Jerusalem! Oh! it is a heavenly heart which can sing

"To me remains nor place nor time;

my country is in every clime;

I can be calm and free from care

On any shore, since God is there."

"Could I be cast where thou art not,

That were indeed a dreadful lot,

But regions none remote I call,

Secure of finding God in all."

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts.* Thy severe dealings with me seem to excite all creation to attack me; heaven, and earth, and hell, call to each other, stirring each other up in dreadful conspiracy against my peace. As in a waterspout, the deeps above and below clasp hands, so it seemed to David that heaven and earth united to create a tempest around him. His woes were incessant and overwhelming. Billow followed billow, one sea echoed the roaring of another; bodily pain aroused mental fear, Satanic suggestions chimed in with mistrustful forebodings, outward tribulation thundered in awful harmony with inward anguish: his soul seemed drowned as in a universal deluge of trouble, over whose waves the providence of the Lord moved as a watery pillar, in dreadful majesty inspiring the utmost terror. As for the afflicted one he was like a lonely bark around which the fury of a storm is bursting, or a mariner floating on a mast, almost every moment submerged. *All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.* David thought that every trouble in the world had met in him, but he exaggerated, for *all* the breaking waves of Jehovah have passed over none but the Lord Jesus; there are griefs to which he makes his children strangers for his love's sake.

Sorrow naturally states its case forcibly; the mercy is that the Lord after all hath not dealt with us according to our fears. Yet what a plight to be in! Atlantic rollers sweeping in ceaseless succession over one's head, waterspouts coming nearer and nearer, and all the ocean in uproar around the weary swimmer; most of the heirs of heaven can realise the description, for they have experienced the like. This is a deep experience unknown to babes in grace, but common enough to such as do business on great waters of affliction: to such it is some comfort to remember that the waves and billows are the Lord's, "*thy waves and thy billows*," says David, they are all sent, and directed by him, and achieve his designs, and the child of God knowing this, is the more resigned.

Verse 8. *Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime.* Come what may there shall be "a certain secret something" to sweeten all. Lovingkindness is a noble life belt in a rough sea. The day may darken into a strange and untimely midnight, but the love of God ordained of old to be the portion of the elect, shall be by sovereign decree meted out to them. No day shall ever dawn on an heir of grace and find him altogether forsaken of his Lord: the Lord reigneth, and as a sovereign he will with authority command mercy to be reserved for his chosen. *And in the night.* Both divisions of the day shall be illuminated with special love, and no stress of trial shall prevent it. Our God is God of the nights as well as the days; none shall find his Israel unprotected, be the hour what it may. *His song shall be with me.* Songs of praise for blessings received shall cheer the gloom of night. No music sweeter than this. The belief that we shall yet glorify the Lord for mercy given in extremity is a delightful stay to the soul. Affliction may put out our candle, but if it cannot silence our song we will soon light the candle again. *And my prayer unto the God of my life.* Prayer is yoked with praise. He who is the living God, is the God of our life, from him we derive it, with him in prayer and praise we spend it, to him we devote it, in him we shall perfect it. To be assured that our sighs and songs shall both have free access to our glorious Lord is to have reason for hope in the most deplorable condition.

Verse 9. *I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me?* Faith is allowed to enquire of her God the causes of his displeasure, and she is even permitted to expostulate with him and put him in mind of his promises, and ask why apparently they are not fulfilled. If the Lord be indeed our refuge, when we find no refuge, it is time to be raising the question, "Why is this?" Yet we must not let go our hold, the Lord must be *my rock* still; we must keep to him as our alone confidence, and never forego our interest in him. *Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* He who condescends to be pleaded with by Abraham, his friend, allows us to put to him the question that we may search out the causes of his severity towards us. Surely he can have no pleasure in seeing the faces of his servants stained and squalid with their tears; he can find no content in the harshness with which their foes assail them. He can never take pleasure in the tyranny with which Satan vexes them. Why then does he leave them to be mocked by his enemies and theirs? How can the strong God,

who is as firm and abiding as a rock, be also as hard and unmoved as a rock towards those who trust in him? Such enquiries humbly pressed often afford relief to the soul. To know the reason for sorrow is in part to know how to escape it, or at least to endure it. Want of attentive consideration often makes adversity appear to be more mysterious and hopeless than it really is. It is a pitiable thing for any man to have a limb amputated, but when we know that the operation was needful to save life, we are glad to hear that it has been successfully performed; even thus as trial unfolds, the design of the Lord sending it becomes far more easy to bear.

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

TITLE. "*Sons of Korah.*" Who were *the sons of Korah*? These opinions have more or less prevailed. One is that they sprang from some one of that name in the days of David. Mudge and others think

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

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

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

Verse 1. *The hart panteth after the water brooks.* And here we have started up, and have sent leaping over the plain another of Solomon's favourites. What elegant creatures these gazelles are, and how gracefully they bound! ...The sacred writers frequently mention gazelles under the various

names of harts, roes, and hinds...I have seen large flocks of these panting harts gather round the water brooks in the great deserts of Central Syria, so subdued by thirst that you could approach quite near them before they fled. *W. M. Thomson.*

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

Verse 1. The soul strongly desires acquaintance with God here in his ordinances. Chrysostom's very rhetorical upon the text, and tells us how that David, like a lover in absence, must express his affection; as they have their dainty sighs, and passionate complaints, their loving exclamations, and sundry discoveries of affection; they can meet with never a tree, but in the bark of it they must engrave the name of their darling, Denfos d o erws d kittos auton ek paaes anadeoai profaoews; it will twine upon every opportunity, as the Moralist speaks. And the true lovers of God, they are always thinking upon him, sighing for him, panting after him, talking of him, and (if it were possible) would engrave the name of the Lord Jesus upon the breasts of all the men in the world. Look upon David, now a banished man, and fled from the presence of Saul, and see how he behaves himself: not like Themistocles or Camillus, or some of those brave banished worthies. He does not complain of the ungratefulness of his country, the malice of his adversaries, and his own unhappy success. No,

instead of murmuring, he falls a panting, and that only after his God. He is banished from the sanctuary, the palace of God's nearest presence, and chiefest residence; he cannot enjoy the beauty of holiness, and all other places seem to him but as the tents of Kedar. He is banished from the temple, and he thinks himself banished from his God, as it is in the following words, *When shall I come and appear before God?* The whole stream of expositors run this way, that it is meant of his strong longing to visit the Temple, and those amiable courts of his God, with which his soul was so much taken. *Nathanael Culverwel's "Panting Soul,"* 1652.

Verses 1-3. are an illustration of the frequent use of the word Elohim in the second book of Psalms.

We give Fry's translation of the first three verses.—

As the hart looketh for the springs of water,

So my soul looketh for thee, O Elohim.

My soul is athirst for Elohim for the living El:

When shall I go and see the face of Elohim?

My tears have been my meat day and night,

While they say to me continually, Where is thy Elohim?

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

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

Verse 3. *Where is thy God?* God's children are impatient, as far as they are men, of reproaches; but so far as they are Christian men, they are impatient of reproaches in religion; *Where is now thy God?* They were not such desperate Atheists as to think there was no God, to call in question whether there were a God or no, though, indeed, they were little better; but they rather reproach and upbraid him with his singularity, *where is thy God?* You are one of God's darlings; you are one that thought nobody served God but you; you are one that will go alone—*your* God! So this is an ordinary reproach, an ordinary part for wicked men to cast at the best people, especially when they are in misery. What it become of your profession now? What is become of your forwardness and strictness now? What is become of your God that you bragged so of, and thought yourselves so happy in, as if he had been nobody's God but yours? We may learn hence the disposition of wicked men. It is a character of a full of poison, cursed disposition to upbraid a man with his religion. But what is the scope? The scope is worse than the words *Where is thy God?* The scope is to shake his faith and his confidence in God, and this is *that* which touched him so nearly while they upbraided him. For the devil knows well enough that as long as God and the soul join together, it is in vain to trouble any

man, therefore he labours to put jealousies, to accuse God to man, and man to God. He knows there is nothing in the world can stand against God. As long as we make God our confidence, all his enterprises are in vain. His scope is, therefore, to shake our affiance in God. *Where is thy God?* So he dealt with the head of the church, our blessed Saviour himself, when he came to tempt him. "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." Mt 4:3. He comes with an "if," he laboured to shake him in his Sonship. The devil, since he was divided from God himself eternally, is become a spirit of division; he labours to divide even God the Father from his own Son; "*If thou be the Son of God?*" So he labours to sever Christians from their head Christ. *Where is thy God?* There was his scope, to breed division if he could, between his heart and God, that he might call God into jealousy, as if he had not regarded him: thou hast taken a great deal of pains in serving thy God; thou seest how he regards thee now; *Where is thy God? Richard Sibbes.*

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

Verse 3. *Where is thy God?*

"Where is now thy God!" Oh, sorrow!
Hourly thus to hear him say,
Finding thus the longed for morrow,
Mournful as the dark to day.
Yet not thus my soul would languish,
Would not thus be grieved and shamed,
But for that severer anguish,
When I hear the Lord defamed.
"Where is now thy God!" Oh, aid me,
Lord of mercy, to reply—
"He is HERE—though foes invade me,
Know his outstretched arm is nigh."
Help me thus to be victorious,
While the shield of faith I take;
Lord, appear, and make thee glorious:
Help me for thy honour's sake.
—*Henry March.*

Verse 4. *When I remember these things,* etc. To a person in misery it is a great increase of misery to have been once happy: it was to David an occasion of new tears when he remembered his former joys. Time was, says the poor soul, when I thought of God with comfort, and when I thought of him as

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

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

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

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

Verse 4. Do but consider David's tears and grief for want of, and his fervent prayers for the fruition of public ordinances even then, when he had opportunities for private performances; and surely thou wilt esteem the ministry of the Word no mean mercy. See his sorrow when he was driven from God's sanctuary. *When I remember these things I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.* "My soul is poured out; that is, I am overwhelmed with grief, and ever ready to die when I compare my present condition with my former happiness in the fruition of religious assemblies. There is an elegancy in the phrase *poured out*; the word is applied to water, or any liquid thing, and in Scripture signifieth abundance. Joe 2:28. My life is ready to be poured out as water upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again, when I remember my former mercies,

and consider my present misery...The loss of his father, mother, wives, children, lands, liberty—nay, of his very life, would not have gone so near his heart as the loss of public ordinances. As his sorrow was great for the want, so was his suit most earnest for the enjoyment of them. How many a prayer doth he put up for the liberty of the tabernacle! Ps 43:3-4 27:4,8. It is the one thing, the principal thing which he begs of God. *Henry Smith.*

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

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

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

—*George Herbert, in "The Temple."*

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

Think of this, ye that feel the heaviness of your soul; think of it, ye that do not, for ye may feel it. Know there is a sorrow "that worketh repentance not to be repented of." Know again there is a sorrow "that worketh death." Remember that there were tears that got sinful Mary heaven; remember again there were tears that got sinful Esau *nothing*. For as in martyrdom, it is not the sword, the boiling lead, or fire, not *what* we suffer, but *why*, that makes us martyrs; so in our sorrows, it is not how deep they wound, but *why*, that justifies them. Let every one, therefore, that hath a troubled heart, ask his soul the "*Why*:" "*Why art thou cast down?*" Is it not for thine own sins, or the sins of others? Take either of

them, thine eyes will have a large field to water. Is it for that thou hast been a child of wrath, a servant of the devil? Is it for that thou art a candle set in the wind, blown at by several temptations? or is it for that thou wouldst be freed from them? "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" Ps 120:5. Art thou troubled as St. Augustine was, when he read that the way to heaven was narrow, the number small that travelled thither? Or hast thou put on St. Bernard's resolution, who had made a compact with his soul, never to joy till he had heard his Saviour call him, "Come ye blessed, nor never to leave sorrowing till he had escaped the bitter sentence, "Go, ye cursed?" If any of these be the *Why*, the ground of thy sorrows, if such thoughts have *cast thee down*; know, that thy Saviour hath already blessed thee, for "Blessed are they that mourn." The angels are thy servants, they gather thy tears; God is thy treasurer, he lays them up in his bottle; the Holy Ghost is thy comforter, he will not leave thee. Fear not, then, to be thus *cast down*, fear not to be thus *disquieted within thee*. *Brian Duppa (Bishop), 1588-1662, in a Sermon entitled "The Soule's Soloquie."*

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

Verse 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* Consider but this, how much there is of God in the affliction. 1. Came it not without *God's privity*? Why art thou troubled, then? Thy Father knowing of it would have stopped its course if it had been best for thee. 2. Came it not *without his command*? Why art thou troubled? It is the cup that thy Father hath given thee, and wilt thou not drink it? 3. Is it thy Father's will that thou shouldst suffer, and shall it be thy humour to rebel? 4. Hath God done *no more than he might do*? Why dost thou murmur, as if he had done thee wrong? 5. Is it a piece of his

wise acting? Why dost thou exalt thy foolish will above his infinite wisdom? 6. Is his way a way of mercy? Why does thy mutinous spirits tumble at it, as a rough way? 7. Is the thing good that is befallen thee? Why dost thou quarrel as if it were evil? 8. Is it *less than men suffer*, than his own people, yea, than his own Son hath suffered, and hast thou cause to complain? 9. Is it but *thy merit?* and less than that, too; and shall the living man complain for the punishment of his sin? 10. Is it *in measure*, ordered with care? (1) by the physician's hand; and (2) a little draught, and (3) proportioned to thy strength; (4) measured out according to the proportion of strength and comfort he intends to measure thee out, to bear it withal? Why are thou cast down? Why art thou disquieted? Is the end and fruit of it but to make thee white, and purify thee? to purge thy sin past, and to prevent it for the time to come? and dost thou find a present fruit in it? Dost thou find that now thou art turned into a chalk stone; thy groves and images—those corruptions which did attend thee while thou wert in prosperity, and which would attend thee if you had those good things which you want, and are disquieted for; and if those evils which you feel or fear were far from your sense and fear, would still attend thee—that those do not now stand up? Lift up thy head, Christian! say to thy soul, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?* Meditate what there is of God in the cause of thy disquietments. *John Collinge (1623-1690) in "A Cordial for a Fainting Soule," 1652.*

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

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

William Gurnall.

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

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

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

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

Verse 5. There was one Alice Benden, who, among others, was imprisoned for religion in Canterbury Castle; but after awhile, by the bishop's order, she was let down into a deep dungeon, where none of her friends could come at her. There she was fed with an halfpenny bread, and a farthing beer a day, neither would they allow her any more for her money. Her lodging was upon a little straw, between a pair of stocks and a stone wall. This made her grievously to bewail and lament her estate, reasoning with herself, why her Lord God did in so heavy a wise afflict her, and suffered her thus to be sequestered from the sweet society of her loving prison fellows. In this extremity of misery, and in the midst of these dolorous mournings she continued, till on a night, repeating that of the psalmist: "*Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so cast down within me? Still trust in God,*" etc.; and, *God's right hand can change all this,* etc.; she received comfort in the midst of her sorrows, and so

continued joyful to the time of her release. *Samuel Clarke's "Mirror."*

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

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

Verses 5, 11. If you would get assurance, spend more time in strengthening your evidences for heaven, than in questioning of them. It is the great fault of many Christians they will spend much time in questioning, and not in strengthening their comforts. They will reason themselves into unbelief, and say, Lord, why should I believe? Why should I take hold of a promise that am so unholy and so unmortified a creature? And so by this they reason themselves to such a pass that they dare not lay hold upon Christ, whereas it should be your work to reason yourselves into Christ as much as you can. Labour to strengthen your comforts, and reason thus, Why should I not believe in Christ? Thus David did. Psalm 42. *"Why art thou troubled, O my soul, and why art thou cast down within me?"* Is not the mercy of God more than sin in the creature? Is not there free grace where there is guilt? Are not there pardoning mercies where condemnation is deserved? You should reason up your comforts

rather than reason them down, and spend more time in strengthening than in questioning of them. You would count him a very unwise man that hath a lease of so much land, and he himself shall create scruples and doubts, and shall use no means to make his title good. And truly many Christians are as unwise for heaven. They have, as I may say, good bond and seal that God will bring them to heaven, and yet they will question and cavil themselves into unbelief. Beloved, this should not be, but you ought rather to strengthen your comforts than question them. *Christopher Love.*

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

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

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

to be a little hill near Mount Sinai, where the law was given. I will remember God's goodness, in giving a law to his people. Here David would call to remembrance the goodness of God of old, to regain to him comfort and quietness in his mind. *Christopher Love.*

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

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

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

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts.* Here he has conjoined two awful and terrific phenomena of nature. It is a fact well ascertained by the evidence of travellers, that the falling of waterspouts is not uncommon on the coast of Judea. It should seem that they are occasioned by the congregating of great masses of cloud, whose waters concentrating to a point, pour themselves down in a tremendous column, accompanied with a roaring noise. Now, the image conceived in the mind of the psalmist seems to be that of the rushing of this vast waterspout down into the sea, already agitated, and increasing the turbulence and disorder of its waves. And awful picture! Especially if there be added to it the ideas of a black tempestuous sky, and the deafening roar occasioned by the tumult. What would be the situation of a vessel in the midst of such a tempest, the deluge pouring down from above, and all around her the furious ocean heaving its tremendous surges—how ungovernable, how helpless, how next to impossible that she should escape foundering except by some almost miraculous interference! Yet to such a situation does David here compare the state of his soul when submersed, as it were, under a sea of afflictions; "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." How pungent must his sense of grief have been to occasion him to make use of such a comparison, so strongly expressive of the utmost danger and terror! *Henry March.*

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

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

Verse 7. *Deep calleth unto deep.* What's that? Why, it is expressed in the verse before: "O God, "says he, "my soul is cast down within me." "Down, "that is *deep* into the jaws of distrust and fear.

And, Lord, my soul in this *depth* of sorrow, calls for help to thy *depth* of mercy. For though I am sinking and going down, yet not so low but that thy mercy is yet underneath me. Do, of thy compassions, open those everlasting arms, and catch him that has no help or stay in himself. For so it is with one that is falling into a *well* or a *dungeon*. *John Bunion*.

Verse 7. Here the psalmist feels the spirit of bondage, which is wrath and fear; and he prays for the joy of God's salvation, and to be upheld by God's free spirit, which is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of love and power. He complains of "*deep calling unto deep*." A soul in the horrible pit hears little else but the calls of law and justice for vengeance, which are always answered again by the accusations of Satan and conscience. The storms of Sinai, like a *waterspout* at sea, threaten the earthen vessel with a deluge of wrath, which would soon drown it in destruction and perdition. These waves of real, and some imaginary, displeasure (no less terrible than real), rolling over the poor creature, are ready to send the bark to the bottom. This is the terrible way in which some fallen and backsliding souls are purged and reclaimed, and especially such as have brought public scandal upon the gospel, and church of Christ. *William Huntington (1744-1813) in "Contemplations of the God of Israel."*

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

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

the mountains, generally in the dry months of summer, does immense mischief. In a few minutes the wadies along its track are swollen into furious rivers, which sweep away grain, olives, raisins, and every other produce of the farmer. I have frequently known them to carry off and drown flocks of sheep and goats, and even cows, horses, and their owners alike. *W. M. Thomson.*

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

Deep to deep incessant calling,
Tossed by furious tempests' roll,
Endless waves and billows falling,
Overwhelm my fainting soul.
Yet I see a Power presiding
Mid the tumult of the storm,
Ever ruling, ever guiding,
Love's intentions to perform.
Yes, mid sorrows most distressing,
Faith contemplates thy design,
Humbly bowing, and confessing
All the waves and billows THINE.

—*Henry March.*

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

Wide over misfortune's surging tide
Billows succeeding billows spread;
Should one, its fury spent, subside,
Another lifts its boisterous head.

—Aeschylus in "The Seven Chiefs against Thebes."

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

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

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

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

Verse 8. (*last clause*). Your song and your prayer must be directed to God as *the God of your life*. You do not own him as God, except you own and adore him as your all sufficient good, and that "fulness which filleth all in all." You detract from the glory of his Godhead, if you attribute not this to him; and if, accordingly, as one that cannot live without him, you do not seek union with him, and join

yourself to him, and then rejoice and solace yourself in that blessed conjunction. *John Howe.*

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

Verse 10. *Mine enemies.* It is strange that *he* should have enemies, that was so harmless a man that when they were sick and distressed, he prayed for them, and put on sackcloth for them, as it is, Ps 35:1-28. This compassionate sweet natured man, yet, notwithstanding, you see he had enemies, and enemies that would discover themselves to reproach him, and that bitterly; in the bitterest manner, they reproach him in his religion. We may be armed by this observation against the scandal of opposition—that if we meet with enemies in the world, we should not be much offended at it; grieve we may, but wonder we need not. Was there ever any that did more good than our Saviour Christ? "He went about doing good." Ac 10:38. He did never a miracle that was harmful (but only of the swine that were drowned in the sea, and that was their own fault), but he went about doing all the good he could; yet, notwithstanding, we see what malicious opposites he had. That that is true of the head must be true in the members. Therefore we should rejoice in our conformity to Christ, if it be in a good cause, that we find enemies and opposition. The devil is not made a Christian yet, and he will never be made good, for his is *in termino*, as we say, he is in his bounds, his nature is immovable; he is in hell in regard of his estate, though he be loose to do mischief. Now, until the devil be good, God's children shall never want enemies; and he will never be good; therefore, though there were good kings and good governors over all the world, yet good men shall never want enemies as long as the devil is alive, as long as he hath anything to do in the world. Enemies, therefore, we must look for, and such enemies as will not conceal their malice neither; for that were something, if they would suffer their malice to boil and concoct in their own hearts, but that will not be, but "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak." *Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 10. *They say daily unto me.* Here's their constancy and perseverance in this their carriage and

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

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

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

them, and will exhibit the comforts of his presence whithersoever they go, his presence is infinite, and filleth all places. The Rabbins put *Makom*, which signifies *place*, among the names of God; Bythner brings them in expounding that text Es 4:14, thus: "Deliverance shall arise from another place, "that is, from God. Now, they called God *place*, because he is in every place, filling heaven and earth with his presence. *Thomas Brooks*.

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

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

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

Verse 11. *God...is the health of my countenance.* The health of David's countenance was not in his countenance, but *in his God*, and this makes his faith silence his fears, and so peremptorily resolve upon it, that there is a time coming (how near so ever he now lies to the grave's mouth) when he *shall yet praise him*. The health and life of thy grace lie both of them, not in thy grace, saith faith, but *in God*, who is *thy God*, therefore I shall yet live and praise him. I do not wonder that the weak Christian is melancholy and sad, when he sees his sickly face in any other glass than this. *William Gurnall*.

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

Verse 11. Hast thou seen the sun shine forth in February, and the sky blue, and the hedgerows

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

Verse 11. His arguments and motives hereunto are impregnated with very great sense and strength; and urged upon himself as the just rate thereof. *Hope thou in God.* For he is 1. *God.* 2. *Thy God.* 3. *The health of thy countenance,* and 4. *One whom thou shalt (certainly and for ever) praise as such.* And 5. Do it *yet,* as lamentable and hopeless as thy case appears at present through seeming difficulties or unlikelihoods. God and ourselves well understood, deeply considered, and skilfully urged and improved, give gracious hearts the best encouragements and supports under the severest accidents of time. And they will very strangely animate our hopes in God under our sorest troubles and dejections. David had (1) confidence in God; and (2) reasons for it; and (3) skill and a heart to urge them. When he reviewed himself, he saw that his soul was gracious; and so he knew God valued it. It was bent for praising God; and so he knew that he should have an opportunity and cause to do it, through some signal favours from him. He had an interest in God; and he would neither lose it nor neglect it, and he had great experience of God's former mercies, and he would not forget them. And when he thinks on God, then praises must be thought on too, and everything relating to it, and all the divine perfections, within the circumference of his knowledge, must have their fresh remembrances and powerful sense revived upon his own heart. *Matthew Sylvester (1636-1708), in "Morning Exercises."*

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

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 2.

1. What thirsts? "my soul."

2. For what? "for God."

3. In what way? "when shall I come."

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

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

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

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

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

1. What causes the sorrow?

2. What will remove it?

3. What benefit will come of it?

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

1. The *nature* of it, and that was *reproach*.

2. The *expression* of it, *They say unto me*.

3. The *constancy* of it: *daily*, or, *all the day long*.

4. The *specification* of it, in a scornful and opprobrious question: *Where is (now) thy God?* *Thomas Horton.*

Verse 4.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 5. *Why art thou cast down?*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. The *variety* of evils—one evil to another.
2. The *conjunction* of evils—one evil with another.
3. The *connexion* of evils, or dependence and mutual reference—one evil upon another. *T. Horton.*

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

1. The depth of *temptation*.
2. The depth of *desertion*.
3. The depth of *affliction and human calamities*. *T. Horton.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 9.

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

Verse 10. The most grievous of taunts.

Verse 11. *My God.*

1. It's a word of *interest*—*My God*, as in covenant with him.
2. A word of *compliance*—*My God*, as submitting to him.
3. A word of affection—*My God*, as taking delight, and rejoicing in him. *T. Horton.*

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

Verse 11.

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

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-SECOND PSALM

A Practical Exposition of the Forty-second Psalm, in ten Sermons, in *Choice and Practical*

Expositions on four select Psalms. Psalms 4, 42, 51, 63. By THOMAS HORTON, D.D. 1675. Folio.
Sabbaths at Home: or, a help to their right improvement; founded on the Forty-second and Forty-third Psalms. Intended for the use of pious persons when prevented from attending the public worship of God. By HENRY MARCH. London: 1823.

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

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

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

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

Psalm 43

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

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

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

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *Judge me, O God.* Others are unable to understand my motives, and unwilling to give me a just verdict. My heart is clear as to intent and therefore I bring my case before thee, content that thou wilt impartially weigh my character, and right my wrongs. If thou wilt judge, thy acceptance of my

conduct will be enough for me; I can laugh at human misrepresentation if my conscience knows that thou art on my side; thou art the only one I care for; and besides, thy verdict will not sleep, but thou wilt see practical justice done to thy slandered servant. *And plead my cause against an ungodly nation.* One such advocate as the Lord will more than suffice to answer a nation of brawling accusers. When people are ungodly, no wonder that they are unjust; those who are not true to God himself cannot be expected to deal rightly with his people. Hating the King they will not love his subjects. Popular opinion weighs with many, but divine opinion is far more weighty with the gracious few. One good word from God outweighs ten thousand railing speeches of men. He bears a brazen shield before him whose reliance in all things is upon his God; the arrows of calumny fall harmlessly from such a buckler. *O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.* Deceit and injustice are boon companions: he who fawns will not fear to slander. From two such devils none can deliver us but God. His wisdom can outwit the craft of the vilest serpent, and his power can over match the most raging lion. Whether this was Doeg or Ahithophel is small matter, such double distilled villains are plentiful, and the only way of dealing with them is to refer the matter to the righteous Judge of all; if we try to fight them with their own weapons, we shall suffer more serious injury from ourselves than from them. O child of God, leave these thine enemies in better hands, remembering that vengeance belongeth not to thee, but to thy Lord. Turn to him in prayer, crying, "O deliver me," and ere long you shall publish abroad the remembrance of his salvation.

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

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,

And scan his work in vain;

God is his own interpreter,

And he will make it plain."

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Why do I wander hither and thither like

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

Verse 3. *O send out thy light and thy truth.* The joy of thy presence and the faithfulness of thy heart; let both of these be manifest to me. Reveal my true character by thy light, and reward me according to thy truthful promise. As the sun darts forth his beams, so does the Lord send forth his favour and his faithfulness towards all his people; and as all nature rejoices in the sunshine, even so the saints triumph in the manifestation of the love and fidelity of their God, which, like the golden sunbeam, lights up even the darkest surroundings with delightful splendour. *Let them lead me.* Be these my stars to guide me to my rest. Be these my Alpine guides to conduct me over mountains and precipices to the abodes of grace. *Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.* First in thy mercy bring me to thine earthly courts, and end my weary exile, and then in due time admit me to thy celestial palace above. We seek not light to sin by, nor truth to be exalted by it, but that they may become our practical guides to the nearest communion with God: only such light and truth as are sent us from God will do this, common light is not strong enough to show the road to heaven, nor will mere moral or physical truths assist to the holy hill; but the light of the Holy Spirit, and the truth as it is in Jesus, these are elevating, sanctifying, perfecting; and hence their virtue in leading us to the glorious presence of God. It is beautiful to observe how David's longing to be away from the oppression of man always leads him to sigh more intensely for communion with God.

Verse 4. *Then will I go unto the altar of God.* If David might but be favoured with such a deliverance as would permit his return, it would not be his own house or heritage which would be his first resort, but to the altar of God his willing feet should conduct him. His whole heart would go as sacrifice to the altar, he himself counting it his greatest happiness to be permitted to lie as a burnt offering wholly dedicated to the Lord. With what exultation should believers draw near unto Christ, who is the antitype of the altar! clearer light should give greater intensity of desire. *Unto God my exceeding joy.* It was not the altar as such that the psalmist cared for, he was no believer in the heathenism of ritualism: his soul desired spiritual fellowship, fellowship with God himself in very deed. What are all the rites of worship unless the Lord be in them; what, indeed, but empty shells and dry husks? Note the holy rapture with which David regards his Lord! He is not his *joy* alone, but his *exceeding joy*; not the fountain of joy, the giver of joy, or the maintainer of joy, but that joy itself. The margin hath it, "The gladness of my joy, "i.e., the soul, the essence, the very bowels of my joy. To draw near to God, who

is such a joy to us, may well be the object of our hungering and thirsting. *Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee.* His best music for his best love. When God fills us with joy we ought ever to pour it out at his feet in praise, and all the skill and talent we have should be laid under contribution to increase the divine revenue of glory. *O God, my God.* How he dwells upon the name which he loves so well! He already harps on it as though his harp music had begun. What sweeter sounds can music know than these four words? To have God in possession, and to know it by faith, is the heart's heaven—a fulness of bliss lies therein.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

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

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

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

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

23:6-7.

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

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

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

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

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

Useful is this doctrine two ways.

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

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

Verse 1. *Ungodly...deceitful...unjust.* There are *ungodly* men who, being destitute of religious principle, will not scruple to injure us, when they can thereby gratify their passions or advance their worldly interests. There are *deceitful* men who will put on the garb of friendship, and acquire our confidence and esteem, and then treacherously cheat us out of our property, or our reputation, or our peace. There are *unjust* men, who by fraud or by violence, would rob us of our dearest rights and most valuable possessions, and not only reduce our powers and opportunities of doing good, but even diminish our means of comfortable subsistence. And there are *oppressors*, who taking advantage of our weakness or dependence, and trampling alike on the maxims of equity and humanity, may exact from us unreasonable services, impose upon us heavy burdens and cruel restraints, and ply us with insults, and harassments, and deprivations, from which we can make no escape, and for which we can find no redress. *Andrew Thomson, D.D., in "Lectures on Portions of the Psalms." 1826.*

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

1. *Natural*, Ac 17:28. This is twofold: of body, of mind. Of robustness, hardness, and agility of body; of

wit, invention, and valour of mind. Now, these donations of corporal and mental natural endowments are God's gifts. Ps 18:34,39 ...

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

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

From *the word of the Spirit*, the word of God. Ps 119:50: "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me." To be "*quickened*, "i.e., enlivened, is to be full of vigour and spirit and to act mightily, and to "*comfort*" is, as the word signifies, to make strong; for when a man is most cheerful with sobriety, he is most strong. St. John in that place fore quoted, saith the young men to whom he wrote were strong because the word of God abode in them. For Pr 12:25 "whereas sorrow in the heart of man maketh it stoop"—makes it sickly, weak, drooping—"a good word maketh it glad, "cheerful, strong, vigorous. And so if the word of a wise friend, how much more the word of God, with its many strengthening promises? Ps 20:2 119:28. The word of God is the very mind and will of God, and power of God, and with the word God created the world, therefore, he that receives this word must needs receive a great deal of strength. Ro 1:16.

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

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

Verse 3. *Light and truth.* Delightful and all comprehensive words. Thy contain all the salvation and all the desire of a believing, confiding soul. But it is only when thus combined—separated they are no longer a ground of trust and joy. For what would favour avail without faithfulness? It would be no

more than the uncertain friendship of men, who smile today and reproach tomorrow; who make large promises, but do not perform them. Even the *light* which angels and glorified spirits enjoy in heaven would be insufficient to banish all fear and to fill them with satisfaction, were it not for their confidence in the *truth* of God. How much more, then, must this be the case with erring, sinful, mortals on earth? When the humble spirit is bowed down under a sense of its utter unworthiness and innumerable weaknesses and defilements, its negligences, follies, and wanderings, what should save from despair but the confidence that he who has been merciful will also be faithful; that God is truth as well as light; that he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; "that he "*cannot* lie, "and that, therefore, "his mercy endureth for ever?" On the other hand, *truth* without *light*, faithfulness without grace, would be only the dreadful execution of terrible but just denunciations on the transgressors of the holy law. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam ate, and in that day became the subject of sin and death. This was *truth* executing judgment. But *light* arose around the darkness; beams of mercy tempered the heavy cloud. The promise of the Great Deliverer was given; then faithfulness was enlisted on the side of grace, and became engaged for its bestowment; "mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other." Since then, all humble and trusting souls have beheld them united, and have made their union the ground of their confidence and joy. *Henry March.*

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

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

heart, essence, substance, and reality of our joy. *John Offord, 1868.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 4. *My exceeding joy.* The psalmist might well call God his *exceeding* joy, for it infinitely

exceeds all other joy in its nature, degree, and duration. *Samuel Lavington.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

Verse 1. We apply to God—

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

Verse 1. Popular opinion outweighed by divine approbation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 4.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 4.

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

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

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

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

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

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

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-THIRD PSALM

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

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

Psalm 44

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

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

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

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *We have heard with our ears, O God.* Thy mighty acts have been the subjects of common conversation; not alone in books have we read thy famous deeds, but in the ordinary talk of the people we have heard of them. Among the godly Israelites the biography of their nation was preserved by oral tradition, with great diligence and accuracy. This mode of preserving and

transmitting history has its disadvantages, but it certainly produces a more vivid impression on the mind than any other; to hear with the ears affects us more sensitively than to read with the eyes; we ought to note this, and seize every possible opportunity of telling abroad the gospel of our Lord Jesus *viva voce*, since this is the most telling mode of communication. The expression, "heard with our ears," may denote the pleasure with which they listened, the intensity of their interest, the personality of their hearing, and the lively remembrance they had of the romantic and soul stirring narrative. Too many have ears but hear not; happy are they who, having ears, have learned to hear. *Our fathers have told us*. They could not have had better informants. Schoolmasters are well enough, but godly fathers are, both by the order of nature and grace, the best instructors of their sons, nor can they delegate the sacred duty. It is to be feared that many children of professors could plead very little before God of what their fathers have told them. When fathers are tongue tied religiously with their offspring, need they wonder if their children's hearts remain sin tied? Just as in all free nations men delight to gather around the hearth, and tell the deeds of valour of their sires "in the brave days of old," so the people of God under the old dispensation made their families cheerful around the table, be rehearsing the wondrous doings of the Lord their God. Religious conversation need not be dull, and indeed it could not be if, as in this case, it dealt more with facts and less with opinions. *What work thou didst in their days, in the times of old*. They began with what their own eyes had witnessed, and then passed on to what were the traditions of their youth. Note that the main point of the history transmitted from father to son was the work of God; this is the core of history, and therefore no man can write history aright who is a stranger to the Lord's work. It is delightful to see the footprints of the Lord on the sea of changing events, to behold him riding on the whirlwind of war, pestilence, and famine, and above all to see his unchanging care for his chosen people. Those who are taught to see God in history have learned a good lesson from their fathers, and no son of believing parents should be left in ignorance of so holy an art. A nation tutored as Israel was in a history so marvellous as their own, always had an available argument in pleading with God for aid in trouble, since he who never changes gives in every deed of grace a pledge of mercy yet to come. The traditions of our past experience are powerful pleas for present help.

Verse 2. *How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand*. The destruction of the Canaanites from the promised land is the work here brought to remembrance. A people numerous, warlike, gigantic and courageous, firmly established and strongly fortified, were driven out by a far feebler nation, because the Lord was against them in the fight. It is clear from Scripture that God sent a plague (so that the land ate up the inhabitants thereof), and also a visitation of hornets against the Canaanites, and by other means dispirited them, so that the easy victories of Joshua were but the results of God's having worked beforehand against the idolatrous nation. *And plantedst them*. The tribes of Israel were planted in the places formerly occupied by the heathen. Hivites and Jebusites were chased

from their cities to make room for Ephraim and Judah. The Great Wonder worker tore up by the roots the oaks of Bashan, that he might plant instead thereof his own chosen "vineyard of red wine." *How thou didst afflict the people.* With judgments and plagues the condemned nations were harassed, by fire and sword they were hunted to the death, till they were all expelled, and the enemies of Israel were banished far away. *And cast them out.* This most probably refers to Israel and should be read, "caused them to increase." He who troubled his enemies smiled on his friends; he meted out vengeance to the ungodly nations, but he reserved of his mercy for the chosen tribes. How fair is mercy when she stands by the side of justice! Bright beams the star of grace amid the night of wrath! It is a solemn thought that the greatness of divine love has its counterpart in the greatness of his indignation. The weight of mercy bestowed on Israel is balanced by the tremendous vengeance which swept the thousands of Amorites and Hittites down to hell with the edge of the sword. Hell is as deep as heaven is high, and the flame of Tophet is as everlasting as the blaze of the celestial glory. God's might, as shown in deeds both of mercy and justice, should be called to mind in troublous times as a stay to our fainting faith.

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

stream of mercy flows. The Lord's delight in his people, his peculiar affection, his distinguishing regard—this is the mainspring which moves every wheel of a gracious providence. Israel was a chosen nation, hence their victories and the scattering of their foes; believers are an elect people, hence their spiritual blessings and conquests. There was nothing in the people themselves to secure them success, the Lord's favour alone did it, and it is ever so in our case, our hope of final glory must not rest on anything in ourselves, but on the free and sovereign favour of the Lord of Hosts.

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

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

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

made to overthrow their foes, and set their feet upon their necks. Read Christian's fight with Apollyon, and see how

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

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

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

Verse 8. *In God we boast all the day long.* We have abundant reason for doing so while we recount his mighty acts. What blessed boasting is this! it is the only sort of boasting that is bearable. All other manna bred worms and stank except that which was laid up before the Lord, and all other boasting is loathsome save this glorying in the Lord, which is laudable and pleasing. *And praise thy name for ever.* Praise should be perpetual. If there were no new acts of love, yet ought the Lord to be praised for what he has done for his people. High let the song be lifted up as we bring to remembrance the eternal love which chose us, predestinated us to be sons, redeemed us with a price, and then enriched us with all the fulness of God. *Selah.* A pause comes in fitly here, when we are about to descend from the highest to the lowest key. No longer are we to hear Miriam's timbrel, but rather Rachel's weeping.

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

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

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

Verse 12. *Thou sellest thy people for nought.* As men sell merchandise to any one who cares to have it, so the Lord seemed to hand over his people to any nation who might choose to make war upon

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

Verse 13. *Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours.* Scorn is always an intensely bitter ingredient in the cup of the oppressed. The taunts and jeers of the victors pain the vanquished almost as much as their swords and spears. It was a mystery indeed that God should suffer his royal nation, his peculiar people, to be taunted by all who dwelt near them. *A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.* The down trodden people had become a common jest; "as base as Israel" cried the cruel tongue of the tyrant: so ordinary had the scorn become that the neighbouring nations, though perhaps equally oppressed, borrowed the language of the conquerors, and joined in the common mockery. To be a derision to both strong and weak, superiors, equals, and inferiors, is hard to bear. The tooth of scoffing bites to the bone. The psalmist sets forth the brutality of the enemy in many words, in order to move the pity of the Lord, to whose just anger he traced all the sorrows of his people: he used the very best of arguments, for the sufferings of his chosen touch the heart of God far more readily than any other reasonings. Blessed be his name, our great Advocate above knows how to avail himself of this powerful plea, and if we are at this hour enduring reproach for truth's sake, he will urge it before the eternal throne; and shall not God avenge his own elect? A father will not long endure to see his children despitefully entreated; he may put up with it for a little, but his love will speedily arouse his anger, and then it will fare ill with the persecutor and reviler.

Verse 14. *Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.* The lamentation is here repeated. They had sunk so low that none did them reverence, but universally and publicly they were treated as infamous and despicable. Those who reviled others dragged in Israel's name by the way as a garnish to their insults, and if perchance they saw one of the seed of Jacob in the street they used lewd gestures to annoy him. Those whose heads were emptiest wagged them at the separated people. They were the common butts of every fool's arrow.

Such has been the lot of the righteous in ages past, such is their portion in a measure now, such may be yet again their heritage in the worst sense. The world knows not its nobility, it has no eye for true excellence: it found a cross for the Master, and cannot be expected to award crowns to his disciples.

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

Verse 16. *For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth.* It seems that from mocking the people of God, the adversaries advanced to reviling God himself, they proceeded from persecution to the sin which is next of kin, namely blasphemy. *By reason of the enemy and avenger.* The enemy boasted of avenging the defeats of their forefathers; they took revenge for the ancient victories of Israel, by insulting over the now fallen people. Here was a sad plight for a nation to be placed in, but it was by no means a hopeless case, for the Lord who brought all this evil upon them could with equal ease release them from it. So long as Israel looked alone to her God, and not to her own arm, no foe could retain her beneath his foot; she *must* arise, for God was on her side.

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

Verse 18. *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.* Heart and life were agreed, and both were true to the Lord's way. Neither within nor without had the godly sufferers offended; they were not absolutely perfect, but they were sincerely free from all wilful transgression. It

was a healthy sign for the nation that her prophet poet could testify to her uprightness before God, both in heart and act; far oftener the case would have worn quite another colour, for the tribes were all too apt to set up other gods and forsake the rock of their salvation.

Verse 19. *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons.* Though utterly crushed and rendered desolate and driven as it were to associate with creatures such as jackals, owls, serpents, which haunt deserted ruins, yet Israel remained faithful. To be true to a smiting God, even when the blows lay our joys in ruinous heaps, is to be such as the Lord delighteth in. Better to be broken by God than from God. Better to be in the place of dragons than of deceivers. *And covered us with the shadow of death.* The language is very strong. The nation is described as completely enveloped in the dense darkness of despair and death, covered up as though confined in hopelessness. Yet the claim is made that they still remained mindful of their God, and a glorious plea it is. Better death than false of faith. Those who are true to God shall never find him false to them.

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

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

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

Verse 23. *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord.* God sleepeth not, but the psalmist puts it so, as if on no other theory he could explain the divine inaction. He would fain see the great Judge ending oppression and giving peace to the holy, therefore does he cry "Awake; "he cannot understand why the reign of tyranny and the oppression of virtue are permitted, and therefore he enquires "Why sleepest thou?" *Arise.* This is all thou needest to do, one move of thine will save us. *Cast us not off for ever.* Long enough hast thou deserted us; the terrible effects of thine absence are destroying us; end thou our calamities, and let thine anger be appeased. In persecuting times men are apt to cry, Where is the God of Israel? At the thought of what the saints have endured from their haughty enemies, we join our voices in the great martyr cry and sing with the bard of Paradise:

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

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

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

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

"Were I a martyr at the stake.
I would plead my Saviour's name,

Intreat a pardon for his sake,
And urge no other claim."

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 3. *(last clause).* The prophet does not suppose any worthiness in the person of Abraham, nor imagine any desert in his posterity, on account of which God dealt so bountifully with them; but

ascribes the whole through the good pleasure of God...Nor does the psalmist here treat of the general benevolence of God, which extends to the whole human race: but he discourses of the difference which exists between the elect and the rest of the world, and the cause of this difference is here referred to the mere good pleasure of God. *John Calvin.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 12. (*last clause*). *Takest no money for them;* literally, *enhances not the price of them,* as a

seller usually does to the buyer. *Daniel Creswell.*

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

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

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

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

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

thousand pieces; and the right covenanter says, Amen. *Alexander Peden's Sermon*, 1682.

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

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

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

Verse 19. *Dragons.* The word rendered *dragons*—(Mynt), *tannim*—means either a great fish, a sea monster, a serpent, a dragon, or a crocodile. It may also mean a jackal, a fox, or a wolf. De Wette renders it here *jackals*. The *idea* in the passage is essentially the same, whichever interpretation of the word is adopted. The "*place of dragons*" would denote the place where such monsters are found, or where they had their abode; that is to say, in desolate places, wastes, deserts, old ruins, depopulated towns. *Albert Barnes*.

Verse 20. *Stretched out our hands to a strange god. The stretching out the hand* towards an object of

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

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

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

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

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

"We pray thee, O eternal God, to bow down thy gracious ear. Lord of Sabaoth, thou Lord of hosts, hear our complaint, for great affliction and persecution have prevailed. Pride has entered thine inheritance, and many supposed to be Christians, have united themselves therewith, and have thus brought in the abomination of desolation. They waste and destroy the Christian sanctuary. They have trodden the same under foot, and the abomination of desolation is worshipped as God. They have troubled thy holy city, thrown down thy holy altar, and slain her servants when they could lay their hands upon them. And now that we as a little flock are left, they have driven us into all thy lands with contempt and reproach. We are scattered as sheep having no shepherd. We have been compelled to forsake house and home. We are as night ravens which abide in the rocks; our chambers are in holes and crags. They watch for us as fowls that fly in the air. We wander in the woods, they hunt us with dogs. They lead us away, seized and bound, as lambs that open not their mouths. They cry out against us as seditious persons and heretics. We are brought like sheep to the slaughter. Many sit oppressed, and in bonds which even decay their bodies. Some have sunk under their sufferings, and died without fault. Here is the patience of the saints in the earth. We must be tried by suffering here. The faithful have they hanged on trees, strangled, hewn in pieces, secretly and openly drowned. Not only men, but likewise women, and maidens have borne witness to the truth, that Jesus Christ is the truth, the only way to eternal life. The world still rages, and rests not; it raves as if mad. They invent lies against us. They cease not their fires and murders. They make the world too narrow for us. O Lord, how long wilt thou be silent? How long wilt thou not judge the blood of thy saints? Let it come up before thy throne. How precious in thine eyes is the blood of thy holy ones! Therefore have we comfort in all our need, a refuge in thee alone, and in none besides; but neither comfort, nor rest, nor peace on this earth. But he who hopeth in thee shall never be confounded. O Lord, there is no sorrow so great that can separate us from thee; therefore, without ceasing we call upon thee, through Christ thy Son our Lord, whom thou of thy free grace hast given us for our comfort. He hath prepared and made known to us the straight path, and the way to eternal life. Everlasting glory and triumph, honour and praise, be given unto thee, both now and to eternity, and let thy righteousness remain for ever. Let all the people bless thy holy name, through Christ the righteous Judge, who cometh to judge the whole world. Amen." *From "A Martyrology of the Churches of Christ, commonly called Baptists. Edited by E. B. Underhill," 1850.*

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

Verse 22. *For thy sake.* This passage is cited by St. Paul, Ro 8:36, apparently from the LXX, in illustration of the fact that the church of God has in all ages been a persecuted church. But there is this remarkable difference between the tone of the psalmist and the tone of the apostle: the former

cannot understand the chastening, and complains that God's heavy hand has been laid without cause upon his people; the latter can rejoice in persecutions also, and exclaim, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." *J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

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

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

ANSWER: It is one thing what the afflicted church cries in the heat of her sufferings, another thing what the Spirit of truth speaks for the comfort of the saints. It is ordinary for the best of saints and martyrs, during the storm, to go to God as Peter did to Christ at sea (sleeping in the stern of the ship), with such importunity in prayer as if the Lord were no more sensible of their agony than Jonah was of the mariners' misery, ready to perish in the turbulent ocean, and he cried out, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise! Saints are so familiar with God in prayer, as if they were at his bedside. THE SOUL'S APPLICATION.—O thou never slumbering Watchman of the house of Israel, carest not thou that we perish? Awake, awake! put on strength, gird thyself, O thou arm of God! I know thou art up, but what am I the better except thou help me up? I know thou sleepest not as man doth, but what advantage hath my soul by that, except thou show thyself, that I may know thou art waking? Oh, it is I that am asleep! You seem to sleep only to awaken me. O that I could watch with thee one hour, as you bid me; I should soon perceive that thy vigilance over me for ever. *William Streat in "The Dividing of the Hoof."* 1654.

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

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

Verse 25. *For our soul is bowed down to the dust,* etc. The speech is metaphorical, expressing the depth of their misery, or the greatness of their sorrow and humiliation. 1. The depth of their misery, with the allusion to the case of a man overcome in battle, or mortally wounded, and tumbling in the dust, or to a man dead and laid in the earth; as, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Ps 22:15. Sure we are, the expression imports the extremity of distress and danger, either as a man dead or near death. 2. The greatness of their sorrow and humiliation; and so the allusion is taken

from a man prostrate and grovelling on the ground, which was their posture of humbling themselves before the Lord, or when any great calamity befell them. As when Herod Agrippa died, they put on sackcloth and lay upon the earth weeping. *Thomas Manton.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 3. Free grace exalted.

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

Verse 3.

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

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

Verse 4.

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

Verse 4. Personal allegiance and pleading intercession.

Verse 4. *My King.* This intends—

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

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

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

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

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

abilities, our experience, our shrewdness, our wealth, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 12. In answer to this complaint.

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

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

Verse 14. Unholy proverbs or godless bywords.

Verse 15. Confessions of a penitent.

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

Verse 17. The faithful soul holding fast his integrity.

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

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

Verse 18.

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) *righteous ways*;
- (2) *blessed ways*;
- (3) *soul refreshing ways*;

(4) *transcendent* ways—ways that transcend all other ways;

(5) *soul strengthening* ways; and

(6) sometimes *afflicted, perplexed, and persecuted* ways. —*Thomas Brooks*.

Verse 21. Can he not? Will he not?

Verse 21. A question and an assertion.

Verse 22.

1. Innocence in the midst of suffering, *sheep*.

2. Honour in the midst of shame, *for thy sake*. *G. Rogers*.

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

Verse 24. Reasons for the withdrawal of divine comfort.

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

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

Psalm 45

Exposition

Explanatory Notes and Quaint Sayings

Hints to the Village Preacher

Other Works

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

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

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

EXPOSITION

Verse 1. *My heart.* There is no writing like that dictated by the heart. Heartless hymns are insults to heaven. *Is inditing a good matter.* A good heart will only be content with good thoughts. Where the fountain is good good streams will flow forth. The learned tell us that the word may be read overflows, or as others, boils or bubbles up, denoting the warmth of the writer's love, the fulness of his heart, and the consequent richness and glow of his utterance, as though it were the ebullition of his inmost soul, when most full of affection. We have here no single cold expression; the writer is not one who frigidly studies the elegancies and proprieties of poetry, his stanzas are the natural outburst of his soul, comparable to the boiling jets of the geysers of Hecla. As the corn offered in sacrifice was parched in the pan, so is this tribute of love hot with sincere devotion. It is a sad thing when the heart is cold with a good matter, and worse when it is warm with a bad matter, but incomparably well when a warm heart and a good matter meet together. O that we may often offer to God an acceptable *minchah*, a sweet oblation fresh from the pan of hearts warmed with gratitude and admiration. *I speak of the things which I have made touching the King.* This song has "the King" for its only subject, and for the King's honour alone was it composed, well might its writer call it a good matter. The psalmist did not write carelessly; he calls his poem his works, or things which he had made. We are not to offer to the Lord that which costs us nothing. Good material deserves good workmanship. We should well digest in our heart's affections and our mind's meditations any discourse or poem in which we speak of one so great and glorious as our Royal Lord. As our version reads it, the psalmist wrote experimentally things which he had made his own, and personally tasted and handled concerning the King. *My tongue is the pen of a ready writer,* not so much for rapidity, for there the tongue always has the preference, but for exactness, elaboration, deliberation, and skilfulness of expression. Seldom are the excited utterances of the mouth equal in real weight and accuracy to the *verba scripta* of a

thoughtful accomplished penman; but here the writer, though filled with enthusiasm, speaks as correctly as a practised writer; his utterances therefore are no ephemeral sentences, but such as fall from men who sit down calmly to write for eternity. It is not always that the best of men are in such a key, and when they are they should not restrain the gush of their hallowed feelings. Such a condition of heart in a gifted mind creates that auspicious hour in which poetry pours forth her tuneful numbers to enrich the service of song in the house of the Lord.

Verse 2. *Thou.* As though the King himself had suddenly appeared before him, the psalmist lost in admiration of his person, turns from his preface to address his Lord. A loving heart has the power to realise its object. The eyes of a true heart see more than the eyes of the head. Moreover, Jesus reveals himself when we are pouring forth our affections towards him. It is usually the case that when we are ready Christ appears. If our heart is warm it is an index that the sun is shining, and when we enjoy his heat we shall soon behold his light. *Thou art fairer than the children of men.* In person, but especially in mind and character, the King of saints is peerless in beauty. The Hebrew word is doubled, "Beautiful, beautiful art thou." Jesus is so emphatically lovely that words must be doubled, strained, yea, exhausted before he can be described. Among the children of men many have through grace been lovely in character, yet they have each had a flaw; but in Jesus we behold every feature of a perfect character in harmonious proportion. He is lovely everywhere, and from every point of view, but never more so than when we view him in conjugal union with his church; then love gives a ravishing flush of glory to his loveliness. *Grace is poured into thy lips.* Beauty and eloquence make a man majestic when they are united; they both dwell in perfection in the all fair, all eloquent Lord Jesus. Grace of person and grace of speech reach their highest point in him. Grace has in the most copious manner been poured upon Christ, for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and now grace is in superabundance, poured forth from his lips to cheer and enrich his people. The testimony, the promises, the invitations, the consolations of our King pour forth from him in such volumes of meaning that we cannot but contrast those cataracts of grace with the speech of Moses which did but drop as the rain, and distil as the dew. Whoever in personal communion with the Wellbeloved has listened to his voice will feel that "never man spake like this man." Well did the bride say of him, "his lips are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh." One word from himself dissolved the heart of Saul of Tarsus, and turned him into an apostle, another word raised up John the Divine when fainting in the Isle of Patmos. Oftentimes a sentence from his lips has turned our own midnight into morning, our winter into spring. *Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.* Calvin reads it, *Because God hath blessed thee for ever.* Christ is blessed of God, blessed for ever, and this is to us one great reason for his beauty, and the source of the gracious words which proceed out of his lips. The rare endowments of the man Christ Jesus are given him of the Father, that by them his people may be blessed with all spiritual blessings in union with himself. But if we take our own translation, we

read that the Father has blessed the Mediator as a reward for all his gracious labours; and right well does he deserve the recompense. Whom God blesses we should bless, and the more so because all his blessedness is communicated to us.

Verse 3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.* Loving spirits jealous of the Redeemer's glory long to see him putting forth his power to vindicate his own most holy cause. Why should the sword of the Spirit lie still, like a weapon hung up in an armoury; it is sharp and strong, both for cutting and piercing: O that the divine power of Jesus were put forth to use against error. The words before us represent our great King as urged to arm himself for battle, by placing his sword where it is ready for use. Christ is the true champion of the church, others are but underlings who must borrow strength from him; the single arm of Immanuel is the sole hope of the faithful. Our prayer should be that of this verse. There is at this moment an apparent suspension of our Lord's former power, we must by importunate prayer call him to the conflict, for like the Greeks without Achilles we are soon overcome by our enemies, and we are but dead men if Jesus be not in our midst. *O most mighty.* A title well deserved, and not given from empty courtesy like the serenities, excellencies and highnesses of our fellow mortals—titles, which are but sops for vain glory. Jesus is the truest of heroes. Hero worship in his case alone is commendable. He is mighty to save, mighty in love. *With thy glory and thy majesty.* Let thy sword both win thee renown and dominion, or as it may mean, gird on with thy sword thy robes which indicate thy royal splendour. Love delights to see the Beloved arrayed as becometh his excellency; she weeps as she sees him in the garments of humiliation, she rejoices to behold him in the vestments of his exaltation. Our precious Christ can never be made too much of. Heaven itself is but just good enough for him. All the pomp that angels and archangels, and thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers can pour at his feet is too little for him. Only his own essential glory is such as fully answers to the desire of his people, who can never enough extol him.

Verse 4. *And in thy majesty ride prosperously.* The hero monarch armed and apparelled is now entreated to ascend his triumphal car. Would to God that our Immanuel would come forth in the chariot of love to conquer our spiritual foes and seize by power the souls whom he has bought with blood. *Because of truth and meekness and righteousness.* These words may be rendered, *ride forth upon truth and meekness and righteousness.*—Three noble chargers to draw the war chariot of the gospel. In the sense of our translation it is a most potent argument to urge with our Lord that the cause of the true, the humble, and the good, calls for his advocacy. Truth will be ridiculed, meekness will be oppressed, and righteousness slain, unless the God, the Man in whom these precious things are incarnated, shall arise for their vindication. Our earnest petition ought ever to be that Jesus would lay his almighty arm to the work of grace lest the good cause languish and wickedness prevail. *And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.* Foreseeing the result of divine working, the psalmist prophesies that the uplifted arm of Messiah will reveal to the King's own eyes the terrible overthrow of

his foes. Jesus needs no guide but his own right hand, no teacher but his own might; may he instruct us all in what he can perform, by achieving it speedily before our gladdened eyes.

Verse 5. *Thine arrows.* Our King is master of all weapons: he can strike those who are near and those afar off with equal force. *Are sharp.* Nothing that Jesus does is ill done, he uses no blunted shafts, no pointless darts. *In the heart of the King's enemies.* Our Captain aims at men's hearts rather than their heads, and he hits them too; point blank are his shots, and they enter deep into the vital part of man's nature. Whether for love or vengeance, Christ never misses aim, and when his arrows stick, they cause a smart not soon forgotten, a wound which only he can heal. Jesus' arrows of conviction are sharp in the quiver of his word, and sharp when on the bow of his ministers, but they are most known to be so when they find a way into careless hearts. They are *his* arrows, he made them, he shoots them. He makes them sharp, and he makes them enter the heart. May none of us ever fall under the darts of his judgment, for none kill so surely as they. *Whereby the people fall under thee.* On either side the slain of the Lord are many when Jesus leads on the war. Nations tremble and turn to him when he shoots abroad his truth. Under his power and presence, men are stricken down as though pricked in the heart. There is no standing against the Son of God when his bow of might is in his hands. Terrible will be that hour when his bow shall be made quite naked, and bolts of devouring fire shall be hurled upon his adversaries: then shall princes fall and nations perish.

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

Verse 7. *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness.* Christ Jesus is not neutral in the great

contest between right and wrong: as warmly as he loves the one he abhors the other. What qualifications for a sovereign! what grounds of confidence for a people! The whole of our Lord's life on earth proved the truth of these words; his death to put away sin and bring in the reign of righteousness, sealed the fact beyond all question; his providence by which he rules from his mediatorial throne, when rightly understood, reveals the same; and his final assize will proclaim it before all worlds. We should imitate him both in his love and hate; they are both needful to complete a righteous character. *Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Jesus as Mediator owned God as his God, to whom, being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient. On account of our Lord's perfect life he is now rewarded with superior joy. Others there are to whom grace has given a sacred fellowship with him, but by their universal consent and his own merit, he is prince among them, the gladdest of all because the cause of all their gladness. At Oriental feasts oil was poured on the heads of distinguished and very welcome guests; God himself anoints the man Christ Jesus, as he sits at the heavenly feasts, anoints him as a reward for his work, with higher and fuller joy than any else can know; thus is the Son of man honoured and rewarded for all his pains. Observe the indisputable testimony to Messiah's Deity in verse six, and to his manhood in the present verse. Of whom could this be written but of Jesus of Nazareth? Our Christ is our Elohim. Jesus is God with us.

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

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

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

Verse 10. *Hearken, O daughter, and consider.* Ever is this the great duty of the church. Faith cometh by hearing, and confirmation by consideration. No precept can be more worthy of the attention of those who are honoured to be espoused to Christ than that which follows. *And incline thine ear.* Lean forward so that no syllable may be unheard. The whole faculties of the mind should be bent upon receiving holy teaching. *Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.* To renounce the world is not easy, but it must be done by all who are affianced to the Great King, for a divided heart he cannot endure; it would be misery to the beloved one as well as dishonour to her Lord. Evil acquaintances, and even those who are but neutral, must be forsaken, they can confer no benefits, they must inflict injury. The house of our nativity is the house of sin—we were shapen in iniquity; the carnal mind is enmity against God, we must come forth of the house of fallen nature, for it is built in the City of Destruction. Not that natural ties are broken by grace, but ties of the sinful nature, bonds of graceless affinity. We have much to forget as well as to learn, and the unlearning is so difficult that only diligent hearing, and considering, and bending of the whole soul to it, can accomplish the work; and even these would be too feeble did not divine grace assist. Yet why should we remember the

Egypt from which we came out? Are the leeks and the garlic, and the onions anything, when the iron bondage, and the slavish tasks, and the death dealing Pharaoh of hell are remembered? We part with folly for wisdom; with bubbles for eternal joys; with deceit for truth; with misery for bliss; with idols for the living God. O that Christians were more mindful of the divine precept here recorded; but, alas! worldliness abounds; the church is defiled; and the glory of the Great King is veiled. Only when the whole church leads the separated life will the full splendour and power of Christianity shine forth upon the world.

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

Verse 12. *And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.* When the church abounds in holiness, she shall know no lack of homage from the surrounding people. Her glory shall then impress and attract the heathen around, till they also unite in doing honour to her Lord. The power of missions abroad lies at home: a holy church will be a powerful church. Nor shall there be lack of treasure in her coffers when grace is in her heart; the free gifts of a willing people shall enable the workers for God to carry on their sacred enterprise without stint. Commerce shall send in its revenue to endow, not with forced levies and imperial taxes, but with willing gifts the church of the Great King. *Even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.* Not by pandering to their follies, but by testifying against their sins, shall the wealthy be one to the faith of Jesus. They shall come not to favour the church but to beg for her favour. She shall not be the hireling of the great, but as a queen shall she dispense her

favours to the suppliant throng of the rich among the people. We go about to beg for Christ like beggars for alms, and many who should know better will make compromises and become reticent of unpopular truth to please the great ones of the earth; not so will the true bride of Christ degrade herself, when her sanctification is more deep and more visible; then will the hearts of men grow liberal, and offerings from afar, abundant and continual, shall be presented at the throne of the Pacific Prince.

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

Verse 14. *She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework.* The day comes when the celestial marriage shall be openly celebrated, and these words describe the nuptial procession wherein the queen is brought to her royal Husband attended by her handmaidens. In the latter-day glory, and in the consummation of all things, the glory of the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be seen by all the universe with admiration. While she was within doors, and her saints hidden ones, the church was glorious; what will be her splendour when she shall appear in the likeness of her Lord in the day of his manifestation? The finest embroidery is but a faint image of the perfection of the church when sanctified by the Spirit. This verse tells us of the ultimate rest of the church—the King's own bosom; of the way she comes to it, she is *brought* by the power of sovereign grace; of the time when this is done—in the future, *she shall be*, it does not yet appear; of the state in which she shall come—clad in richest array, and attended by brightest spirits. *The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.* Those who love and serve the church for her Lord's sake shall share in her bliss "in that day." In one sense they are a part of the church, but for the sake of the imagery they are represented as maids of honour; and, though the figure may seem incongruous, they are

represented as brought to the King with the same loving familiarity as the bride, because the true servants of the church are of the church, and partake in all her happiness. Note that those who are admitted to everlasting communion with Christ, are pure in heart—*virgins*, pure in company—*her companions*, pure in walk—*that follow her*. Let none hope to be brought into heaven at last who are not purified now.

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

Verse 16. *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.* The ancient saints who stood as fathers in the service of the Great King have all passed away; but a spiritual seed is found to fill their places. The veterans depart, but volunteers fill up the vacant places. The line of grace never becomes extinct. As long as time shall last, the true apostolical succession will be maintained. *Whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.* Servants of Christ are kings. Where a man has preached successfully, and evangelised a tribe or nation, he gets to himself more than regal honours, and his name is like the name of the great men that be upon the earth. Jesus is the king maker. Ambition of the noblest kind shall win her desire in the army of Christ; immortal crowns are distributed to his faithful soldiers. The whole earth shall yet be subdued for Christ, and honoured are they, who shall, through grace, have a share in the conquest—these shall reign with Christ at his coming.

Verse 17. *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations.* Jehovah by the prophet's mouth promises to the Prince of Peace eternal fame as well as a continuous progeny. His name is his fame, his character, his person; these are dear to his people now—they never can forget them; and it shall be so as long as men exist. Names renowned in one generation have been unknown to the next era, but the laurels of Jesus shall ever be fresh, his renown ever new. God will see to this; his providence and his grace shall make it so. The fame of Messiah is not left to human guardianship; the Eternal guarantees it, and his promise never fails. All down the ages the memories of Gethsemane and Calvary shall glow with inextinguishable light; nor shall the lapse of time, the smoke of error, or the malice of hell be able to dim the glory of the Redeemer's fame. *Therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.* They shall confess thee to be what thou art, and shall render to thee in perpetuity

the homage due. Praise is due from every heart to him who loved us, and redeemed us by his blood; this praise will never be fully paid, but will be ever a standing and growing debt. His daily benefits enlarge our obligations, let them increase the number of our songs. Age to age reveals more of his love, let every year swell the volume of the music of earth and heaven, and let thunders of song roll up in full diapason to the throne of him that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

TITLE. "*Upon Shoshannim*, "or upon *lilies*. It will be remembered that lilies were an emblem of purity and loveliness, and were introduced as such in the building of Solomon's temple (see 1Ki 7:19,22,26 2Ch 4:5); and the church is compared in the Canticles to a "lily among thorns." So 2:2. The Psalms which bear this title, "upon lilies, "are the present, the sixty-ninth, and the eightieth (compare Ps 60:1-12); and all these contain prophecies of Christ and his church. The sixtieth is a parallel to the forty-fourth, and represents her supplicating appeal to God, and Christ's victories. The sixty-ninth displays the victories gained by Christ through suffering. The eightieth is also parallel to the forty-fourth and sixtieth, a plaintive lament of the church in distress and a supplicating cry for deliverance. All these three Psalms are (if we may venture to use this expression) like the voice of the "lily among thorns." That there is, therefore, some reference here to the spiritual meaning of the word (Mynvs), or *lilies*, in this title, seems at least to be probable. *Christopher Wordsworth*.

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

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

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

Whole Psalm. The Psalter, which sets forth so much truth respecting the person and work of Christ—truth more precious than gold and sweeter than the honeycomb—is not silent respecting the bond subsisting between him and his people, THE MYSTICAL UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. When a prince sets his affections on a woman of lowly rank, and takes her home to be his wife, the two are so united that her debts become his, his wealth and honours become hers. Now, that there is formed between Christ and the church, between Christ and every soul that will consent to receive him, a connection, of which the most intimate of all natural relations is the analogue and type, we have already found to be not only taught in the Psalms, but to be implied in the very structure of many of them. He takes his people's sins upon him, and they receive the right to become the sons of God: the One Spirit of God wherewith he was baptised without measure, dwells in them according to the measure of the grace that is given them. I will only add further, that this union, besides being implied on so many places, is expressly set forth in one most glorious Psalm—the Nuptial Song of Christ and the Church—which has for its peculiar theme the home bringing of Christ's elect, that they may be joined to him in a union that shall survive the everlasting hills. *William Binnie, D.D.*

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

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

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

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

Verse 1. A similitude taken from the *mincah*, or *meat offering* in the law, which was dressed in the frying pan Le 7:9, and there boiled in oil, being made of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil Le 2:5, and afterwards was presented to the Lord by the priest, verse 8. Here the matter of this Psalm is as the *mincah* or oblation, which with the oil, the grace of the Spirit, was boiled and prepared in the prophet's heart, and now presented. *Henry Ainsworth.*

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 2. Thou art fairer than the children of men, etc. Nothing can be more beautiful than this abrupt way of discourse. The prophet sets out with a professed design to speak of the king. But as if in the moment he had so intended, the glorious *Person* of whom he was going to speak appeared to his view, he instantly leaves every other consideration to speak to him himself. And what a rapturous

address he makes! He first describes the glories, the beauties, the astonishing loveliness, of his *person*. Though to a carnal eye there was no beauty to desire him, his visage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons on men, yet to an eye truly enlightened, he is the king in his beauty, fairer, as the glorious *Mediator*, the Head, the Bridegroom of his Church and people, than all the children of men. And, in the Father's view, so greatly beloved, so truly glorious, that *grace was poured into his lips*. Reader, observe the expression; not simply grace put into his heart, for the holiness and purity of his person, but poured into his lips, that, like the honey, it might drop upon his people, and be for ever communicated to all his redeemed, in an endless perpetuity of all suited blessings here, and glory hereafter. *Robert Hawker, D.D.*

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

Verse 2. *Thou art fairer*, etc. Fair he was (1) in his *conception*, conceived in purity, and a fair angel brought the news. Fair (2) in his *nativity*: *wraioz* is the word in the Septuagint, *tempustivus*, *in time*, that is, all things are beautiful in their time, Ec 3:11. And *in the fulness of time* it was that he was born, and a fair star pointed to him. Fair (3) in his *childhood*; he grew up in grace and favour, Lu 2:52. The doctors were much taken with him. Fair (4) in his *manhood*; had he not been so, says S. Jerome, had there not been something admirable in his countenance and presence, some heavenly beauty, the apostles and the whole world (as the Pharisees themselves confess) would not so suddenly have gone after him. Fair (5) in his *transfiguration*, white as the light, or as the snow, his face glittering as the sun Mt 17:2, even to the ravishing the very soul of S. Peter, that "he knew not what he said," "could let his eyes dwell upon that face for ever, and never come down the mount again. Fair (6) in his *passion*. *Nihil indecorum*, no uncomeliness, in his nakedness; his very wounds, and the bloody prints of the whips and scourges drew an *ecce* from the mouth of Pilate: "Behold, the man!" the sweetness of his countenance and carriage in the midst of filth and spittle, whips and buffets. His very comeliness upon the cross, and his giving up the ghost, made the centurion cry out, he "*was the Son of God*:" there appeared so sweet a majesty, so heavenly a lustre in him through that very darkness that encompassed him. Fair (7) in his *resurrection*; so subtle a beauty, that mortal eyes, even the eyes of his own disciples, were not able to see or apprehend it, but when he veiled it from them. Fair (8) in his *ascension*; made his disciples stand gazing after him so long (as if they never could look long enough upon him), till an angel is sent from heaven to rebuke them, to look home, Ac

1:2. *Mark Frank.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. For the *manner*, he taught not as the scribes; he spake so sweetly that the very catch poll officers, astonished at his words, gave this testimony, "Never man spake like this man," Joh 7:46. He spake so graciously that the apostles forsook all things and followed him; at his call Andrew left his nets

straightway, James and John their father without tarrying, Matthew from the receipt of custom, Zacchaeus from the like worldly course came hastily to receive him joyfully. Mr 10:28 Mt 4:20-21 9:9 Lu 19:6. Nay, beloved, he was so powerful an orator, that the very winds and waves obeyed his word, Mr 4:39. It is reported in Holy Writ that all princes and people were desirous of hearing Solomon's eloquence; the Queen of Sheba wondering at the same, cried out, "Happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom," 1Ki 10:8. Solomon is type here, but Christ is the truth; and this showeth evidently that Christ is not a tyrant, but a mild prince, persuading obedience plausibly, not compelling his people violently; his sayings are his *sceptre* and his sword: his piercing exhortations are, as it were, his *sharp arrows* by which his followers are subdued unto him.

To conclude this argument, his fair words (as the Scripture speaks) "are as an honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones" Pr 16:24: "an honeycomb," and what more toothsome?" sweetness to the soul and health to the bones; "and what, I pray, more wholesome? The good man's soul is Christ's own spouse, to which he speaks a great many ways graciously; sometimes correcting, and what stronger argument of love? for "whom he loveth he chasteneth" Heb 12:6; sometimes instructing, and his gospel is able to make "the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" 2Ti 3:17; sometimes wooing in amorous terms, as in his love song everywhere: "my beloved, ""my sister, ""my spouse, " "the fairest among women, ""my love," "my dove." etc.; sometimes promising, and that both the blessings of this life present. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: etc., Isa 41:10, and of that life which is to come. Joh 17:21,24. But Christ's excellent intercession every day to God the Father, appearing in the court of heaven, and as an advocate pleading for us, is yet fuller of grace; for if Caleb easily granted his daughter's request, and bestowed on her "the springs above and the springs beneath" Jud 1:15, how shall Almighty God (whose mercies are above all his works) deny the suits of such a Son in whom he is well pleased? *John Boys*.

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

Verse 2. (*second clause*). Never were there such words of love and sweetness spoken by any man as by him: never was there such a loving and tender heart as the heart of Jesus Christ: *Grace was poured into his lips*. Certainly never were there such words of love, sweetness, and tenderness spoken here upon this earth as those last words of his which were uttered a little before his sufferings, and are recorded in the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th chapters of John. Read over all the books of love and friendship that were ever written by any of the sons of men, they do all come far short of these melting strains of love that are there expressed. So sweet and amiable was the conversation of Jesus Christ, that it is reported of the apostle Peter in the Ecclesiastical History, that

after Christ's ascension he wept so abundantly, that he was always seen wiping his face from the tears; and being asked why he wept so, he answered, He could not choose but weep as often as he thought of that most sweet conversation of Jesus Christ. *John Row.*

Verse 3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.* The sword, according to ancient custom was hung in a belt put round the shoulders, and reaching down to the thigh. It was suspended on the back part of the thigh, almost to the ground, but was not girded upon it; the horseman's sword was fixed on the saddle by a girth. When David, in spirit invites the Redeemer of the church to gird his sword upon his thigh, and the spouse says of the valiant of Israel, "every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night" So 3:8, they do not mean that the weapon was literally bound upon their thigh, but hung in the girdle on the back part of it; for this was the mode in which, by the universal testimony of ancient writers, the infantry wore their swords. It is still the practice in the East to wear swords in this manner, for Chardin informs us, that "the Eastern people wear their swords hanging down at length; and the Turks wear their swords on horseback, and on their thigh." But in his poetical invitation to the Redeemer, to gird his sword upon his thigh, David manifestly points to some special occasion of solemn and official character; and a clear light is thrown upon his meaning by a custom to this day observed in the East. "When a Persian or an Ottoman prince *ascends the throne*, "says Mr. Morier, "he girds on his sabre. Mohammed Jaffer, for example, was proclaimed by the Khan, governor *pro tempore*, till the arrival of his brother, and was invested in this dignity by the *girding of a sword upon his thigh*, and honour which he accepted with a reluctance perhaps not wholly feigned."—"This ceremony, "says Dr. Davey, giving an account of an Eastern coronation, "remained to be performed before the prince could be considered completely king—it was that of choosing a new name, and putting on the regal sword. The prince went in great state to the temple, where he presented offerings, and then, the sword having been girded on his thigh, the priest presented a pot of sandal powder, in which the prince, who *may now be called king*, dipped his fingers." From these anecdotes, it is evident girding a sword on the thigh is part of the ceremony of royal inauguration; and that when the psalmist addresses the Messiah, he refers to his receiving the honours and powers of the Lord of all. *G. Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture.*

Verse 3. *Thy sword.* The word of God is compared to such a weapon, for the apostle informs us that it is quick, or living, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and laying open the thoughts and intents of the heart. It must be observed, however, that this description of the word of God is applicable to it only when Christ girds it on, and employs it as his sword. Of what use is a sword, even though it be the sword of Goliath, while it lies still in its scabbard, or is grasped by the powerless hand of an infant? In those circumstances it can neither conquer nor defend, however well suited it might be to do both in the hand of a warrior. It is the same with the sword of the Spirit. While it lies still in its

scabbard, or is wielded only by the infantile hand of Christ's ministers, it is a powerless and useless weapon; a weapon at which the weakest sinner can laugh, and against which he can defend himself with the utmost ease. But not so when he who is the Most Mighty girds it on. Then it becomes a weapon of tremendous power, a weapon resistless as the bolt of heaven. "Is not my word like a fire, and a hammer, saith the Lord, which breaketh the rock in pieces?" It is indeed, for what can be more efficacious and irresistible than a weapon sharper than a two edged sword, wielded by the arm of omnipotence? What must his sword be whose glance is lightning? Armed with this weapon, the Captain of our salvation cuts his way to the sinner with infinite ease, though surrounded by rocks and mountains, scatters his strongholds and refuges of lies, and with a mighty blow cleaves asunder his heart of adamant, and lays him prostrate and trembling at his feet. Since such are the effects of this weapon in the hand of Christ, it is with the utmost propriety that the psalmist begins by requesting him *to gird it on*, and not suffer it to be inactive in its scabbard, or powerless in the feeble grasp of his ministers. *Edward Payson.*

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

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

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

Verse 4. *Ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.* The literal translation would be, "Ride on the word of truth, and the meekness of righteousness," and so the Syriac has it. If this rendering be adopted, the meaning will then be, that the great object of Christ's gospel was to vindicate the cause of truth and righteousness in the world. Christ is said to ride on the word of truth, because the knowledge of the truth depends on the word—it is by the word that truth is

made known. He is said to ride on the meekness or humility of righteousness, because meekness or humility is its distinguishing characteristic. The former relates to what man is to believe, the latter to how he is to live. *George Harpur.*

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

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

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

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

was, "Let us break their *bands* asunder." *George Harpur*.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 7. *Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;* i.e., enriched and filled thee in a singular manner with the fulness of the Spirit, whereby thou art consecrated to thy office; and by reason whereof you out shine and excellest all the saints who are thy *fellows*, or copartners in these graces. So that in these words you have two parts, namely, first, *the saint's dignity*; and, secondly, *Christ's preeminence*. First. *The saint's dignity*, which consists in this, that they are Christ's *fellows*. The Hebrew word (Kyrkxm), is very full and copious, and is translated consorts, companions, copartners, partakers; or as ours reads it, *fellows*; i.e., such as are partakers with him in the anointing of the Spirit, who do in their measure receive the same Spirit,

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

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

Verse 7. Behold, O ye Arians, and acknowledge even hence the truth. The psalmist speaks of us all as *fellows* or *partakers* of the Lord, but were he one of things which come out of nothing, and of things generate, he himself had been one of those who partake. But since he hymned him as the eternal God, saying, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, and has declared that all other things partake of him, what conclusion must we draw, but that he is distinct from generated things, and he only the Father's veritable Word, Radiance, and Wisdom, which all things generate partake, being sanctified by him in Spirit? And, therefore, he is here *anointed*, not that he may become God, for he was so even before; nor that he may become king, for he has the kingdom eternally, existing as God's image, as the sacred oracle shows; but in our behalf is this written, as before. For the Israelitish kings, upon their being anointed, then became kings, not being so before, as David, as Ezekias, as Josias, and the rest; but the Saviour, on the contrary, being God, and ever ruling in the Father's kingdom, and being himself the dispenser of the Holy Ghost, nevertheless is here said to be anointed, that, as before, being said as man to be anointed with the Spirit, he might provide for us more, not only exaltation and resurrection, but the indwelling and intimacy of the Spirit...And when he received the Spirit, we it was who, by him were made recipients of it. And, moreover, for this reason,

not as Aaron, or David, or the rest, was he anointed with oil, but in another way, above all his fellows, *with the oil of gladness*, which he himself interprets to be the Spirit, saying by the prophet, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me; "as also the apostle has said, "How God anointed him with the Holy Ghost." *Athanasius*.

Verse 8. *All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.* Although there is considerable obscurity overhanging these words, still the general idea of a *supereminent fulness of anointing* is quite apparent, combined, however, with the other idea that the anointing oil or ointment is of *the most exquisite quality*. Myrrh, and aloes, and cassia were celebrated for their peculiar fragrance, on which account they were used in compounding the choicest unguents. Myrrh and cassia are mentioned in Ex 30:23-24, as two of the spices of which the holy anointing oil was made up. All its ingredients were considered sacred. The Israelites were forbidden to pour it upon man's flesh, or to attempt any imitation of it in their own perfumes. Ivory was in early times, as it still is, rare and costly, and it was highly esteemed as a material for household decoration, on which the finest workmanship and the most princely expenditures were displayed. In palaces of ivory, therefore, it was to be expected that, in correspondence with the magnificence of their structure and the costliness of their furniture, the ointment employed for anointing would be of the richest perfume, and in the greatest profusion. According to our version of the Psalm, the divine Saviour is thus represented as being anointed with oil of the very best kind, even oil taken from the ivory palaces; and also as receiving it in no ordinary measure. His anointing was not confined to a few ceremonial drops poured upon the head, but so abundant is it said to have been, that *all his garments smelled* of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Bishop Horsley has proposed a change in the translation, by which means the idea of abundance is connected, not with the fragrance arising from the anointing, but with the anointing itself, which is a different and far more important thing. "Thy garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia, excelling the palaces of ivory, excelling those which delight thee." This translation, which is strictly literal as well as poetical, is at the same time comparatively free from obscurity, and it visibly sets forth, under the most expressive imagery, the surpassing measure of that anointing which was conferred on our Lord above all his fellows. His garments are supposed not merely to have been all richly perfumed, or even thoroughly saturated with the oil of gladness, but to have consisted of the very articles which entered into the composition of the most precious and odoriferous unguent: *Thy garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia*. This is figurative language, but nothing could more emphatically exhibit how truly "the Spirit rested on Jesus, and abode with him" in all the plenitude of his heavenly gifts. That heavenly anointing constituted, as it were, his very dress, "excelling" in the quantity or measure of the anointing "the palaces of ivory; "because their furniture, however highly scented, were not made of aromatic materials. The strength of the perfumes would evaporate, the fragrance would

soon diminish; but permanent as well as plentiful fragrance is secured to him whose "garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia." It is added, in the way of parallelism, "excelling those which delight in thee, "or those which make thee glad. To say that the persons here alluded to are the occupiers of the ivory palaces, might perhaps be objected to as fanciful; but palaces are the abodes of kings; and anointed kings wither literally, or typically, or spiritually, are the fellows of the Lord's Anointed One; and it does seem manifest that, as his anointing causes joy and gladness to all the parties concerned in it, so likewise there is an anointing of those who are honoured to be his fellows which causes joy and gladness to him. The persons who are in the one verse spoken of as giving delight to Christ, there is no reason to regard as any other than the persons spoken of in the former verse as his "*fellows*." And if this is the case, then we have a comparison drawn betwixt the one and the other in the matter of their anointing, and to that of Christ a decided superiority is ascribed. *David Pitcairn, in "The Anointed Saviour," 1846.*

Verse 8. *All thy garments smell of myrrh, etc.* These things are true in Jesus; by his garments is meant his righteousness; for it is written, He clothed himself with righteousness and zeal. And here the translator hath put in *smell*, which rather should have been *are*, for "*his garments are of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia,* " that is, truly purging, cleansing, and making sound; for his righteousness, which is the righteousness of faith, maketh sound hearted Christians; whereas, man's righteousness, which is the righteousness of works, maketh filthy hypocrites. And by "*ivory palaces,* " is meant the true faith and fear of God; for ivory is solid and white, and palaces are king's houses; and by Christ we are made kings, and our dwelling is in faith and fear of God; and this is the gladness and joy of our Lord Jesus, that he brings many sons and daughters unto God. *Richard Coore, 1683.*

Verse 8. *Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.* Commentators have been more perplexed in explaining these words than any other part of the Psalm. Not to detain you with the various expositions that have been proposed, I will give you what I conceive to be the meaning of the passage. The word rendered *whereby*, is also the name of a region in Arabia Felix, namely, Minnaea, which, according to the geographer Strabo, "abounded in myrrh and frankincense." Now, it is singular that, according to the historian, Diodorus Siculus, "the inhabitants of Arabia Felix had sumptuous houses, adorned with *ivory* and precious stones." Putting these two things together, therefore, namely, that this region abounded in myrrh and frankincense, and that its inhabitants adorned their houses with ivory, we may, I conceive, find a clue to the psalmist's meaning. If we substitute "Minnaea" for "whereby," the passage will run thus—

"Myrrh, aloes, and cassia, are all thy garments.

From ivory palaces of Minnaea they have made thee glad."

You recollect in the verse just going before, the oil with which Christ was said to be anointed, is called the oil of "*gladness*." Accordingly, he is here said to be made *glad* (it is the same word in both places

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 9. *King's daughters.* Albeit the Catholic church consisting of true converts or real saints be but the one and only true spouse of Christ, yet particular visible churches consisting of saints by calling, by obligation, by profession, and common estimation, their own or others, are many. The true church consisting of true converts (whose praise is of God, to whom only they are certainly known, and not of

men), being but one, is compared to the *queen*; but the particular, whose collections and consociations are known to men, being many, are compared to *ladies of honour* who serve the queen. *David Dickson*.

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

Ortu magna, viro major, sed maxima prole,

Hic jacet Henrici filia, nupta, parens.

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

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

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

Verse 10. *Forget.* If thou be on the mountain, have no love to look back to Sodom. If thou be in the ark, fly not back to the world, as the raven did. If thou be set on Canaan, forget the flesh pots of Egypt. If marching against Midian, forget stooping to the waters of Harod. Jud 7:1-25. If on the house top, forget that is below thee. Mr 13:15. If thy hand be put to the plough, forget that is behind thee. Lu 9:62. Themistocles desired rather to learn the art of forgetfulness than of memory. Philosophy is an art of remembering, divinity includes in it an art of forgetting. The first lesson that Socrates taught his

scholars was, Remember; for he thought that knowledge was nothing else but a calling to remembrance of those things the mind knew ere it knew the body. But the first lesson that Christ teacheth his scholars is, *Forget. Forget thine own people*; "Repent" Mt 4:17; first, "eschew evil, "1Pe 3:11. *Thomas Adams*.

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

Verse 11. In this Psalm Christ is set forth in all his royalty and majesty; yet he is said *greatly to desire or delight in the beauty* of his queen, that is, the graces of the saints; and that not with an ordinary delight, but he "*greatly* desires; "his desire is increased as her beauty is. For that is there brought in as a motive unto her to be more holy and conformed unto him, "to incline her ear, and forsake her father's house." *So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.* Christ hath a beauty that pleaseth him as well as we have, though of another kind; and, therefore, ceaseth not till he hath got out every spot

and wrinkle out of his spouse's face, as the apostle speaks Eph 5:27, "so as to present her glorious unto himself, "that it, delightful and pleasing in his eyes. *Thomas Goodwin.*

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

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

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

Verse 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within,* etc. When the children of God recollect their glorious and heavenly pedigree, they endeavour to excel others, both in the beautiful disposition of soul and manner of life. *The king's daughter,* that is, the daughter of the heavenly Father, who is also the bride of the king's Son; every believing soul *is all glorious,* adorned with a holiness not only glorious to herself, but also to the Father and the Bridegroom, and is the beginning of a heavenly glory; and that chiefly *within,* not only when she appears abroad, and presents herself to the view of men, but also when she sits in the inner bed chamber in the secret exercises of religion, in which she in private pleases the Father and the Bridegroom, who having a regard to the inward man, she above all endeavours to keep that pure and chaste. Her clothing is of *gold*; in comparison of which whatever excellency natural men were even possessed of, is but a shining vanity; nay, it was *wrought* gold, curiously beautified with various resemblances, which represents the perfections of God himself; and of different colours, on account of the different yet harmoniously corresponding graces of the Holy Spirit; or of needlework of the Phrygian embroiderers, or rather the work of the cunning workman,

mentioned in So 7:1. Nor is the spouse only beautiful within, but also without; "holding forth the word of life, "Php 2:16, she practises charity, glorifies Christ, edifies her neighbour, and in this manner she is brought unto the king, worthy to be presented to him. This is the only way by which we are to endeavour to obtain familiarity with him, and the sweetest intercourse of the most chaste love, both on earth and in heaven. *Hermann Witsius*. 1636-1708.

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

Verse 13. *All glorious within.* Saints must shine by the comeliness of Christ, as a gracious husband labours to change his spouse into his own image and likeness by kindnesses, precepts, and example, that he may take the more delight in her person; so does our spiritual Solomon change the hue of his Egyptian queen to deem of things and persons as her Lord and husband judges, and frames her spirit to delight in doing his will and pleasure, and take the highest solace in obedience, to enjoy a heavenly freedom, mixed with amiable and joyful reverence. He roots out of her heart all changeable affections and worldly fancies, and hankering longings after the fond fashions of Shechem, and all carnal inclinations to the daughters of Canaan's lineage, and all the beggardly humours of the besotted world, and to pass by with a holy scorn all the pitiful pageantry of this perishing and fading life, and rise to a mean estimate of the baubles and trifles that enchant a carnal heart. At length she arrives to a noble and generous judgment, counting all but dung and dross that she may win Christ. As her prince of life was crucified by the world for her redemption, so she begins to be crucified to it in token of conformity to him, and at length becomes *all glorious within*. *Samuel Lee*, in "*The Triumph of Mercy*." 1676.

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

Verse 13. *Her clothing is of wrought gold.* Some read it *purled* works, or closures of *gold, enamelled*

gold, such as precious *stones* were set in, which were exceeding *splendid* and glorious; such were the *clothes* of service in the tabernacle, and the garments and robes of the *high priest*, which shadowed forth Christ's *righteousness*. Ex 28:11-14 Ex 39:1-6. *William Troughton*.

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

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

Verse 14. *The virgins her companions that follow her*. These are members of the church, but the figure of a bridal train is employed to sustain the allegory. What bright train the Royal Bride will have as she goes forth to meet the Bridegroom! King's daughters will be there, for every crowned head on earth shall one day bow at the foot of the cross. The daughter of Tyre shall be there—Tyre, the ancient emporium of the nations—to show that the merchandise of the world shall be holiness from the Lord. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Jews and Gentiles will be there—representatives from all peoples, and tongues, and nations. They are *virgins*. They keep themselves unspotted from the world. They are weaned from its idols; they dread its contaminations. Their first care is to preserve the whiteness of their souls by daily washing in the blood of the Lamb...They *follow* the royal Bride. They keep by her side in storm and sunshine. They follow her in

the regeneration. They follow her in the search after her Beloved. So 3:2-3. They follow her to the green pastures and the still waters. They follow her without the camp bearing his reproach. Like Ruth, they leave father and mother to follow her. Ru 1:16. Like Caleb, they follow the Lord fully. When a crisis comes, and the question, "Who is on the Lord's side?" involves heavy issues, and hollow hearted professors fly away like swallows before the storm, they follow her. When persecution comes, and Christ's faithful witnesses have to prophesy clothed in sackcloth, and perhaps to pass through a baptism of blood to the crown, they follow her: like Peden, when—the bloodhounds of persecution in full chase after him, and the lone moor his home—he thought of Richard Cameron gone to glory, and sighed "Oh, to be with Richie!" *Duncan Macgregor, M.A., in "The Shepherd of Israel; or, Illustrations of the Inner Life," 1869.*

Verse 15. *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought.* No marriage was ever consummated with that triumphal solemnity as the marriage of Christ and believers shall be in heaven. Among the Jews the marriage house was called *bethillulah*—the house of praise; there was joy on all hands, but not like the joy that will be in heaven when believers, the spouse of Christ, shall be brought thither. *God the Father* will rejoice to behold the blessed accomplishment and consummation of that glorious design and project of his love. *Jesus Christ the Bridegroom* will rejoice to see the travail of his soul, the blessed birth and issue of all his bitter pangs and agonies. Isa 53:11. *The Holy Spirit* will rejoice to see the complement and perfection of that sanctifying design which was committed to his hand 2Co 5:5; to see those souls, whom he once found as rough stones, now to shine as the bright polished stones of the spiritual temple. *Angels* will rejoice; great was the joy when the foundation of this design was laid, in the incarnation of Christ Lu 2:13; great, therefore, must their joy be when the top stone is set up with shouting, crying, Grace, grace. *The saints* themselves shall rejoice unspeakably, when they shall enter into the king's palace, and be for ever with the Lord. 1Th 4:17. Indeed, there will be joy on all hands, except among the devils and damned, who shall gnash their teeth with envy, at the everlasting advancement and glory of believers. *John Flavel.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 17. *(last clause):*

"When morning gilds the skies,

My heart awakening cries;

May Jesus Christ be praised."

"When sleep her balm denies,

My silent spirit sighs;

May Jesus Christ be praised."

"In heaven's eternal bliss,

The loveliest strain is this;

May Jesus Christ be praised."

"To God the Word on high.

The hosts of angels cry;

May Jesus Christ be praised."

"Let mortals too, upraise

Their voice in hymns of praise;

May Jesus Christ be praised."

"Let earth's wide circle round,

In joyful notes resound;

May Jesus Christ be praised."

"Let air, and sea, and sky,

From depths to height reply;

May Jesus Christ be praised."

"Be this while life is mine,

My canticles divine;

May Jesus Christ be praised."

"Be this the eternal song

Through all the ages on;

May Jesus Christ be praised."

—*Translated by Edward Caswall, in "Poems." 1861.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

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

1. That it is a *good matter*—*good* as speaking of the Son of God, who is the *chief good*.

2. *Good for us*; for upon the marriage of Christ to his church depends our good. *Bishop Nicholson.*

Verse 1. Character read by heart writing.

1. The true lover of Christ is sincere—*my heart?*

2. He is a man of emotion.

3. A man of holy meditation.

4. A man of experience—*things I have made.*

5. A man who bears witness for his Lord.

Verse 1. Three things requisite for Christian teaching:

1. That the matter be good; and concerning the best of all subjects, *touching the King.*

2. That the language be fluent like the pen, etc.—(a) Partly from nature, (b) Partly from cultivation, (c) Partly from the Spirit of God.

3. That the heart be absorbed in it—*My heart is inditing. G. R.*

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

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

Verse 2.

1. We may and ought to praise Christ. Angels do, God does, Scripture does, Old Testament saints and New, so should we. It is the work of heaven begun on earth.
2. For what should we praise him? (a) For his beauty. Is wisdom beauty? Is righteousness? Is love? Is meekness? All are found in him supremely—"All human beauties, all divine, In our Redeemer meet and shine." (b) For his grace. Grace of God treasured up in him.
3. For his blessedness—of God and for ever. *G.R.*

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

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

—*Matthew Henry.*

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

Verse 5.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 7. Christ's love and hate.

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

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

Verse 8.

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

creatures who unite to make him glad. *G.R.*

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

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

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

Verses 13-15.

1. The Bride's *new name*—"The king's daughter." She is the king's daughter for two reasons. (a) She is *born of God*; and (b) She is *espoused to the Son of God*.

2. The Bride's *character*—"All glorious within." (a) Because *Christ reigns on the throne of her heart*. (b) Because *she is the temple of the Holy Ghost*.

3. The Bride's *raiment*—"wrought gold, " "needlework:" this is the *righteousness of Christ*; in other words, His *perfect obedience*, and His *atoning death*.

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

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

Verse 17.

1. Christ is the Father's delight. "I will make, "etc.

2. He is the church's theme—his name shall be remembered; and

3. He is heaven's glory, "Shall praise thee, "etc. *G.R.*

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-FIFTH PSALM

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

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

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

A Treatise of Solomon's Marriage; or, a Congratulation for the happie and hopeful Marriage betweene the most illustrious and Noble Prince, Fredericke the V. Count Palatine of Rhine...and the most gracious and excellent Princisse, the Lady Elizabeth, sole daughter unto the high and mighty

Prince James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. Joyfully solemnized on the 14th day of February, 1612...(On Ps 45:10-16. By ANDREW WILLET.)

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

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

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