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First Psalm

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

DIVISION.--This Psalm consists of two parts: in the first (from verse 1-3) David sets out wherein the felicity and blessedness of a godly man consisteth, what his exercises are, and what blessings he shall receive from the Lord. In the second part (from verse 4-6) he contrasts the state and character of the ungodly, reveals the future, and describes, in telling language, his ultimate doom.

EXPOSITION.

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

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

He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor standeth in the way of sinners. Nor SITTETH in the SEAT of SCORNFUL.

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

And now mark his positive character. "His delight is in the law of the Lord." He is not under the law as a curse and condemnation, but he is in it, and he delights to be in it as his rule of life; he delights, moreover, to meditate in it, to read it by day, and think upon it by night. He takes a text and carries it with him all day long; and in the night-watches, when sleep forsakes his eyelids, he museth upon the Word of God. In the day of his prosperity he sings psalms out of the Word of God, and in the night of his affliction he comforts himself with promises out of the same book. "The law of the Lord" is the daily bread of the true believer. And yet, in David's day, how small was the volume of inspiration, for they

had scarcely anything save the first five books of Moses! How much more, then, should we prize the whole written Word which it is our privilege to have in all our houses! But, alas, what ill-treatment is given to this angel from heaven! We are not all Berean searchers of the Scriptures. How few among us can lay claim to the benediction of the text! Perhaps some of you can claim a sort of negative purity, because you do not walk in the way of the ungodly; but let me ask you-- Is your delight in the law of God? Do you study God's Word? Do you make it the man of your right hand--your best companion and hourly guide? If not, this blessing belongeth not to you.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The sinner has his particular way of transgressing; one is a drunkard, another dishonest, another unclean. Few are given to every species of vice. There are many covetous men who abhor drunkenness, many drunkards who abhor covetousness, and so of others. Each has his easily besetting sin; therefore, says the prophet, "Let the wicked forsake HIS WAY." Now, blessed is he who stands not in such a man's WAY. The scorner has brought, in reference to himself, all religion and moral feeling to an end. He has sat down--is utterly confirmed in impiety, and makes a mock at sin. His

conscience is seared, and he is a believer in all unbelief. Now, _blessed is the man who sits not down in his _SEAT_.--^Adam Clarke.

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

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

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

Verse 2.--"_His delight is in the law of the Lord_."--This _delight_ which the prophet here speaks of is the only delight that neither blushes nor looks pale; the only delight that gives a repast without an after

reckoning; the only delight that stands in construction with all tenses; and like Aeneas Anchyses, carries his parents upon his back.--^Sir Richard Baker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The naturalists observe that to uphold and accommodate bodily life, there are divers sorts of faculties communicated, and these among the rest: 1. An attractive faculty, to assume and draw in the food; 2. A retentive faculty, to retain it when taken in; 3. An assimilating faculty, to concoct the nourishment; 4. An augmenting faculty, for drawing to perfection. Meditation is all these. It helps judgment, wisdom, and faith to ponder, discern, and credit the things which reading and hearing supply and furnish. It assists the memory to lock up the jewels of divine truth in her sure treasury. It has a digesting power, and turns special truth into spiritual nourishment; and lastly, it helps the renewed heart to grow upward and increase its power to know the things which are freely given to us of God.--^Condensed from Nathaniel Ranew, 1670.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

The insinuating and progressive nature of sin.--[^]J. Morison.

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

Verse 2.--THE WORD OF GOD. 1. The believer's delight in it. 2. The believer's acquaintance with it. We long to be in the company of those we love.

Verse 2.--I. What is meant by "the law of the Lord." II. What there is in it for the believer to delight in. III. How he shows his delight, thinks of it, reads much, speaks of it, obeys it, does not delight in evil.

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

EXPOSITION.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

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

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

Verse 3.--" _In his season_." The Lord reckons the times which pass over us, and puts them to our account: let us, therefore, improve them, and, with the impotent persons at the pool of Bethesda, step in when the angel stirs the water. Now the church is afflicted, it is a season of prayer and learning; now the church is enlarged, it is a season of praise; I am now at a sermon, I will hear what God will say; now in the company of a learned and wise man, I will draw some knowledge and counsel from him; I am under a temptation, now is a fit time to lean on the name of the Lord; I am in a place of dignity and power, let me consider what it is that God requireth of me in such a time as this. And thus as the tree of life bringeth fruit every month, so a wise Christian, as a wise husbandman, hath his distinct employments for every month, bringing forth his fruit in his season.--John Spencer's Things New and Old, 1658.

Verse 3.--" _In his season_." Oh, golden and admirable word! by which is asserted the liberty of Christian righteousness. The ungodly have their stated days, stated times, certain works, and certain places; to which they stick so closely, that if their neighbours were perishing with hunger, they could not be torn from them. But this blessed man, being free at all times, in all places, for every work, and to every person, will serve you whenever an opportunity is offered him; whatsoever comes into his hands to do, he does it. He is neither a Jew, nor a Gentile, nor a Greek, nor a barbarian, nor of any other particular person. He gives his fruit in his season, so often as either God or man requires his work. Therefore his fruits have no name, and his times have no name.--^Martin Luther.

Verse 3.--" _His leaf also shall not wither_." He describes the fruit before he does the leaf. The Holy Spirit himself always teaches every faithful preacher in the church to know that the kingdom of God does not stand in word but in power. 1Co 4:20. Again, "Jesus began both to do and to teach." Ac 1:1. And again, "Which was a prophet mighty in deed and word." Lu 24:19. And thus, let him who professes the word of doctrine, first put forth the fruits of life, if he would not have his fruit to wither, for Christ cursed the fig tree which bore no fruit. And as Gregory saith, that man whose life is despised is condemned by his doctrine, for he preaches to others, and is himself reprobated.--^Martin Luther.

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

Verse 3.--" _And whatsoever he doeth, [or, maketh or taketh in hand] shall prosper_." And with regard to this "prospering," take heed that thou understandest not a carnal prosperity. This prosperity is hidden prosperity, and lies entirely secret in spirit; and therefore if thou hast not this prosperity that is by faith, thou shouldst rather judge thy prosperity to be the greatest adversity. For as the devil bitterly hates this leaf and the word of God, so does he also those who teach and hear it, and he persecutes such, aided by all the powers of the world. Therefore thou hearest of a miracle the greatest of all miracles, when thou hearest that all things prosper which a blessed man doeth.--^Martin Luther.

Verse 3.--A critical journal has shown that instead of " _Whatsoever it doeth shall prosper_," the rendering might be, " _Whatsoever it produceth shall come to maturity_." This makes the figure entire, and is sanctioned by some MSS. and ancient versions.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Verse 3.--" _Planted by the rivers of water_." I. The origination of Christian life, " _planted_." II. The streams which support it. III. The fruit expected from it.

Verse 3.--Influence of religion upon prosperity.--[^]Blair.

The nature, causes, signs, and results of true prosperity.

"_Fruit in his season_;" virtues to be exhibited at certain seasons--patience in affliction; gratitude in prosperity; zeal in opportunity, etc.

"_His leaf also shall not wither_;" the blessing of retaining an unwithered profession.

EXPOSITION.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

Verse 4.--"_Driveth away_," or tosseth away; the Chaldee translath for "wind," "whirlwind."--[^]Henry Ainsworth, 1639.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verses 3, 4.--See No. 280 of "Spurgeon's Sermons."--"The Chaff Driven Away."

Sin puts a negative on every blessing.

EXPOSITION.

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

Well may the saints long for heaven, for no evil men shall dwell there, "_nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous_." All our congregations upon earth are mixed. Every Church has one devil in it. The tares grow in the same furrows as the wheat. There is no floor which is as yet thoroughly purged from chaff. Sinners mix with saints, as dross mingles with gold. God's precious diamonds still lie in the same field with pebbles. Righteous Lots are this side heaven continually vexed by the men of Sodom. Let us rejoice then, that in "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" above, there shall by no means be admitted a single unrenewed soul. Sinners cannot live in heaven. They would be out of their element. Sooner could a fish live upon a tree than the wicked in Paradise. Heaven would be an intolerable hell to an impenitent man, even if he could be allowed to enter; but such a privilege shall never be granted to the

man who perseveres in his iniquities. May God grant that we may have a name and a place in his courts above!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

Verse 5.--The Irish air will sooner brook a toad, or a snake, than heaven a sinner.--[^]John Trapp.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 5.--The sinner's double doom. 1. Condemned at the judgment-bar. 2. Separated from the saints. Reasonableness of these penalties, "therefore," and the way to escape them.

"The congregation of the righteous" viewed as the church of the first-born above. This may furnish a noble topic.

EXPOSITION.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6 (first sentence).--A sweet encouragement to the tried people of God. The knowledge here meant.

1. Its character.--It is a knowledge of observation and approbation. 2. Its source.--It is caused by omniscience and infinite love. 3. Its results.--Support, deliverance, acceptance, and glory at last.

Verse 6 (last clause).--His way of pleasure, of pride, of unbelief, of profanity, of persecution, of procrastinating, of self-deception, etc.; all these shall come to an end.

Second Psalm

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

DIVISION.--This Psalm will be best understood if it be viewed as a four-fold picture. (In verses 1,2,3) the Nations are raging; (4-6) the Lord in heaven derides them; (7-9) the Son proclaims the decree; and (from 10-12) advice is given to the kings to yield obedience to the Lord's anointed. This division is not only suggested by the sense, but is warranted by the poetic form of the Psalm, which naturally falls into four stanzas of three verses each.

EXPOSITION.

We have, in these first three verses, a description of the hatred of human nature against the Christ of God. No better comment is needed upon it than the apostolic song in Ac 4:27,28: "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." The Psalm begins abruptly with an angry interrogation; and well it may: it is surely but little to be wondered at, that the sight of creatures in arms against their God should amaze the psalmist's mind. We see the heathen raging, roaring like the sea, tossed to and fro with restless waves, as the ocean in a storm; and then we mark the people in their hearts imagining a vain thing against God. Where there is much rage there is generally some folly, and in this case there is an excess of it. Note, that the commotion is not caused by the people only, but their leaders foment the rebellion. "The kings of the earth set themselves." In determined malice they arrayed themselves in opposition against God. It was not temporary rage, but deep-seated hate, for they set themselves resolutely to withstand the Prince of Peace. "And the rulers take counsel together." They go about their warfare craftily, not with foolish haste, but deliberately. They use all the skill which art can give. Like Pharaoh, they cry, "Let us deal wisely with them." O that men were half as careful in God's service to serve him wisely, as his enemies are to attack his kingdom craftily. Sinners have their wits about them, and yet saints are dull. But what say they? what is the meaning of this commotion? "Let us break their bands asunder." "Let us be free to commit all manner of abominations. Let us be our own gods. Let us rid ourselves of all restraint." Gathering impudence by the traitorous proposition of rebellion, they add--"let us cast away;" as if it were an easy matter,--"let us fling off 'their cords from us.'" What! O ye kings, do ye think yourselves Samsons? and are the bands of Omnipotence but as green withs before you? Do you dream that you shall snap to pieces and destroy the mandates of God--the decrees of the Most High--as if they were but tow? And do ye say, "Let us cast away their cords from us?" Yes! There are monarchs who have spoken thus, and

there are still rebels upon thrones. However mad the resolution to revolt from God, it is one in which man has persevered ever since his creation, and he continues in it to this very day. The glorious reign of Jesus in the latter day will not be consummated, until a terrible struggle has convulsed the nations. His coming will be as a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap, and the day thereof shall burn as an oven. Earth loves not her rightful monarch, but clings to the usurper's sway: the terrible conflicts of the last days will illustrate both the world's love of sin and Jehovah's power to give the kingdom to his only Begotten. To a graceless neck the yoke of Christ is intolerable, but to the saved sinner it is easy and light. We may judge ourselves by this, do we love that yoke, or do we wish to cast it from us?

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 1.--"Rage." The word with which Paul renders this in the Greek denotes rage, pride, and restiveness, as of horses that neigh, and rush into the battle. "ephruaxan," from "phruass" <5433>, to snort or neigh, properly applied to a high-mettled horse. See Ac 4:25.

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

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

Verse 2.--The many had done their part, and now the mighty show themselves. --[^]John Trapp.

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

Verse 2.--"Against Jehovah and against his Anointed." What an honour it was to David to be thus

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Verse 1.--_Nothing is more irrational than irreligion_. A weighty theme.

The reasons why sinners rebel against God, stated, refuted, lamented, and repented of.

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

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

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

Verse 2.--"Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 495, "The Greatest Trial on Record."

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

EXPOSITION.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

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

Verse 4.--"_He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh_" They scoff at us, God laughs at them. Laugh? This seems a hard word at the first view: are the injuries of his saints, the cruelties of their enemies, the derision, the persecution of all that are round about us, no more but matter of laughter? Severe Cato thought that laughter did not become the gravity of Roman consuls; that it is a diminution of states, as another told princes; and is it attributed to the Majesty of heaven? According to our capacities, the prophet

describes God, as ourselves would be in a merry disposition, deriding vain attempts. He laughs, but it is in scorn; he scorns, but it is with vengeance. Pharaoh imagined that by drowning the Israelite males, he had found a way to root their name from the earth; but when at the same time, his own daughter, in his own court, gave princely education to Moses, their deliverer, did not God laugh?

Short is the joy of the wicked. Is Dagon put up to his place again? God's smile shall take off his head and his hands, and leave him neither wit to guide nor power to subsist ... We may not judge of God's works until the fifth act: the case, deplorable and desperate in outward appearance, may with one smile from heaven find a blessed issue. He permitted his temple to be sacked and rifled, the holy vessels to be profaned and caroused in; but did not God's smile make Belshazzar to tremble at the handwriting on the wall? Oh, what are his frowns, if his smiles be so terrible!--^Thomas Adams.

Verse 4.--The expression, "_He that sitteth in the heavens_", at once fixes our thoughts on a being infinitely exalted above man, who is of the earth, earthly. And when it is said, "_HE shall laugh_", this word is designed to convey to our minds the idea, that the greatest confederacies amongst kings and peoples, and their most extensive and vigorous preparations, to defeat HIS purposes or to injure HIS servants, are in HIS sight altogether insignificant and worthless. HE looks upon their poor and puny efforts, not only without uneasiness or fear, but HE laughs at their folly; HE treats their impotency with derision. He knows how HE can crush them like a moth when HE pleases, or consume them in a moment with the breath of HIS mouth. How profitable it is for us to be reminded of truths such as these! Ah! it is indeed "_a vain thing_" for the potsherd of the earth to strive with the glorious Majesty of Heaven.--^David Pitcairn.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

EXPOSITION.

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

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

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

Verse 6.--"_Yet have I set my KING_," etc.--Jesus Christ is a threefold King. _First_, his enemies' King; _secondly_, his saints' King; _thirdly_, his Father's King.

First. Christ is his enemies' King, that is, he is King over his enemies. Christ is a King above all kings. What are all the mighty men, the great, the honourable men of the earth to Jesus Christ? They are but like a little bubble in the water; for if all the nations, in comparison to God, be but as the drop of the bucket, or the dust of the balance, as the prophet speaks in Isa 40:15, how little then must be the kings of the earth! Nay, beloved, Christ Jesus is not only higher than kings, but he is higher than the angels; yea, he is the head of angels; and, therefore, all the angels in heaven are commanded to worship him. Col 2:12; Heb 1:6 ... He is King over all kingdoms, over all nations, over all governments, over all powers, over all people Da 7:14 ... The very heathen are given to Christ, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Ps 2:8.

Secondly. Jesus Christ is his saints' King. He is King of the bad, and of the good; but as for the wicked, he rules over them by his power and might; but the saints, he rules in them by his Spirit and graces. Oh! this is Christ's spiritual kingdom, and here he rules in the hearts of his people, here he rules over their consciences, over their wills, over their affections, over their judgments and understandings, and nobody hath anything to do here but Christ. Christ is not only the King of nations, but the King of saints; the one he rules over, the other he rules in.

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

Verse 6.--"_Zion_." The _name_ "Zion" signifies a "distant view" (_speculam_)] And the church is called "a distant view" (_specula_), not only because it views God and heavenly things by faith (that is, afar off), being wise unto the things that are above, not unto those that are on the earth: but also, because there are within her true viewers, or seers, and watchmen in the spirit, whose office it is to take charge of the people under them, and to watch against the snares of enemies and sins; and such are called in the Greek bishops (episk"p"i) <1985> that is, spyers or seers; and you may for the same reason give them, from the Hebrew, the appellation of Zionians of Zioners.--^Martin Luther.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 5.--_The voice of wrath_. One of a series of sermons upon the voices of the divine attributes.

Verse 6.--_Christ's sovereignty_. 1. The opposition to it: "_yet_." 2. The certainty of its existence: "_Yet have I set_." 3. The power which maintains it: "_have I set_." 4. The place of its manifestation: "_my holy hill of Zion_." 5. The blessings flowing from it.

EXPOSITION.

This Psalm wears something of a dramatic form, for now another person is introduced as speaking. We have looked into the counsel-chamber of the wicked, and to the throne of God, and now we behold the Anointed declaring his rights of sovereignty, and warning the traitors of their doom.

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Verse 7.--The dispute concerning the eternal filiation of our Lord betrays more of presumptuous curiosity

than of reverent faith. It is an attempt to explain where it is far better to adore. We could give rival Expositions of this verse, but we forbear. The controversy is one of the most unprofitable which ever engaged the pens of theologians.--^C. H. S.

Verse 8.--"Ask of me_" The priesthood doth not appear to be settled upon Christ by any other expression than this, "_Ask of me_" The Psalm speaks of his investiture in his kingly office; the apostle refers this to his priesthood, his commission, for both took date at the same time; both bestowed, both confirmed by the same authority. The office of asking is grounded upon the same authority as the honour of king. Ruling belonged to his royal office, asking to his priestly. After his resurrection, the Father gives him a power and command of asking.-- ^Stephen Charnock.

Verse 8.--As the limner looks on the person whose picture he would take, and draws his lines to answer him with the nearest similitude that he can, so God looks on Christ as the archetype to which he will conform the saint, in suffering, in grace, in glory; yet so that Christ hath the pre-eminence in all. Every saint must suffer, because Christ suffered: Christ must not have a delicate body under a crucified head; yet never any suffered, or could, what he endured. Christ is holy, and therefore so shall every saint be, but in an inferior degree; an image cut in clay cannot be so exact as that engraved on gold. Now, our conformity to Christ appears, that as the promises made to him were performed upon his prayers to his Father, his promises made to his saints are given to them in the same way of prayer: "_Ask of me_" saith God to his Son, "_and I shall give thee_" And the apostle tells us, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." God hath promised support to Christ in all his conflicts. Isa 42:1. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; " yet he prayed "with strong cries and tears," when his feet stood within the shadow of death. A seed is promised to him, and victory over his enemies, yet for both these he prays. Christ towards us acts as a king, but towards his Father as a priest. All he speaks to God is by prayer and intercession. So the saints, the promise makes them kings over their lusts, conquerors over their enemies; but it makes them priests towards God, by prayer humbly to sue out those great things given in the promise.--^William Gurnall, 1617--1679.

Verse 8.--It will be observed in our Bible that two words of verse eight are in italics, intimating that they are not translations of the Hebrew, but additions made for the purpose of elucidating the meaning. Now if the "_thee_" and the "_for_" are left out, the verse will read thus, "Ask of me, and I shall give the heathen, thine inheritance, and thy possession, the uttermost parts of the earth." And this reading is decidedly preferable to the other. It implies that by some previous arrangement on the part of God, he had already assigned an inheritance of the heathen, and the possession of the earth, to the person of whom he says, "Thou art my Son." And when God says, "I will give," etc., he reveals to his Anointed, not so much in what the inheritance consisted, and what was the extent of possession destined for him, as the promise of his readiness to bestow it. The heathen were already "the inheritance," and the ends of the earth "the possession," which God had _purposed_ to give to his Anointed. Now he says to him, "Ask of me," and he _promises_ to fulfil his purpose. This is the idea involved in the words of the text, and the importance of it will become more apparent, when we consider its application to the _spiritual_ David, to the true Son of God, "whom he hath appointed the heir of all things."

Verse 9.--The "_rod_" has a variety of meanings in Scripture. It might be of different materials, as it was employed for different purposes. At an early period, a wooden rod came into use as one of the insignia of royalty, under the name of sceptre. By degrees the sceptre grew in importance, and was regarded as characteristic of an empire, or of the reign of some particular king. A golden sceptre denoted wealth and pomp. The right, or straight sceptre of which we read in Ps 45:6, is expressive of the justice and uprightness, the truth and equity, which shall distinguish Messiah's reign, after his kingdom on earth has been established. But when it is said in Re 14:15, that he, "whose name is called the Word of God," will smite the nations, and "rule them with a rod of iron," if the rod signifies "his sceptre," then the "iron" of which it is made must be designed to express the severity of the judgments which this omnipotent "King of kings" will inflict on all who resist his authority. But to me it appears doubtful whether the "rod of iron" symbolizes the royal sceptre of the Son of God at his second advent. It is mentioned in connection with "a sharp sword," which leads me to prefer the opinion that it also ought to be regarded as a weapon of war; at all events, the "rod of iron" mentioned in the Psalm we are endeavouring to explain, is evidently not the emblem of sovereign power, although represented as in the hands of a king, but an instrument of correction and punishment. In this sense the word "rod" is often used ... When the correcting rod, which

usually was a wand or cane, is represented, as in the second Psalm, to be of "iron" it only indicates how weighty, how severe, how effectual the threatened chastisement will be--it will not merely bruise, but it will break. "_Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron_."

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Verse 8.--Christ's inheritance.--^William Jay.

Prayer indispensable.--_Jesus must ask_.

Verse 9.--_The ruin of the wicked_. Certain, irresistible, terrible, complete, irretrievable, "like a potter's vessel."

The destruction of systems of error and oppression to be expected. The gospel an iron rod quite able to break mere pots of man's making.

EXPOSITION.

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

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

The first Psalm is a contrast between the righteous man and the sinner; the second Psalm is a contrast between the tumultuous disobedience of the ungodly world and the sure exaltation of the righteous Son of God. In the first Psalm, we saw the wicked driven away like chaff; in the second Psalm, we see them

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

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

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

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

Verse 12.--"Kiss," a sign of love among equals: Ge 33:4; 1Sa 20:41; Ro 16:16; 1Co 16:20. Of subjection in inferiors: 1Sa 10:1. Of religious adoration in worshippers: 1Ki 19:18; Job 31:27.--^{John Richardson, Bishop of Ardagh, 1655.}

Verse 12.--"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry," From the Person, the Son, we shall pass to the act (Osculamini, kiss the Son); in which we shall see, that since this is an act which licentious men have depraved (carnal men do it, and treacherous men do it--Judas betrayed his Master by a kiss), and yet God commands this, and expresses love in this; everything that hath, or may be abused, must not therefore be abandoned; the turning of a thing out of the way, is not a taking of that thing away, but good things deflected to ill uses by some, may be by others reduced to their first goodness. Then let us consider and magnify the goodness of God, that hath brought us into this distance, that we may kiss the Son, that the expressing of this love lies in our hands, and that, whereas the love of the church, in the Old Testament, even in the Canticle, went no farther but to the Osculatur me (O that he would kiss me

with the kisses of his mouth_! So 1:2), now, in the Christian church, and in the visitation of a Christian soul, he hath invited us, enabled us to kiss him, for he is presentially amongst us. This leads us to give an earnest persuasion and exhortation _to kiss the Son_, with all those affections, which we shall there find to be expressed in the Scriptures, in that testimony of true love, a holy kiss. But then lest that persuasion by love should not be effectual and powerful enough to us, we shall descend from that duty, to the danger, from love, to fear, "_lest he be angry_;" and therein see first, that God, who is love, can be angry; and then, that this God who is angry here, is the Son of God, he that hath done so much for us, and therefore in justice may be angry; he that is our Judge, and therefore in reason we are to fear his anger: and then, in a third branch, we shall see how easily this anger departs--a kiss removes it.

Verse 12.--"_Kiss the Son_." That is, embrace him, depend upon him all these ways: as thy kinsman, as thy sovereign; at thy going, at thy coming; at thy reconciliation, in the truth of religion in thyself, in a peaceable unity with the church, in a reverent estimation of those men, and those means whom he sends. Kiss him, and be not ashamed of kissing him; it is that which the spouse desired, "_I would kiss thee, and not be despised_" So 8:1. If thou be despised for loving Christ in his gospel, remember that when David was thought base, for dancing before the ark, his way was to be more base. If thou be thought frivolous for thrusting in at service, in the forenoon, be more frivolous, and come again in the afternoon: "_Tanto major requies, quanto ab amore Jesu nulla requies;" [Gregory] "The more thou troublest thyself, or art troubled by others for Christ, the more peace thou hast in Christ." ... "_Lest he be angry_" Anger, as it is a passion that troubles, and disorders, and discomposes a man, so it is not in God; but anger, as it is a sensible discerning of foes from friends, and of things that conduce, or disconduce to his glory, so it is in God. In a word, Hilary hath expressed it well: "_Paena patientis, ira discernentis_;" "Man's suffering is God's anger." When God inflicts such punishments as a king justly incensed would do, then God is thus angry. Now here, our case is heavier; it is not this great, and almighty, and majestic God, that may be angry--that is like enough; but even the _Son_, whom we must _kiss_, may be _angry_; it is not a person whom we consider merely as God, but as man; nay, not as man neither, but _a worm, and no man_, and he may be angry, and angry to our ruin ... "_Kiss the Son_," and he will not _be angry_; if he be, kiss the rod, and he will be angry no longer--love him lest he be; fear him when he is angry: the preservative is easy, and so is the restorative too: the balsamum of this kiss is all, to suck spiritual milk out of the left breast, as well as out of the right, to find mercy in his judgments, reparation in his ruins, feasts in his lents, joy in his anger.--^From Sermons of John Donne, D.D., Dean of St. Paul's, 1621--1631.

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

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

Verse 12.--"_His wrath_." Unspeakable must the wrath of God be when it is kindled fully, since perdition may come upon the _kindling of it but a little_.--^John] Newton.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 10.--True Wisdom, fit for kings and judges, lies in obeying Christ.

The gospel, a school for those who would learn how to rule and judge well. They may consider its principles, its exemplar, its spirit, etc.

Verse 11.--_Mingled experience_. See the case of the women returning from the sepulchre. Mt 28:8. This may be rendered a very comforting subject, if the Holy Spirit direct the mind of the preacher.

True religion, a compound of many virtues and emotions.

Verse 12.--_An earnest invitation_. 1. _The command_. 2. _The argument_. 3. _The benediction_ upon the obedient.--"Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 260.

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

Third Psalm

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

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

EXPOSITION.

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

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

Let us here recall to our memory the innumerable hosts which beset our Divine Redeemer. The legions of our sins, the armies of fiends, the crowd of bodily pains, the host of spiritual sorrows, and all the allies of death and hell, set themselves in battle against the Son of Man. O how precious to know and believe that he has routed their hosts, and trodden them down in his anger! They who would have troubled us he has removed into captivity, and those who would have risen up against us he has laid low. The dragon lost his sting when he dashed it into the soul of Jesus.

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

curse of the curse. This was the wormwood mingled with the gall. To be deserted of his Father was worse than to be the despised of men. Surely we should love him who suffered this bitterest of temptations and trials for our sake. It will be a delightful and instructive exercise for the loving heart to mark the Lord in his agonies as here portrayed, for there is here, and in very many other Psalms, far more of David's Lord than of David himself.

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

"O may my heart in tune be found Like David's harp of solemn sound."

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

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

Whole Psalm.--Thus you may plainly see how God hath wrought in his church in old time, and therefore should not discourage yourselves for any sudden change; but with David, acknowledge your sins to God, declare unto him how many there be that vex you and rise up against you, naming you Huguenots, Lutherans, Heretics, Puritans, and the children of Belial, as they named David. Let the wicked idolators brag that they will prevail against you and overcome you, and that God hath given you over, and will be no more your God. Let them put their trust in Absalom, with his large golden locks; and in the wisdom of Ahithophel, the wise counsellor; yet say you, with David, "_Thou, O Lord, art my defender, and the lifter up of my head_" Persuade yourselves, with David, that the Lord is your defender, who hath compassed you round about, and is, as it were, a "_shield_" that doth cover you on every side. It is he only that may and will compass you about with glory and honour. It is he that will thrust down those proud hypocrites from their seat, and exalt the lowly and meek. It is he which will "_smite_" your "enemies on _the cheek

bone_," and burst all their teeth in sunder. He will hang up Absalom by his own long hairs; and Ahithophel through desperation shall hang himself. The bands shall be broken and you delivered; for this belongeth unto the Lord, to save his from their enemies, and to bless his people, that they may safely proceed in their pilgrimage to heaven without fear.--^Thomas Tymme's "Silver Watch Bell," 1634.

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

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

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

Verses 2,4,8.--"_Selah_" (*celfh* <05542>). Much has been written on this word, and still its meaning does not appear to be wholly determined. It is rendered in the Targum or Chaldee paraphrase, *_lealmin_*, for ever, or to eternity. In the Latin Vulgate, it is omitted, as if it were no part of the text. In the Septuagint it is rendered *_Diapsalma_*, supposed to refer to some variation or modulation of the voice in singing. Schleusner, *_Lex_*. The word occurs seventy-three times in the Psalms, and three times in the book of Habakkuk (Hab 3:3,9,13). It is never translated in our version, but in all these places the original word *_Selah_* is retained. It occurs only in poetry, and is supposed to have had some reference to the singing or cantillation of poetry, and to be probably a musical term. In general, also, it indicates a pause in the sense, as well as in the musical performance. Gesenius (*_Lex_*.) supposes that the most probable meaning of this musical term or note is *_silence_* or *_pause_*, and that its use was, in chanting the words of the Psalm, to direct the singer *_to be silent, to pause a little_*, while the instruments played an interlude or harmony. Perhaps this is all that can now be known of the meaning of the word, and this is enough to satisfy every reasonable enquiry. It is probable, if this was the use of the term, that it would commonly correspond with the sense of the passage, and be inserted where the sense made a pause suitable; and this will doubtless be found usually to be the fact. But any one acquainted at all with the character of musical notation will perceive at once that we are not to suppose that this would be invariably or necessarily the fact, for the musical pauses by no means always correspond with pauses in the sense. This word, therefore, can furnish very little assistance in determining the meaning of the passages where it is found. Ewald supposes, differing from this view, that it rather indicates that in the places where it occurs the voice is to be raised, and that it is synonymous with *_up, higher, loud_*, or *_distinct_*, from *_sal_*, (*_cal_* <05536>), *_salal_*, (*_cflal_* <05549>), *_to ascend_*. Those who are disposed to enquire further respecting its meaning, and the uses of musical pauses in general, may be referred to Ugolin, *"_Thesau. Antiq. Sacr_,"* tom. xxii.--^Albert Barnes, 1868.

Verses 2,4,8.--"*Selah_*, (*_celfh_*, <05542>), is found seventy-three times in the Psalms, generally at the end of a sentence or paragraph; but in Ps 55:19; 57:3, it stands in the middle of the verse. While most authors have agreed in considering this word as somehow relating to the music, their conjectures about its precise meaning have varied greatly. But at present these two opinions chiefly obtain. Some, including Herder, De Wette, Ewald (*_Poet Bucher_*, i. 179), and Delitzsch, derive it from *_celfh_* <05542>, or *_cflal_* <05549>, *_to raise_* and understand an *_elevation_* of the voice or music; others, after Gesenius, in *_Thesaurus_*, derive it from *_celfh_* <05542>, *_to be still or silent, and understand a pause*

in the singing. So Rosenmuller, Hengstenberg, and Tholuck. Probably *selah* was used to direct the singer to be silent, or to pause a little, while the instruments played an interlude (so Sept., *diapsalma*) or symphony. In Ps 9:16, it occurs in the expression *higgaion selah*, which Gesenius, with much probability, renders *instrumental, pause*; i.e., let the instruments strike up a symphony, and let the singer pause. By Tholuck and Hengstenberg, however, the two words are rendered *meditation, pause*; i.e., let the singer meditate while the music stops.--[^]Benjamin Davis, Ph.D., LL.D., article Psalms, in Kitto's Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature.

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

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

Verse 2.--"*There is no help for him in his God.*" In the Hebrew the expression is simply, "in God," without the pronoun "*his*," which seems to me to give clearness and force to the expression. As if he had said, They say of me that I am not only deserted and oppressed by all creatures, but that even God, who is present with all things, and preserves all things, and protects all things, forsakes me as the only thing out of the whole universe that he does not preserve. Which kind of temptation Job seems also to have tasted where he says, "Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee?" Job 7:20. For there is no temptation, no, not of the whole world together, nor of all hell combined in one, equal unto that wherein God stands contrary to a man, which temptation Jeremiah prays against (Jer 17:17), "Be not a terror unto me; thou art my hope in the day of evil;" and concerning which also the sixth Psalm following saith, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger;" and we find the same petitions throughout the psalter. This temptation is wholly unsupportable, and is truly hell itself; as it is said in the same sixth Psalm, "for in

death there is no remembrance of thee," etc. In a word, if you have never experienced it, you can never form any idea of it whatever.--^Martin Luther.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--" _The saint telling his griefs to his God_ . (1) His right to do so. (2) The proper manner of telling them. (3) The fair results of such holy communications with the Lord.

When may we expect increased troubles? Why are they sent? What is our wisdom in reference to them?

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

Exposition.

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 3.--" _For thou, O Lord, art my helper, my glory, and the lifter up of my head_ ." David here contrasts three things with three; helper, with many troubling; glory, with many rising up; and the lifter up of the head, with the blaspheming and insulting. Therefore, the person here represented is indeed alone in the estimation of man, and even according to his own feelings also; but in the sight of God, and in a spiritual

view, he is by no means alone; but protected with the greatest abundance of help; as Christ saith (Joh 16:32), "Behold, the hour cometh when ye shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." ... The words contained in this verse are not the words of nature, but of grace; not of free-will, but of the spirit of strong faith; which, even though seeing God, as in the darkness of the storm of death and hell, a deserting God, acknowledges him a sustaining God; when seeing him as a persecuting God, acknowledges him a helping God; when seeing him as a condemner, acknowledges him a Saviour. Thus this faith does not judge of things according as they seem to be, or are felt, like a horse or mule which have no understanding; but it understands things which are not seen, for "hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" Ro 8:24.--^Martin Luther.

Verse 4.--"I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill." In the Hebrew, the verb is in the future, and is, as Hieronymus translates it, "I will cry," and, "he shall hear;" and this pleases me better than the perfect tense; for they are the words of one triumphing in, and praising and glorifying God, and giving thanks unto him who sustained, preserved, and lifted him up, according as he had hoped in the preceding verse. For it is usual with those that triumph and rejoice, to speak of those things which they have done and suffered, and to sing a song of praise unto their helper and deliverer; as in Ps 66:16, "Come, then, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue." And also Ps 81:1, "sing aloud unto God our strength." And so again, Ex 15:1, "Let us sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously." And so here, being filled with an overflowing sense of gratitude and joy, he sings of his being dead, of his having slept and rose up again, of his enemies being smitten, and of the teeth of the ungodly being broken. This it is which causes the change; for he who hitherto had been addressing God in the second person, changes on a sudden his address to others concerning God, in the third person, saying, "and he heard me," not "and thou heardest me;" and also, "I cried unto the Lord," not "I cried unto thee," for he wants to make all know what benefits God has heaped upon him; which is peculiar to a grateful mind.--^Martin Luther.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 5.--Gurnall, who wrote when there were houses on old London Bridge, has quaintly said, "Do you not think that they sleep as soundly who dwell on London Bridge as they who live at Whitehall or Cheapside? for they know that the waves which rush under them cannot hurt them. Even so may the saints rest quietly over the floods or trouble or death, and fear no ill."

Verse 5.--Xerxes, the Persian, when he destroyed all the temples in Greece, caused the temple of Diana to be preserved for its beautiful structure: that soul which hath the beauty or holiness shining in it, shall be preserved for the glory of the structure; God will not suffer his own temple to be destroyed. Would you be secured in evil times? Get grace and fortify this garrison; a good conscience is a Christian's fort-royal. David's enemies lay round about him; yet saith he, " _I laid me down and slept_." A good conscience can sleep in the mouth of a cannon, grace is a Christian's coat of mail, which fears not the arrow or bullet. True grace may be shot at, but can never be shot through; grace puts the soul into Christ, and there it is safe, as the bee in the hive, as the dove in the ark. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Ro 8:1.--^Thomas Watson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 5.--(1) Describe sweet sleeping. (2) Describe happy waking. (3) Show how both are to be enjoyed, "I for the Lord sustained me_"

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

Exposition.

His only hope is in his God, but that is so strong a confidence, that he feels the Lord hath but to _arise_ and he is saved. It is enough for the Lord to stand up, and all is well. He compares his enemies to wild beasts, and he declares that God hath broken their jaws, so that they could not injure him; "_Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly_" Or else he alludes to the peculiar temptations to which he was then

exposed. They had spoken against him; God, therefore, has smitten them upon the cheek bone. They seemed as if they would devour him with their mouths; God hath broken their teeth, and let them say what they will, their toothless jaws shall not be able to devour him. Rejoice, O believer, thou hast to do with a dragon whose head is broken, and with enemies whose teeth are dashed from their jaws!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

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

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

this greatest of all blessings be upon thee, rise up and Sing-

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 8.--" _Salvation belongeth unto the Lord:_ " parallel passage in Jon 2:9, " _Salvation is of the Lord_." The mariners might have written upon their ship, instead of Castor and Pollux, or the like device, " _Salvation is the Lord's_"; the Ninevites might have written upon their gates, " _Salvation is the Lord's_"; and whole mankind, whose cause is pitted and pleaded by God against the hardness of Jonah's heart, in the last, might have written on the palms of their hands, " _Salvation is the Lord's_". It is the argument of both the Testaments, the staff and supportation of heaven and earth. They would both sink, and all their joints be severed, if the salvation of the Lord were not. The birds in the air sing no other notes, the beasts in the field give no other voice, than " _Salus Jehovae_," Salvation is the Lord's. The walls and fortresses to our country's gates, to our cities and towns, bars to our houses, a surer cover to our heads than a helmet of steel, a better receipt to our bodies than the confection of apothecaries, a better receipt to our souls than the pardons of Rome, is " _Salus Jehovae_," the salvation of the Lord. " _The Salvation of the Lord_ " blesseth, preserveth, upholdeth all that we have; our basket and our store, the oil in our cruses, our presses, the sheep in our fold, our stalls, the children in the womb, at our tables, the corn in our field, our stores, our garner; it is not the virtue of the stars, nor nature of all things themselves, that giveth being and continuance to any of these blessings. And, "What shall I more say?" as the apostle asked (Heb 11), when he had spoken much, and there was much more behind, but time failed him. Rather, what should I not say? for the world is my theatre at this time, and I neither think nor can feign to myself anything that hath not dependence upon this acclamation, " _Salvation is the Lord's_". Plutarch writeth, that the Amphictions in Greece, a famous council assembled of twelve sundry people, wrote upon the temple of Apollo Pythius, instead of the Iliads of Homer, or songs of Pindarus (large and tiring discourses), short sentences and memoratives, as, " _Know thyself, Use moderation, Beware of suretyship_," and the like; and doubtless though every creature in the world, whereof we have use, be a treatise and narration unto us of the goodness of God, and we might weary our flesh, and spend our days in writing books of that inexplicable subject, yet this short apothegm of Jonah comprehendeth all the rest, and standeth at the end of the song, as the altars and stones that the patriarch set up at the parting of the ways, to give knowledge to the after-world by what means he was delivered. I would it were daily preached in our temples, sung in our streets, written upon our door-posts, painted upon our walls, or rather cut with an adamant claw upon the tables of our hearts, that we might never forget salvation to be the Lord's. We have need of such remembrances to keep us in practice of revolving the mercies of God. For nothing decayeth sooner than love: " _nihil facilius quam amor putrescit_". And of all the powers of the soul, memory is most delicate, tender, and brittle, and first waxeth old, " _memoria delicata, tenera, fragilis, in quam primum senectus incurrit_"; and of all the apprehensions of memory, first benefit " _primum senescit beneficium_". --^John King's Commentary on Jonah, 1594.

Verse 8.--" _Thy blessing is upon thy people_." The saints are not only blessed when they are comprehensors, but while they are viators. They are blessed before they are crowned. This seems a paradox to flesh and blood: what, reproached and maligned, yet blessed! A man that looks upon the children of God with a carnal eye, and sees how they are afflicted, and like the ship in the gospel, which was covered with waves (Mt 8:24), would think they were far from blessedness. Paul brings a catalogue of his sufferings (2Co 11:24-26), "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck," etc. And those Christians of the first magnitude, of whom the world was not worthy, "Had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword." Heb 11:36,37. What! and were all these during the time of their sufferings blessed? A carnal man would think, if this be to be blessed, God deliver him from it. But, however sense would give their vote, our Saviour Christ pronounceth the godly man blessed; though a mourner, though a martyr, yet blessed. Job on the dunghill was blessed Job. The saints are blessed when they are cursed. Shimei did curse David (2Sa 16:5), "He came forth and cursed him;" yet when he was cursed David he was blessed David. The saints though they are bruised, yet they are blessed. Not only they shall be blessed, but they are so. Ps 119:1. "Blessed are the undefiled." Ps 3.8. " _Thy blessing is upon thy people_." --^Thomas Watson.

[As a curious instance of Luther's dogmatical interpretations, we give very considerable extracts from his

rendering of this Psalm without in any degree endorsing them. C.H.S.]

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 8 (first clause).--Salvation of God from first to last. (See the Exposition).

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

Fourth Psalm

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

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

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

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

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

DIVISION.--In the first verse David pleads with God for help. In 2 he expostulates with his enemies, and continues to address them to the end of verse 5. Then from verse 6-8 he delightfully contrasts his own satisfaction and safety with the disquietude of the ungodly in their best estate. The Psalm was most probably written upon the same occasion as the preceding, and is another choice flower from the garden of affliction. Happy is it for us that David was tried, or probably we should never have heard these sweet sonnets of faith.

EXPOSITION.

This is another instance of David's common habit of pleading past mercies as a ground for present favour. Here he reviews his Ebenezers and takes comfort from them. It is not to be imagined that he who has helped us in six troubles will leave us in the seventh. God does nothing by halves, and he will never cease to help us until we cease to need. The manna shall fall every morning until we cross the Jordan.

Observe, that David speaks first to God and then to men. Surely we should all speak the more boldly to men if we had more constant converse with God. He who dares to face his Maker will not tremble before the sons of men.

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

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

comforter.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 1.--"_Hear me_." The great Author of nature and of all things does nothing in vain. He instituted not this law, and, if I may so express it, art of praying, as a vain and insufficient thing, but endows it with wonderful efficacy for producing the greatest and happiest consequences. He would have it to be the key by which all the treasures of heaven should be opened. He has constructed it as a powerful machine, by which we may, with easy and pleasant labour, remove from us the most dire and unhappy machinations of our enemy, and may with equal ease draw to ourselves what is most propitious and advantageous. Heaven and earth, and all the elements, obey and minister to the hands which are often lifted up to heaven in earnest prayer. Yea, all works, and, which is yet more and greater, all the words of God obey it. Well known in the sacred Scriptures are the examples of Moses and Joshua, and that which James (Jas 5:17) particularly mentions of Elijah, whom he expressly calls _h"m"i"path's_ <3663>, _a man subject to like infirmities_ with ourselves, that he might illustrate the admirable force of prayer, by the common and human weakness of the person by whom it was offered. And that Christian legion under Antoninus is well known and justly celebrated, which, for the singular ardour and efficacy of its prayers, obtained the name of _k^raun"b"l"s_, _the thundering legion_.--^Robert Leighton, D.D., Archbishop of Glasgow, 1611--1684.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--Is full of matter for a sermon upon, _past mercies a plea for present help_. The first sentence shows that believers desire, expect, and believe in a God that heareth prayer. The title--_God of my righteousness_, may furnish a text (see Exposition), and the last sentence may suggest a sermon upon, "The best of saints must still appeal to God's mercy and sovereign grace."

Exposition.

In this second division of the Psalm, we are led from the closet of prayer into the field of conflict. Remark the undaunted courage of the man of God. He allows that his enemies are great men (for such is the import of the Hebrew words translated --_sons of men_), but still he believes them to be foolish men, and therefore chides them, as though they were but children. He tells them that they _love vanity, and seek after leasing_, that is, lying, empty fancies, vain conceits, wicked fabrications. He asks them _how long_ they mean to make his honour a jest, and his fame a mockery? A little of such mirth is too much, why need they continue to indulge in it? Had they not been long enough upon the watch for his halting? Had not repeated disappointments convinced them that the Lord's anointed was not to be overcome by all their calumnies? Did they mean to jest their souls into hell, and go on with their laughter until swift vengeance should turn their merriment into howling? In the contemplation of their perverse continuance in their vain and lying pursuits, the Psalmist solemnly pauses and inserts a _Selah_. Surely we too may stop awhile, and meditate upon the deep-seated folly of the wicked, their continuance in evil, and their sure destruction; and we may learn to admire that grace which has made us to differ, and taught us to _love_ truth, and _seek_ after _righteousness_.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 2.--"_O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah_." Prayer soars above the violence and impiety of men, and with a swift

wing commits itself to heaven, with happy omen, if I may allude to what the learned tell us of the augury of the ancients, which I shall not minutely discuss. Fervent prayers stretch forth a strong, wide-extended wing, and while the birds of night hover beneath, they mount aloft, and point out, as it were, the proper seats to which we should aspire. For certainly there is nothing that cuts the air so swiftly, nothing that takes so sublime, so happy, and so auspicious a night as prayer, which bears the soul on its pinions, and leaves far behind all the dangers, and even the delights of this low world of ours. Behold this holy man, who just before was crying to God in the midst of distress, and with urgent importunity entreating that he might be heard, now, as if he were already possessed of all he had asked, taking upon him boldly to rebuke his enemies, how highly soever they were exalted, and how potent soever they might be even in the royal palace.--^Robert Leighton, D.D.

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

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

^Andrew A. Bonar, 1859.

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

"Leasing." This is an old Saxon word signifying falsehood.

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

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

Verse 2.--" _Love Vanity_." Men's affections are according to their principles; and every one loves that most _without him_ which is most suitable to somewhat _within him_: _liking_ is founded in _likeness_, and has therefore that word put upon it. It is so in whatsoever we can imagine; whether in temporals or

spirituals, as to the things of this life, or of a better. Men's love is according to some working and impression upon their own spirits. And so it is here in the point of vanity; those which are vain persons, they delight in vain things; as children, they love such matters as are most agreeable to their childish dispositions, and as do suit them in that particular. Out of the heart comes all kind of evil.--^Thomas Horton, 1675.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 2.--_Depravity of man_ as evinced (1) by continuance in despising Christ, (2) loving vanity in his heart, and (3) seeking lies in his daily life.

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

Exposition.

"_But know_." Fools will not learn, and therefore they must again and again be told the same thing, especially when it is such a bitter truth which is to be taught them, viz:--the fact that the godly are the chosen of God, and are, by distinguishing grace, set apart and separated from among men. Election is a doctrine which unrenewed men cannot endure, but nevertheless, it is a glorious and well-attested truth, and one which should comfort the tempted believer. Election is the guarantee of complete salvation, and an argument for success at the throne of grace. HE who chose us for himself will surely hear our prayers. The Lord's elect shall not be condemned, nor shall their cry be unheard. David was king by divine decree, and we are the Lord's people in the same manner; let us tell our enemies to their faces, that they fight against God and destiny, when they strive to overthrow our souls. O beloved, when you are on your knees, the fact of your being _set apart_ as God's own peculiar treasure, should give you courage and inspire you with fervency and faith. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?" since he chose to love us he cannot but chose to hear us.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 3.--_Election_--Its aspects towards God, our enemies, and ourselves.

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

Verse 3.--_The gracious Separatist_. Who is he? Who separated him? With what end? How to make men know it?

Exposition.

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

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

Can this world afford thee bliss? Can it chase away thy gloom? Flattering, false, and vain it is; Tremble at the worldling's doom!

Think, O sinner, on thy end, See the judgment-day appear, Thither must thy spirit wend, There thy righteous sentence hear.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 4.--"_Stand in awe, and sin not_." Jehovah is a name of great power and efficacy, a name that hath in it five vowels, without which no language can be expressed; a name that hath in it also three syllables, to signify the Trinity of persons, the eternity of God, One in Three and Three in One; a name of such dread and reverence amongst the Jews, that they tremble to name it, and therefore they use the name _Adonai_ (Lord) in all their devotions. And this ought every one to "_stand in awe, and sin not_," by taking the name of God in vain; but to sing praise, and honour, to remember, to declare, to exalt, to praise and bless it; for holy and reverend, only worthy and excellent is his name.--^Rayment, 1630.

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

Verse 4.--If thou wouldst exercise thyself to godliness in solitude, accustom thyself to soliloquies, I mean to conference with thyself. He needs never be idle that hath so much business to do with his own soul. It was a famous answer which Antisthenes gave when he was asked what fruit he reaped by all his studies. By them, saith he, I have learned both to live and talk with myself. Soliloquies are the best disputes; every good man is best company for himself of all the creatures. Holy David enjoine this to others, "_Commune with your own hearts upon your bed, and be still_." "_Commune with your own hearts_;" when ye have none to speak with, talk to yourselves. Ask yourselves for what end ye were made, what lives ye have led, what times ye have lost, what love ye have abused, what wrath ye have deserved. Call yourselves to a reckoning, how ye have improved your talents, how true or false ye have been to your trust, what provision ye have laid in for an hour of death, what preparation ye have made for a great day of account. "_Upon your beds_." Secrecy is the best opportunity for this duty. The silent night is a good time for this speech. When we have no outward objects to disturb us, and to call our eyes, as the fool's eyes are always, to the ends of the earth; then our eyes, as the eyes of the wise, may be in our heads; and then our minds, like the windows in Solomon's temple, may be broad inwards. The most successful searches have been made in the night season; the soul is then wholly shut up in the earthly house of the body, and hath no visits from strangers to disquiet its thoughts. Physicians have judged dreams a probable sign whereby they might find out the distempers of the body. Surely, then, the bed is no bad place to examine and search into the state of the soul. "_And be still_." Self communion will much help to curb your headstrong, ungodly passions. Serious consideration, like the casting up of earth amongst bees, will allay inordinate affections when they are full of fury, and make such a hideous noise. Though sensual appetites and unruly desires are, as the people of Ephesus, in an uproar, pleading for their former privilege, and expecting their wonted provision, as in the days of their predominancy, if conscience use its authority, commanding them in God's name, whose officer it is, to keep the king's peace, and argue it with

them, as the town-clerk of Ephesus, "We are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this day's concourse;" all is frequently by this means hushed, and the tumult appeased without any further mischief.--^George Swinnock, 1627--1673.

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

Verse 4.--"_Stand in awe_."

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

^John Needham, 1768.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Verse 6.--Where Christ reveals himself there is satisfaction in the slenderest portion, and without Christ

there is emptiness in the greatest fullness.--^Alexander Grosse, on enjoying Christ, 1632.

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

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6.--The cry of the world and the church contrasted. _Vox populi_ not always _Vox Dei_ .

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

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

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 7.--"Thou hast put gladness in my heart." The comforts which God reserves for his mourners are filling comforts (Ro 15:13); "The God of hope fill you with joy" (Joh 16:24); "Ask that your joy may be full." When God pours in the joys of heaven they fill the heart, and make it run over (2Co 8:4); "I am exceeding joyful;" the Greek is, I overflow with joy, as a cup that is filled with wine till it runs over. Outward comforts can no more fill the heart than a triangle can fill a circle. Spiritual joys are satisfying (Ps 63:5); "My heart shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips;" "Thou hast put gladness in my heart." Worldly joys do put gladness into the face, but the spirit of God puts gladness into the heart; divine joys are heart joys (Zec 10:7; Joh 16:22); "Your heart shall rejoice" (Lu 1:47); "My spirit rejoiced in God." And to show how filling these comforts are, which are of a heavenly extraction, the Psalmist says they create greater joy than when "corn and wine increase." wine and oil may delight but not satisfy; they have their vacuity and indigence. We may say, as Zec 10:2, "They comfort in vain;" outward comforts do sooner cloy than cheer, and sooner weary than fill. Xerxes offered great rewards to him that could find out a new pleasure; but the comforts of the Spirit are satisfactory, they recruit the heart (Ps 94:19), "Thy comforts delight my soul." There is as much difference between heavenly comforts and earthly, as between a banquet that is eaten, and one that is painted on the wall.--
^Thomas Watson.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

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

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

Verse 8.--When you have walked with God from morning until night, it remaineth that you conclude the day well, when you would give yourself to rest at night. Wherefore, first look back and take a strict view of your whole carriage that day past. Reform what you find amiss; and rejoice, or be grieved, as you find you have done well or ill, as you have advanced or declined in grace that day. Secondly, since you cannot sleep in safety if God, who is your keeper (Ps 111:4,5), do not wake and watch for you (Ps 127:1); and though you have God to watch when you sleep, you cannot be safe, if he that watcheth be your enemy. Wherefore it is very convenient that at night you renew and confirm your peace with God by faith and prayer, commending and committing yourself to God's tuition by prayer (Ps 3:4,5; Ps 92:2), with thanks-giving before you go to bed. Then shall you lie down in safety. Ps 4:8. All this being done, yet while you are putting off your apparel, when you are lying down, and when you are in bed, before you sleep, it is good that you commune with your own heart. Ps 4:4. If possibly you can fall asleep with some heavenly meditation, then will your sleep be more sweet (Pr 3:21,24,25); and more secure (Pr 6:21,22); your dreams fewer, or more comfortable; your head will be fuller of good thoughts (Pr 6:22), and your heart will be in a better frame when you awake, whether in the night or in the morning.--[^]Condensed from Henry Scudder's Daily Walk, 1633.

Verse 8.--"I will both," etc. We have now to retire for a moment from the strife of tongues and the open hostility of foes, into the stillness and privacy of the chamber of sleep. Here, also, we find the "I will" of trust. "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." God is here revealed to us as exercising personal care in the still chamber. And there is something here which should be inexpressibly sweet to the believer, for this shows the minuteness of God's care, the individuality of his love; how it condescends and stoops, and acts, not only in great, but also in little spheres; not only where glory might be procured from great results, but where nought is to be had save the gratitude and love of a poor feeble creature, whose life has been protected and preserved, in a period of helplessness and sleep. How blessed would it be if we made a larger recognition of God in the still chamber; if we thought of him as being there in all hours of illness, of weariness, and pain; if we believed that his interest and care are as much concentrated upon the feeble believer there as upon his people when in the wider battle field of the strife of tongues. There is something inexpressibly touching in this "laying down" of the Psalmist. In thus lying down he voluntarily gave up guardianship of himself; he resigned himself into the hands of another; he did so completely, for in the absence of all care he slept; there was here a perfect trust. Many a believer lies down, but it is not to sleep. Perhaps he feels safe enough so far as his body is concerned, but cares and anxieties invade the privacy of his chamber; they come to try his faith and trust; they threaten, they frighten, and alas! prove too strong for trust. Many a poor believer might say, "I will lay me down, but not to sleep." The author met with a touching instance of this, in the case of an aged minister whom he visited in severe illness. This worthy man's circumstances were narrow, and his family trials were great; he said, "The doctor wants me to sleep, but how can I sleep with care sitting on my pillow?" It is the experience of some of the Lord's people, that although equal to an emergency or a continued pressure, a reaction sets in afterwards; and when they come to be alone their spirits sink, and they do not realise that strength from God, or feel that confidence in him which they felt while the pressure was exerting its force ... There is a trial in stillness; and oftentimes the still chamber makes a larger demand upon loving trust than the battle field. O that we could trust God more and more with personal things! O that he were the God of our chamber, as well as of our temples and houses! O that we could bring him more and more into the minutiae of daily life! If we did thus, we should experience a measure of rest to which we are, perhaps, strangers now; we should have less dread of the sick chamber; we should have that unharassed mind which conduces most to repose, in body and soul; we should be able to say, "I will lie down and sleep, and leave to-morrow with God!" Ridley's brother offered to remain with him during the night preceding his martyrdom, but the bishop declined, saying, that "he meant to go to bed, and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life."--[^]Philip Bennett Power's 'I Wills' of the Psalms.

Verse 8.--Due observation of Providence will both beget and secure inward tranquility in your minds

amidst the vicissitudes and revolutions of things in this unstable vain world. "_I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for the Lord only maketh me dwell in safety_" He resolves that sinful fears of events shall not rob him of his inward quiet, nor torture his thoughts with anxious presages: he will commit all his concerns into that faithful fatherly hand that had hitherto wrought all things for him; and he means not to lose the comfort of one night's rest, nor bring the evil of to-morrow upon the day; but knowing in whose hand he was, wisely enjoys the sweet felicity of a resigned will. Now this tranquility of our minds is as much begotten and preserved by a due consideration of providence as by anything whatsoever.--^John Flavel, 1627-1691.

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

Verse 8.--"_Sleep_"

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

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

^Mrs. M'Cartree.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 8.--The peace and safety of the good man.--^Joseph Lathrop, D.D., 1805.

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

Verse 8.--The Christian's good-night.

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

Fifth Psalm

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

DIVISION.--The Psalm should be divided into two parts, from 1-7, and then from 8-12. In the first part of the Psalm David most vehemently beseeches the Lord to hearken to his prayer, and in the second part he retraces the same ground.

EXPOSITION.

There are two sorts of prayers--those expressed in words, and the unuttered longings which abide as silent meditations. Words are not the essence but the garments of prayer. Moses at the Red Sea cried to God, though he said nothing. Yet the use of language may prevent distraction of mind, may assist the powers of the soul, and may excite devotion. David, we observe, uses both modes of prayer, and craves for the one a hearing, and for the other a consideration. What an expressive word! "Consider my meditation." If I have asked that which is right, give it to me; if I have omitted to ask that which I most needed, fill up the vacancy in my prayer. "Consider my meditation." Let thy holy soul consider it as presented through my all-glorious Mediator: then regard thou it in thy wisdom, weigh it in the scales, judge thou of my sincerity, and of the true state of my necessities, and answer me in due time for thy mercy's sake! There may be prevailing intercession where there are no words; and alas! there may be words where there is no true supplication. Let us cultivate the spirit of prayer which is even better than the habit of prayer. There may be seeming prayer where there is little devotion. We should begin to pray before we kneel down, and we should not cease when we rise up.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

Verses 1,2.--Observe the order and force of the words, "my cry," "the voice of my prayer;" and also, "give ear," "consider," "hearken." These expressions all evince the urgency and energy of David's feelings and petitions. First, we have, "give ear;" that is, hear me. But it is of little service for the words to be heard, unless the "cry," or the roaring, or the meditation, be considered. As if he had said, in a common way of expression, I speak with deep anxiety and concern, but with a failing utterance; and I cannot express myself, nor make myself understood as I wish. Do thou, therefore, understand from my feelings more than I am able to express in words. And, therefore, I add my "cry;" that what I cannot express in words for thee to hear, I may by my "cry" signify to thine understanding. And when thou hast

understood me, then, O Lord "_Hearken unto the voice of my prayer_" and despise not what thou hast thus heard and understood. We are not, however, to understand that hearing, understanding, and hearkening, are all different acts in God, in the same way as they are in us; but that our feelings towards God are to be thus varied and increased; that is, that we are first to desire to be heard, and then, that our prayers which are heard may be understood; and then, that being understood, they may be hearkened unto, that is, not disregarded.--^Martin Luther.

Verse 1.--"_Meditation_" fits the soul for supplication; meditation fills the soul with good liquor, and then prayer broaches it, and sets it a-running. David first mused, and then spake with his tongue, "Lord, make me to know mine end." Ps 39:3,4. Nay, to assure us that meditation was the mother which bred and brought forth prayer, he calls the child by its parent's name, "_Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation_" Meditation is like the charging of a piece, and prayer the discharging of it. "Isaac went into the field to meditate." Ge 24:63. The Septuagint, the Geneva translation, and Tremellius, in his marginal notes on it, read it to "pray;" and the Hebrew word *_s-wach_ <07742>* used there signifieth both to pray and meditate; whereby we may learn they are very near akin; like twins, they be in the same womb, in the same word. Meditation is the best beginning of prayer, and prayer is the best conclusion of meditation. When the Christian, like Daniel, hath first opened the windows of his soul by contemplation, then he may kneel down to prayer.--^George Swinnoek.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

"_The voice of my cry_" In another Psalm we find the expression, "The voice of my weeping." Weeping has a voice--a melting, plaintive tone, an ear-piercing shrillness, which reaches the very heart of God: and *_crying_* hath a voice--a soul-moving eloquence; coming from *_our_* heart it reaches *_God's_* heart. Ah! my brothers and sisters, sometimes we cannot put our prayers into words: they are nothing but a *_cry_*: but the Lord can comprehend the meaning, for he hears a voice in our cry. To a loving father his children's cries are music, and they have a magic influence which his heart cannot resist. "_My King and my God_" Observe carefully these little pronouns, "*_my_* King, and *_my_* God." They are the pith and marrow of the plea. Here is a grand argument why God should answer prayer--because he is *_our_* King and *_our_* God. We are not aliens to him: he is the King of our country. Kings are expected to hear the appeals of their own people. We are not strangers to him; we are his worshippers, and he is our God: ours by covenant, by promise, by oath, by blood.

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

Exposition.

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

"_In the morning_" This is the fittest lime for intercourse with God. An hour in the morning is worth two in the evening. While the dew is on the grass, let grace drop upon the soul. Let us give to God the mornings of our days and the morning of our lives. Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night. Devotion should be both the morning star and the evening star.

If we merely read our English version, and want an explanation of these two sentences, we find it in the figure of an archer, "_I will direct my prayer unto thee_" I will put my prayer upon the bow, I will direct it towards heaven, and then when I have shot up my arrow, *_I will look up_* to see where it has gone. But the Hebrew has a still fuller meaning than this--"I will *_direct_* my prayer." It is the word that is used for the laying in order of the wood and the pieces of the victim upon the altar, and it is used also for the putting of the shewbread upon the table. It means just this: "I will arrange my prayer before thee;" I will lay it out

upon the altar in the morning, just as the priest lays out the morning sacrifice. I will arrange my prayer; or, as old Master Trapp has it, "I will marshal up my prayers," I will put them in order, call up all my powers, and bid them stand in their proper places, that I may pray with all my might, and pray acceptably.

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

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

Yet never sleep the sun up; prayer should Dawn with the day, there are set awful hours 'Twixt heaven and us; the manna was not good After sun-rising, for day sullies flowers. Rise to prevent the sun; sleep doth sins glut, And heaven's gate opens when the world's is shut.

Walk with thy fellow creatures, note the hush And whisperings amongst them. Not a spring Or leaf but hath his morning hymn; each bush And oak doth know I AM--canst thou not sing? O leave thy cares and follies! Go this way, And thou art sure to prosper all the day.

Henry Vaughan, 1621-1695.

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

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

Verse 3.--"In the morning I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up," or I will marshal my prayer, I will bring up petition after petition, pleading after pleading, even till I become like Jacob, a prince with God, till I have won the field and got the day. Thus the word is applied by a metaphor both to disputations with men and supplications to God. Further, we may take the meaning plainly without any strain of rhetoric, Set thy words in order before me. Method is good in everything, either an express or covert method. Sometimes it is the best of art to cover it; in speaking there is a special use of method, for

though, as one said very well (speaking of those who are more curious about method than serious about matter), "_Method never converted any man_;" yet method and the ordering of words is very useful. Our speeches should not be heaps of words, but words bound up; not a throng of words, but words set in array, or, as it were, in rank and file.--^Joseph Caryl.

Verse 3. "_I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up_." In the words you may observe two things: first, David's posture in prayer; secondly, his practice after prayer. First, his posture in prayer, "_I will direct my prayer unto thee_." Secondly, his practice after prayer, "_And I will look up_." The prophet in these words, makes use of two military words. First, he would not only pray, but marshal up his prayers, he would put them in battle array; so much the Hebrew word *frak* <06186> imports. Secondly, when he had done this, then he would be as a spy upon his watch-tower, to see whether he prevailed, whether he got the day or no; and so much the Hebrew word *tsfphfh* <06822> imports. When David had set his prayers, his petitions, in rank and file, in good array, then he was resolved he would look abroad, he would look about him to see at what door God would send in an answer of prayer. He is either a fool or a madman, he is either very weak or very wicked, that prays and prays, but never looks after his prayers; that shoots many an arrow towards heaven, but never minds where his arrows alight.--^Thomas Brooks.

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 3.--The excellence of morning devotion.

Verse 3 (last two clauses).--1. Prayer directed. 2. Answers expected.

Exposition.

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

David, "I pray against the very things which thou thyself abhorrest." _Thou_ hatest evil: Lord, I beseech thee, deliver _me_ from it!

Let us learn here the solemn truth of the hatred which a righteous God must bear towards sin. _He has no pleasure in wickedness_, however wittily, grandly, and proudly it may array itself. Its glitter has no charm for him. Men may bow before the successful villainy, and forget the wickedness of the battle in the gaudiness of the triumph, but the Lord of Holiness is not such-an-one as we are. "_Neither shall evil dwell with thee_" He will not afford it the meanest shelter. Neither on earth nor in heaven shall evil share the mansion of God. Oh, how foolish are we if we attempt to entertain two guests so hostile to one another as Christ Jesus and the devil! Rest assured, Christ will not live in the parlour of our hearts if we entertain the devil in the cellar of our thoughts. "_The foolish shall not stand in thy sight_" sinners are fools written large. A little sin is a great folly, and the greatest of all folly is great sin. Such sinful fools as these must be banished from the court of heaven. Earthly kings were wont to have fools in their trains, but the only wise God will have no fools in his palace above. "_Thou hatest all workers of iniquity_" It is not a little dislike, but a thorough hatred which God bears to workers of iniquity. To be hated of God is an awful thing. O let us be very faithful in warning the wicked around us, for it will be a terrible thing for them to fall into the hands of an angry God! Observe, that evil speakers must be punished as well as evil workers, for "_thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing." All liars shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. A man may lie without danger of the law of man, but he will not escape the law of God. Liars have short wings, their flight shall soon be over, and they shall fall into the fiery floods of destruction. "_The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man_" Bloody men shall be made drunk with their own blood, and they who began by deceiving others shall end with being deceived themselves. Our old proverb saith, "Bloody and deceitful men dig their own graves." The voice of the people is in this instance the voice of God. How forcible is the word _abhor_! Does it not show us how powerful and deep-seated is the hatred of the Lord against the workers of iniquity?

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verses 4-6.--Here the Lord's alienation from the wicked is set forth gradually, and seems to rise by six steps. First, _he hath no pleasure in them_; secondly, _they shall not dwell with them_; thirdly, he casteth them forth, _they shall not stand in his sight_; fourthly, his heart turns from them, _thou hatest all the workers of iniquity_; fifthly, his hand is turned upon them, _thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing_; sixthly, his spirit riseth against them, and is alienated from them, _the Lord will abhor the bloody man_. This estrangement is indeed a _strange_ (yet a certain) _punishment_ to "the workers of iniquity_." These words, "_the workers of iniquity_" may be considered two ways. First, as intending (not all degrees of sinners, or sinners of every degree, but) the highest degree of sinners, great, and gross sinners, resolved and wilful sinners. Such as sin industriously, and, as it were, artificially, with skill and care to get themselves a name, as if they had an ambition to be accounted _workmen_ that need not be ashamed in doing that whereof all ought to be ashamed; these, in strictness of Scripture sense, are "_workers of iniquity_" Hence note, _notorious sinners made sin their business, or their trade_. Though every sin be work of iniquity, yet only some sinners are "_workers of iniquity_;" and they who are called so, make it their calling to sin. We read of some _who love and make a lie_. Re 22:15. A lie may be told by those who neither love nor make it; but there are lie-makers, and they, sure enough, are lovers of a lie. Such craftsmen in sinning are also described in Ps 58:2.--"Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth." The psalmist doth not say, they had wickedness in their heart, but they did work it there; _the heart is a shop within, an underground shop_; there they did closely contrive, forge, and hammer out their wicked purposes, and fit them into actions.--^Joseph Caryl.

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

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

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

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

Verse 6.--" _Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing_" whether in jest or earnest. Those that lie in jest will (without repentance) go to hell in earnest.--^John Trapp.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Verse 5.--" _The foolish_" Show why sinners are justly called fools.

Exposition.

With this verse the first part of the Psalm ends. The Psalmist has bent his knee in prayer: he has described before God, as an argument for his deliverance, the character and the fate of the wicked; and now he contrasts this with the condition of the righteous. "_But as for me, I will come into thy house_" I will not stand at a distance, I will come into thy sanctuary, just as a child comes into his father's house. But I will not come there by my own merits; no, I have a multitude of sins, and therefore I will come _in the multitude of thy mercy_. I will approach thee with confidence because of thy immeasurable grace. God's judgments are all numbered, but his mercies are innumerable; he gives his wrath by weight, but without

weight his mercy. "_And in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple_"--towards the temple of thy holiness. The temple was not built on earth at that time; it was but a tabernacle; but David was wont to turn his eyes spiritually to that temple of God's holiness where between the wings of the Cherubim Jehovah dwells in light ineffable. Daniel opened his window towards Jerusalem, but we open our hearts towards heaven.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 7.--"_Multitude of thy mercy_" Dwell upon the varied grace and goodness of God.

Verse 7.--The devout resolution.

Verse 7.--I. Observe the _singularity_ of the resolution. II. Mark the _object_ of the resolution. It regards the service of God in the sanctuary. "I will come into thine _house_in thy fear will I _worship_ towards thy _holy temple_" III. The manner in which he would accomplish the resolution. (1) Impressed with a sense of the divine goodness: "I will come into thy house in _the multitude of thy mercy_" (2) Filled with holy veneration: "And _in thy fear_ will I worship."--^William Jay, 1842.

Exposition.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

This description of depraved man has been copied by the Apostle Paul, and, together with some other quotations, he has placed it in the second chapter of Romans, as being an accurate description of the whole human race, not of David's enemies only, but of all men by nature. Note that remarkable figure, "_Their throat is an open sepulchre_" a _sepulchre_ full of loathsomeness, of miasma, of pestilence and death. But, worse than that, it is an _open_ sepulchre, with all its evil gases issuing forth, to spread death

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

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

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

Verse 9.--"Their inward part," etc. Their hearts are storehouses for the devil.--[^]John Trapp.

Exposition.

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

man, be it known unto thee that all thy godly friends will give their solemn assent to the awful sentence of the Lord, which he shall pronounce upon thee in the day of doom! Our verdict shall applaud the condemning curse which the Judge of all the earth shall thunder against the godless.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 11.--I. The character of the righteous: _faith and love_. II. The privileges of the righteous. (1) _Joy_--great, pure, satisfying, triumphant (_shout_), constant (_ever_). (2) Defence--by power, providence, angels, grace, etc.

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

Exposition.

Jehovah has ordained his people the heirs of blessedness, and nothing shall rob them of their

inheritance. With all the fullness of his power he will bless them, and all his attributes shall unite to satiate them with divine contentment. Nor is this merely for the present, but the blessing reaches into the long and unknown future. "_Thou Lord, wilt bless the righteous_" This is a promise of infinite length, of unbounded breadth, and of unutterable preciousness.

As for the defence which the believer needs in this land of battles, it is here promised to him in the fullest measure. There were vast shields used by the ancients as extensive as a man's whole person, which would surround him entirely. So says David, "_With favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield_" According to Ainsworth there is here also the idea of being crowned, so that we wear a royal helmet, which is at once our glory and defence. O Lord, ever give to us this gracious coronation!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 12 (first clause).--_The divine blessing upon the righteous_. It is ancient, effectual, constant, extensive, irreversible, surpassing, eternal, infinite.

Verse 12 (second clause).--A sense of divine favour a defence to the soul.

Sixth Psalm

TITLE.--This Psalm is commonly known as the first of THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS, [the other six are, Ps 32; 38; 41; 102; 130; 143.] and certainly its language well becomes the lip of a penitent, for it expresses at once the sorrow (verses 3,6,7), the humiliation (verses 2,4), and the hatred of sin (verse 8), which are the unfailing marks of the contrite spirit when it turns to God. O Holy Spirit, beget in us the true repentance which needeth not to be repented of. The title of this Psalm is, "To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith, [see 1Ch 15:21] A Psalm of David," that is, to the chief musician with stringed instruments, upon the eight, probably the octave. Some think it refers to the bass or tenor key, which would certainly be well adapted to this mournful ode. But we are not able to understand these old musical terms, and even the term "Selah," still remains untranslated. This, however, should be no difficulty in our way. We probably lose but very little by our ignorance, and it may serve to confirm our faith. It is a proof of the high antiquity of these Psalms that they contain words, the meaning of which is lost even to the best scholars of the Hebrew language. Surely these are but incidental (accidental I might almost say, if I did not believe them to be designed by God), proofs of their being, what they profess to be, the ancient writings of King David of olden times.

DIVISION.--You will observe that the Psalm is readily divided into two parts. First, there is the Psalmist's plea in his great distress, reaching from 1-7. Then you have, from 8-10, quite a different theme. The Psalmist has change and his note. He leaves the minor key, and betakes himself to sublime strains. He tunes his note to the high key of confidence, and declares that God hath heard his prayer, and hath delivered him out of all his troubles.

EXPOSITION.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.--David was a man that was often exercised with sickness and troubles from enemies, and in all the instances almost that we meet with in the Psalms of these his afflictions, we may observe the outward occasions of trouble brought him under the suspicion of God's wrath and his own iniquity; so that he was seldom sick, or persecuted, but this called on the disquiet of conscience, and brought his sin to remembrance; as in this Psalm, which was made on the occasion of his sickness, as appears from verse 8, wherein he expresseth the vexation of his soul under the apprehension of God's anger; all his other griefs running into this channel, as little brooks, losing themselves in a great river, change their name and nature. He that was at first only concerned for his sickness, is now wholly concerned with sorrow and smart under the fear and hazard of his soul's condition; the like we may see in Ps 38. and many places more.--[^]Richard Gilpin, 1677.

Verse 1.--"Rebuke me not." God hath two means by which he reduceth his children to obedience; his word, by which he rebukes them; and his rod, by which he chastiseth them. The word precedes, admonishing them by his servants whom he hath sent in all ages to call sinners to repentance: of the which David himself saith, "Let the righteous rebuke me;" and as a father doth first rebuke his disordered

child, so doth the Lord speak to them. But when men neglect the warnings of his word, then God as a good father, takes up the rod and beats them. Our Saviour wakened the three disciples in the garden three times, but seeing that served not, he told them that Judas and his band were coming to awaken them whom his own voice could not waken.--^A. Symson, 1638.

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

Verse 1.--" _O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger_."

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

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

Verse 1.--" _Neither chasten me in thine hot displeasure_."

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

^Richard Baxter, 1615-1691.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--_A Sermon for afflicted souls_. I. God's twofold dealings. (1) _Rebuke_ by a telling sermon, a judgment on another, a slight trial in our own person, or a solemn monition in our conscience by the Spirit. (2) _Chastening_. This follows the other when the first is disregarded. Pain, losses, bereavements, melancholy, and other trials. II. The evils in them to be most dreaded, anger and hot displeasure. III. The means to avert these ills. Humiliation, confession, amendment, faith in the Lord, etc.

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

Exposition.

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

" _O Lord heal me; for my bones are vexed_." Here he prays for _healing_, not merely the mitigation of the ills he endured, but their entire removal, and the curing of the wounds which had arisen therefrom. His bones were " _shaken_," as the Hebrew has it. His terror had become so great that his very bones shook; not only did his flesh quiver, but the bones, the solid pillars of the house of manhood, were made to tremble. "My bones are shaken." Ah, when the soul has a sense of sin, it is enough to make the bones

shake; it is enough to make a man's hair stand up on end to see the flames of hell beneath him, an angry God above him, and danger and doubt surrounding him. Well might he say, "My bones are shaken." Lest, however, we should imagine that it was merely bodily sickness--although bodily sickness might be the outward sign--the Psalmist goes on to say, "_My soul is also sore vexed_." Soul-trouble is the very soul of trouble. It matters not that the bones shake if the soul be firm, but when the soul itself is also sore vexed this is agony indeed. "_But thou, O Lord, how long?_" This sentence ends abruptly, for words failed, and grief drowned the little comfort which dawn upon him. The Psalmist had still, however, some hope; but that hope was only in his God. He therefore cries, "O Lord, how long?" The coming of Christ into the soul in his priestly robes of grace is the grand hope of the penitent soul; and, indeed, in some form or other, Christ's appearance is, and ever has been, the hope of the saints.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

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

Verse 2.--"_Heal me_" etc. David comes not to take physic upon wantonness, but because the disease is violent, because the accidents are vehement; so vehement, so violent, as that it hath pierced _ad ossa_, and _ad animam_, "_My bones are vexed, and my soul is sore troubled_" therefore "_heal me_" which is the reason upon which he grounds this second petition, "_Heal me, because my bones are vexed_" etc.--^John Donne.

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

Verse 2.--The term "_bones_" frequently occurs in the psalms, and if we examine we shall find it used in

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

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

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

Verse 3.--"_O Lord, how long_" As the saints in heaven have their *usque quo*, how long, Lord, holy, and true, before thou begin to execute judgment? So, the saints on earth have their *usque quo*. How long, Lord, before thou take off the execution of this judgment upon us? For, our deprecatory prayers are not mandatory, they are not directory, they appoint not God his ways, or his times; but as our postulatory prayers are, they also are submitted to the will of God, and have all in them that ingredient, that herb of grace, which Christ put into his own prayer, that *veruntamen*, yet not my will, but thy will be fulfilled; and they have that ingredient which Christ put into our prayer, *fiat voluntas*, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven; in heaven there is no resisting of his will; yet in heaven there is a soliciting, a hastening, an accelerating of the judgment, and the glory of the resurrection; so though we resist not his corrections here upon earth, we may humbly present to God the sense which we have of his displeasure, for this sense and apprehension of his corrections is one of the principal reasons why he sends them; he corrects us therefore that we might be sensible of his corrections; that when we, being humbled under his hand, have said with his prophet, "_I will bear the wrath of the Lord because I have sinned against him_" (Mic 7:9), he may be pleased to say to his correcting angel, as he did to his destroying angel, *This is enough*, and so burn his rod now, as he put up his sword then.--^John Donne.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 2.--The *argumentum ad misericordiam*.

Verse 2.--_First sentence--Divine healing_. 1. What precedes it, *my bones are vexed*. 2. How it is wrought. 3. What succeeds it.

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

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

Exposition.

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 4.--"Return, O Lord, deliver my soul_," etc. In this his besieging of God, he brings up his works from afar off, closer; he begins in this Psalm, at a deprecatory prayer; he asks nothing, but that God would do nothing, that he would forbear him--_rebu ke me not, correct me not_. Now, it costs the king less to give a pardon than to give a pension, and less to give a reprieve than to give a pardon, and less to connive, not to call in question, than either reprieve, pardon, or pension; to forbear is not much. But then as the mathematician said, that he could make an engine, a screw, that should move the whole frame of the world, if he could have a place assigned him to fix that engine, that screw upon, so that it might work upon the world; so prayer, when one petition hath taken hold upon God, works upon God, moves God, prevails with God, entirely for all. David then having got this ground, this footing in God, he brings his works closer; he comes from the deprecatory to a postulatory prayer; not only that God would do nothing against him, but that he would do something for him. God hath suffered man to see _Arcana imperii_, the secrets of his state, how he governs--he governs by precedent; by precedents of his predecessors, he cannot, he hath none; by precedents of other gods he cannot, there are none; and yet he proceeds by precedents, by his own precedents, he does as he did before, _habenti dat_, to him that hath received he gives more, and is willing to be wrought and prevailed upon, and pressed with his own example. And, as though his doing good were but to learn how to do good better, still he writes after his own copy, and _nulla dies sine linea_. He writes something to us, that is, he doth something for us every day. And then, that which is not often seen in other masters, his copies are better than the originals; his latter mercies larger than his former; and in this postulatory prayer, larger than the deprecatory, enters our text, "_Return, O Lord; deliver my soul: O save me_," etc.--^John Donne.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Verse 4.--The prayer of the deserted saint. 1. _His state_: his soul is evidently in bondage and danger: 2. _His hope_: it is in the Lord's return. 3. _His plea_: mercy only.

Exposition.

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

this is true of God, who, when he gives mercy, glorifies himself.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 5.--" _For in death there is no remembrance of thee, in the grave who will give thee thanks_?" Lord, be thou pacified and reconciled to me ... for shouldst thou now proceed to take away my life, as it were a most direful condition for me to die before I have propitiated thee, so I may well demand what increase of glory or honour will it bring unto thee? Will it not be infinitely more glorious for thee to spare me, till by true contrition I may regain thy favour?--and then I may live to praise and magnify thy mercy and thy grace: thy mercy in pardoning so great a sinner, and then confess thee by vital actions of all holy obedience for the future, and so demonstrate the power of thy grace which hath wrought this change in me; neither of which will be done by destroying me, but only thy just judgments manifested in thy vengeance on sinners.--
^Henry Hammond, D.D., 1659.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

The Psalmist gives a fearful description of his long agony: " _I am weary with my groaning_." He had groaned till his throat was hoarse; he had cried for mercy till prayer became a labour. God's people may groan, but they may not grumble. Yea, they must groan, being burdened, or they will never shout in the day of deliverance. The next sentence, we think, is not accurately translated. It should be, " _I shall make my bed to swim every night_," (when nature needs rest, and when I am most alone with my God). That is to say, my grief is fearful even now, but if God do not soon save me, it will not stay of itself, but will increase, until my tears will be so many, that my bed itself shall swim. A description rather of what he feared would be, than of what had actually taken place. May not our forebodings of future woe become arguments which faith may urge when seeking present mercy? " _I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies_." As an old man's eye grows dim with years, so says David, my eye is grown red and feeble through weeping. Conviction sometimes has such an effect upon the body, that even the outward organs are made to suffer. May not this explain some of the convulsions and hysterical attacks which have been experienced under convictions in the revivals in Ireland? Is it surprising that some should be smitten to the earth, and begin to cry aloud; when we find that David himself made his bed to swim, and grew old while he was under the heavy hand of God? Ah! brethren, it is no light matter to feel one's self a sinner, condemned at the bar of God. The language of this Psalm is not strained and forced, but perfectly natural to one in so sad plight.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

Verse 6.--" _My bed_." The place of his sin is the place of his repentance, and so it should be; yea, when we behold the place where we have offended, we should be pricked in the heart, and there again crave him pardon. As Adam sinned in the garden, and Christ sweat bloody tears in the garden. "Examine your

hearts upon your beds, and convert unto the Lord;" and whereas ye have stretched forth yourselves upon your bed to devise evil things, repent there and make them sanctuaries to God. Sanctify by your tears every place which ye have polluted by sin. And let us seek Christ Jesus on our own bed, with the spouse in the Canticles, who saith, "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth."--^Archibald Symson.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 7.--That eye of his that had looked and lusted after his neighbour's wife is now dimmed and darkened with grief and indignation. He had wept himself almost blind.--^John Trapp.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6.--Saints' tears in quality, abundance, influence, assuagement, and final end.

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

Exposition.

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

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

David has found peace, and rising from his knees he begins to sweep his house of the wicked. " _Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity_" The best remedy for us against an evil man is a long space between us both. "Get ye gone; I can have no fellowship with you." Repentance is a practical thing. It is not enough to bemoan the desecration of the temple of the heart, we must scourge out the buyers and sellers, and overturn the tables of the money changers. A pardoned sinner _will hate the sins_ which cost the Saviour his blood. Grace and sin are quarrelsome neighbours, and one or the other must go to the wall.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 8.--" _Depart from me_" etc., i.e., you may now go your way; for that which you look for, namely, my death, you shall not have at this present; _for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping_, i.e., has graciously granted me that which with tears I asked of him.--^Thomas Wilcocks.

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

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

Verse 8.--The wicked are called " _workers of iniquity_" because they are free and ready to sin, they have a strong tide and bent of spirit to do evil, and they do it not to halves but throughly: they do not only begin

or nibble at the bait a little (as a good man often doth), but greedily swallow it down, hook and all; they are fully in it, and do it fully; they make a work of it, and so are "_workers of iniquity_"--^Joseph Caryl.

Verse 8.--Some may say, "My constitution is such that I cannot weep; I may as well go to squeeze a rock, as think to get a tear." But if thou canst not weep for sin, canst thou grieve? Intellectual mourning is best; there may be sorrow where there are no tears, the vessel may be full though it wants vent; it is not so much the weeping eye God respects as the broken heart; yet I would be loath to stop their tears who can weep. God stood looking on Hezekiah's tears (Isa 38:5), "I have seen thy tears." David's tears made music in God's ears, "_The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping_" It is a sight fit for angels to behold, tears as pearls dropping from a penitent eye.--^T. Watson.

Verse 8.--"_The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping_" God hears the voice of our looks, God hears the voice of our tears sometimes better than the voice of our words; for it is the Spirit itself that makes intercession for us. Ro 8:26. _Gemitibus inenarrabilibus_, in those _groans_, and so in those _tears_, which we _cannot utter_; _ineloquacibus_, as Tertullian reads that place, devout, and simple tears, which cannot speak, speak aloud in the ears of God; nay, tears which we cannot utter; not only not utter the force of the tears, but not utter the very tears themselves. As God sees the water in the spring in the veins of the earth before it bubble upon the face of the earth, so God sees tears in the heart of a man before they blubber his face; God hears the tears of that sorrowful soul, which for sorrow cannot shed tears. From this casting up of the eyes, and pouring out the sorrow of the heart at the eyes, at least opening God a window through which he may see a wet heart through a dry eye; from these overtures of repentance, which are as those imperfect sounds of words, which parents delight in, in their children, before they speak plain, a penitent sinner comes to a verbal and a more express prayer. To these prayers, these vocal and verbal prayers from David, God had given ear, and from this hearing of those prayers was David come to this thankful confidence, "_The Lord hath heard, the Lord will hear_"--^John Donne.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 8.--The pardoned sinner forsaking his bad companions.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 9.--Past answers the ground of present confidence. He _hath_, he _will_.

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 10.--The shame reserved for the wicked.

Seventh Psalm

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

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

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

DIVISION.--In the first and second verses (1,2) the danger is stated, and prayer offered. Then the Psalmist most solemnly avows his innocence (3,4,5). The Lord is pleaded with to arise to judgment (6,7). The Lord, sitting upon his throne, hears the renewed appeal of the Slandered Supplicant (8,9). The Lord clears his servant, and threatens the wicked (10,11,12,13). The slanderer is seen in vision bringing a curse upon his own head (14,15,16) while David retires from trial singing a hymn of praise to his righteous God. We have here a noble sermon upon that text: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

EXPOSITION.

David appears before God to plead with him against the Accuser, who had charged him with treason and treachery. The case is here opened with an avowal of confidence in God. Whatever may be the emergency of our condition we shall never find it amiss to retain our reliance upon our God. " _O Lord my God_," mine by a special covenant, sealed by Jesus' blood, and ratified in my own soul by a sense of union to thee; " _in thee_," and in thee only, " _do I put my trust_," even now in my sore distress. I shake, but my rock moves not. It is never right to distrust God, and never vain to trust him. And now, with both divine relationship and holy trust to strengthen him, David utters the burden of his desire--" _save me from all them that persecute me_." His pursuers were very many, and any one of them cruel enough to devour him; he cries, therefore, for salvation from them all. We should never think our prayers complete until we ask for preservation from all sin, and all enemies. " _And deliver me_," extricate me from their snares, acquit me of their accusations, give a true and just deliverance in this trial of my injured character. See how clearly his case is stated; let us see to it, that we know what we would have when we are come to the throne of mercy. Pause a little while before you pray, that you may not offer the sacrifice of fools. Get a distinct idea of your need, and then you can pray with the more fluency of fervency.

" _Lest he tear my soul_." Here is the plea of fear co-working with the plea of faith. There was one among David's foes mightier than the rest, who had both dignity, strength, and ferocity, and was, therefore, " _like a lion_." From this foe he urgently seeks deliverance. Perhaps this was Saul, his royal enemy; but in our own case there is one who goes about like a lion, seeking whom he may devour, concerning whom we should ever cry, " _Deliver us from the Evil One_." Notice the vigour of the description--" _rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver_." It is a picture from the shepherd-life of David. When the fierce lion had pounced upon the defenceless lamb, and had made it his prey, he would rend the victim in pieces, break all the bones, and devour all, because no shepherd was near to protect the lamb or rescue it from the ravenous beast. This is a soul-moving portrait of a saint delivered over to the will of Satan. This will make the bowels of Jehovah yearn. A father cannot be silent when a child is in such peril. No, he will not

endure the thought of his darling in the jaws of a lion, he will arise and deliver his persecuted one. Our God is very pitiful, and he will surely rescue his people from so desperate a destruction. It will be well for us here to remember that this is a description of the danger to which the Psalmist was exposed from slanderous tongues. Verily this is not an overdrawn picture, for the wounds of a sword will heal, but the wounds of the tongue cut deeper than the flesh, and are not soon cured. Slander leaves a slur, even if it be wholly disproved. Common fame, although notoriously a common liar, has very many believers. Once let an ill word get into men's mouths, and it is not easy to get it fully out again. The Italians say that good repute is like the cypress, once cut, it never puts forth leaf again; this is not true if our character be cut by a stranger's hand, but even then it will not soon regain its former verdure. Oh, 'tis a meanness most detestable to stab a good man in his reputation, but diabolical hatred observes no nobility in its mode of warfare. We must be ready for this trial, for it will surely come upon us. If God was slandered in Eden, we shall surely be maligned in this land of sinners. Gird up your loins, ye children of the resurrection, for this very trial awaits you all.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

TITLE.--"Shiggaion," though some have attempted to fix on it a reference to the moral aspect of the world as depicted in this Psalm, is in all probability to be taken as expressing the nature of the composition. It conveys the idea of something erratic (shfgfh <07686> <07692>, to wander) in the style; something not so calm as other Psalms; and hence Ewald suggests that it might be rendered, "a confused ode," a Dithyramb. This characteristic of excitement in the style, and a kind of disorder in the sense, suits Hab 3:1, the only other place where the word occurs. ^Andrew A. Bonar.

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

The second part of this wandering hymn contains a protestation of innocence, and an invocation of wrath upon his own head, if he were not clear from the evil imputed to him. So far from hiding treasonable intentions in his hands, or ungratefully requiting the peaceful deeds of a friend, he had even suffered his enemy to escape when he had him completely in his power. Twice had he spared Saul's life; once in the cave of Adullam, and again when he found him sleeping in the midst of his slumbering camp; he could, therefore, with a clear conscience, make his appeal to heaven. He needs not fear the curse whose soul is clear of guilt. Yet is the imprecation a most solemn one, and only justifiable through the extremity of the occasion, and the nature of the dispensation under which the Psalmist lived. We are commanded by our Lord Jesus to let our yea be yea, and our nay, nay; "for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil." If we cannot be believed on our word, we are surely not to be trusted on our oath; for to a true Christian

his simple word is as binding as another man's oath. Especially beware, O unconverted men! of trifling with solemn imprecations. Remember the woman at Devizes, who wished she might die if she had not paid her share in a joint purchase, and who fell dead there and then with the money in her hand.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 3.--"O Lord, my God, if I have done this, if there be iniquity in my hands_" In the primitive times the people of God were then a people under great reproach. What strange things does Tertullian tell us they reproached them withal; as that in their meetings they made Thyestes suppers, who invited his brother to a supper, and presented him with a dish of his own flesh. They charged them with uncleanness because they met in the night (for they durst not meet in the day), and said, they blew out the candles when they were together, and committed filthiness. They reproached them for ignorance, saying, they were all unlearned; and therefore the heathens in Tertullian's time used to paint the God of the Christians with an ass's head, and a book in his hand, to signify that though they pretended learning, yet they were an unlearned, silly people, rude and ignorant. Bishop Jewel in his sermon upon Lu 6:5, cites this out of Tertullian, and applies it to his time:-- "Do not our adversaries do the like," saith he, "at this day, against all those that profess the gospel of Christ? Oh, say they, who are they that favour this way? they are none but shoemakers, tailors, weavers, and such as were never at the university;" they are the bishop's own words. He cites likewise Tertullian a little after, saying, that the Christians were accounted the public enemies of the State. And Josephus tells us of Apollinaris, speaking concerning the Jews and Christians, that they are more foolish than any barbarian. And Paulus Fagius reports a story of an Egyptian, concerning the Christians, who said, "They were a gathering together of a most filthy, lecherous people;" and for the keeping of the Sabbath, he says, "they had a disease that was upon them, and they were fain to rest the seventh day because of that disease." And so in Augustine's time, he hath this expression, "Any one that begins to be godly, presently he must prepare to suffer reproach from the tongues of adversaries;" and this was their usual manner of reproach, "What shall we have of you, an Elias? a Jeremy?" And Nazianzen in one of his orations says, "It is ordinary to reproach, that I cannot think to go free myself." And so Athanasius, they called him Sathanasius, because he was a special instrument against the Arians. And Cyprian, they called him Coprian, one that gathers up dung, as if all the excellent things that he had gathered in his works were but dung.--^Jeremiah Burroughs.

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

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

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

have done no wrong.--^Joseph Caryl.

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

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

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

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6.--How and in what sense divine anger may become the hope of the righteous.

Fire fought by fire, or man's anger overcome by God's anger.

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

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

Verse 7 (last clause).--The coming of Christ to judgment for the good of his saints.

Exposition.

If I am not mistaken, David has now seen in the eye of his mind the Lord ascending to his judgment-seat, and beholding him seated there in royal state, he draws near to him to urge his suit anew. In the last two verses he besought Jehovah to arise, and now that he is arisen, he prepares to mingle with "the congregation of the people" who compass the Lord about. The royal heralds proclaim the opening of the court with the solemn words, "_The Lord shall judge the people_." Our petitioner rises at once, and cries with earnestness and humility, "_Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me_." His hand is on an honest heart, and his cry is to a righteous Judge. He sees a smile of complacency upon the face of the King, and in the name of all the assembled congregation he cries aloud, "_Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just_." Is not this the universal longing of the whole company of the elect? When shall we be delivered from the filthy conversation of these men of Sodom? When shall we escape from the filthiness of Mesech and the blackness of the tents of Kedar?

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

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

^Francis Quarles, 1592-1644.

Verse 9.--"The heart_" may signify the cogitations, and the "_reins_" the affections.--^Henry Ainsworth.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 8.--The character of the Judge before whom we all must stand.

Verse 9 (first clause).--(1) By changing their hearts; or (2) by restraining their wills, (3) or depriving them of power, (4) or removing them. Show the times when, the reasons why, such a prayer should be offered, and how, in the first sense, we may labour for its accomplishment.

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

Verse 9.--The period of sin, and the perpetuity of the righteous:--^Matthew Henry.

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

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

Exposition.

The judge has heard the cause, has cleared the guiltless, and uttered his voice against the persecutors. Let us draw near, and learn the results of the great assize. Yonder is the slandered one with his harp in hand, hymning the justice of his Lord, and rejoicing aloud in his own deliverance. "My defence is of God, which saveth the upright heart_" Oh, how good to have a true and upright heart. Crooked sinners, with all their craftiness, are foiled by the upright in heart. God defends the right. Filth will not long abide on the pure white garments of the saints, but shall be brushed off by divine providence, to the vexation of the men by whose base hands it was thrown upon the godly. When God shall try our cause, our sun has risen, and the sun of the wicked is set for ever. Truth, like oil, is ever above, no power of our enemies can drown it; we shall refute their slanders in the day when the trumpet wakes the dead, and we shall shine in honour when lying lips are put to silence. O believer, fear not all that thy foes can do or say against thee, for the tree which God plants no winds can hurt. "God judgeth the righteous_" he hath not given thee up to be condemned by the lips of persecutors. Thine enemies cannot sit on God's throne, nor blot thy name out of his book. Let them alone, then, for God will find time for his revenges.

"God is angry with the wicked every day_" He not only detests sin, but is angry with those who continue

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

"_If he turn not, he will whet his sword_." What blows are those which will be dealt by that long uplifted arm! God's sword has been sharpening upon the revolving stone of our daily wickedness, and if we will not repent, it will speedily cut us in pieces. Turn or burn if the sinner's only alternative. "_He hath bent his bow and made it ready_." Even now the thirsty arrow longs to wet itself with the blood of the _persecutor_. The bow is bent, the aim is taken, the arrow is fitted to the string, and what, O sinner, if the arrow should be let fly at thee even now! Remember, God's arrows never miss the mark, and are, every one of them, "instruments of death." Judgment may tarry, but it will not come too late. The Greek proverb saith, "The mill of God grinds late, but grinds to powder."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 10.--"_My defence is of God_." Literally, "_My shield is upon God_," like Ps 62:7, "My salvation is _upon_ God." The idea may be taken from the armour-bearer, ever ready at hand to give the needed weapon to the warrior.--^Andrew A. Bonar.

Verse 11.--"_God judgeth the righteous_," etc. Many learned disputes have arisen as to the meaning of this verse; and it must be confessed that its real import is by no means easily determined: without the words written in italics, which are not in the original, it will read thus, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry every day." The question still will be, is this a good rendering? To this question it may be replied, that there is strong evidence for a contrary one. Ainsworth translates it, "God _is_ a just judge; and God angrily threateneth every day." With this corresponds the reading of Coverdale's Bible, "God is a righteous judge, and God is ever threatening." In King Edward's Bible, of 1549, the reading is the same. But there is another class of critics who adopt quite a different view of the text, and apparently with much colour of argument. Bishop Horsley reads the verse, "God is a righteous judge, although he is not angry every day." In this rendering he seems to have followed most of the ancient versions. The Vulgate reads it, "God is a judge, righteous, strong, and patient; will he be angry every day?" The Septuagint reads it, "God is a righteous judge, strong, and longsuffering; not bringing forth his anger every day." The Syriac has it, "God is the judge of righteousness; he is not angry every day." In this view of the text Dr. A. Clarke agrees, and expresses it as his opinion that the text was first corrupted by the Chaldee. This learned divine proposes to restore the text thus, "_I_ <0410>, with the vowel point _tseri_, signifies God; _al_ <0408>, the same letters, with the point _pathach_, signifies _not_." There is by this view of the original no repetition of the divine name in the verse, so that it will simply read, as thus restored, "God is a righteous judge, and is NOT angry every day." The text at large, as is intimated in the Vulgate, Septuagint, and some other ancient versions, conveys a strong intimation of the longsuffering of God, whose hatred of sin is unchangeable, but whose anger against transgressors is marked by infinite patience, and does not burst forth in vengeance every day.--^John Morison, in "An

Exposition of the Book of Psalms," 1829.

Verse 11.--"_God is angry_." The original expression here is very forcible. The true idea of it appears to be, to _froth_ or _foam at the mouth_ with indignation.--^Richard Mant, D.D., 1824.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 13.--"_He ordaineth his arrows_" This might more exactly be rendered, "He maketh his arrows burning." This image would seem to be deduced from the use of fiery arrows.^--John Kitto, 1804-1854.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 10.--"_Upright in heart_" Explain the character.

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

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

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

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

Exposition.

In three graphic pictures we see the slanderer's history. A woman in travail furnishes the first metaphor. "_He travaileth with iniquity_" He is full of it, pained until he can carry it out, he longs to work his will, he is full of pangs until his evil intent is executed. "_He hath conceived mischief_" This is the original of his base design. The devil has had doings with him, and the virus of evil is in him. And now behold the progeny of this unhallowed conception. The child is worthy of its father, his name of old was "the father of lies," and the birth doth not belie the parent, for _he brought forth falsehood_. Thus, one figure is carried out to perfection; the Psalmist now illustrates his meaning by another taken from the stratagems of the hunter. "_He made a pit and digged it_" He was cunning in his plans, and industrious in his labours. He stooped to the dirty work of digging. He did not fear to soil his own hands, he was willing to work in _a ditch_ if others might fall therein. What mean things men will do to wreak revenge on the godly. They hunt for good men, as if they were brute beasts; nay, they will not give them the fair chase afforded to the hare or the fox, but must secretly entrap them, because they can neither run them down nor shoot them down. Our enemies will not meet us to the face, for they fear us as much as they pretend to despise us. But let us look on to the end of the scene. The verse says, he "_is fallen into the ditch which he made_" Ah! there he is, let us laugh at his disappointment. Lo! he is himself the beast, he has hunted his own soul, and the chase has brought him a goodly victim. Aha, aha, so should it ever be. Come hither and make merry with this entrapped hunter, this biter who has bitten himself. Give him no pity, for it will be wasted on such a wretch. He is but rightly and richly rewarded by being paid in his own coin. He cast forth evil from his mouth, and it has fallen into his bosom. He has set his own house on fire with the torch which he lit to burn a neighbour. He sent forth a foul bird, and it has come back to its nest. The rod which he lifted on high, has smitten his own back. He shot an arrow upward, and it has "_returned upon his own head_" He hurled a stone at another, and it has "_come down upon his own pate_" Curses are like young chickens, they always come home to roost. Ashes always fly back in the face of him that throws them. "As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him" (Ps 109:17.) How often has this been the case in the histories of both ancient and modern times. Men have burned their own fingers when they were hoping to brand their neighbour. And if this does not happen now, it will hereafter. The lord has caused dogs to lick the blood of Ahab in the midst of the vineyard of Naboth. Sooner or later the evil deeds of persecutors have always leaped back into their arms. So will it be in the last great day, when satan's fiery darts shall all be quivered in his own heart, and all his followers shall reap the harvest which they themselves have sown.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 14.--"_Behold, he travaileth with iniquity_" etc. The words express the _conception, birth, carriage_, and _miscarriage_, of a _plot_ against David. In which you may consider:--(1.) What his _enemies_ did. (2.) What _God_ did. (3.) What _we all_ should do: his enemies' _intention_, God's _prevention_, and our _duty_; his enemies' intention, _he travaileth with iniquity, and conceiveth mischief_; God's prevention, _he brought forth a lie_; our duty, _behold_. ... Observe the aggravation of the sin, _he conceiveth_. He was not put upon it, or forced into it; it was voluntary. The more liberty we have not to sin, makes our sin the greater. He did not this in passion, but in cold blood. The less will, less sin.--^Richard Sibbs.

Verse 14.--"_He travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief_" All note that conceiving is before travailing, but here travailing, as a woman in labour, goeth first; the reason whereof is, that the wicked are so hotly set upon the evil which they maliciously intend, that they would be immediately acting of it if they could tell how, even before they have conceived by what means; but in fine they bring forth but a lie, that is, they find that their own hearts lied to them, when they promised good success, but they had evil. For their haste to perpetrate mischief is intimated in the word rendered "_persecutors_" (verse 13), which properly signifieth _ardentes, burning_; that is, with a desire to do mischief--and this admits of no delay. A

notable common-place, both setting forth the evil case of the wicked, especially attempting anything against the righteous, to move them to repentance--for thou hast God for thine enemy warring against thee, whose force thou canst not resist--and the greedy desire of the wicked to be evil, but their conception shall all prove abortive.--^J. Mayer, in loc.

Verse 14.--"_And hath brought forth falsehood_" Every sin is a lie.--Augustine.

Verse 14.--

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

^Thomas Fuller.

Verses 14,15.--"_They have digged a pit for us_"--and that low, unto hell--"_and are fallen into it themselves."

"No juster law can be devised or made, Than that sin's agents fall by their own trade."

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

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

Verse 16.--That most witty of commentators, Old Master Trapp, tells the following notable anecdote, in illustration of this verse: That was a very remarkable instance of Dr. Story, who, escaping out of prison in Queen Elizabeth's days, got to Antwerp, and there thinking himself out of the reach of God's rod, he got commission under the Duke of Alva to search all ships coming thither for English books. But one Parker, an English merchant, trading to Antwerp, laid his snare fair (saith our chronicler), to catch this foul bird, causing secret notice to be given to Story, that in his ship were stores of heretical books, with other intelligence that might stand him in stead. The Canonist conceiving that all was quite sure, hastened to the ship, where, with looks very big upon the poor mariners, each cabin, chest, and corner above-board were searched, and some things found to draw him further on: so that the hatches must be opened, which seemed to be unwillingly done, and great signs of fear were showed by their faces. This drew on the Doctor to descend into the hold, where now in the trap the mouse might well gnaw, but could not get out, for the hatches were down, and the sails hoisted up, which, with a merry gale were blown into England, where ere long he was arraigned, and condemned of high treason, and accordingly executed at Tyburn, as he had well deserven.

Verse 16.--The story of Phalaris's bull, invented for the torment of others, and serving afterwards for himself, is notorious in heathen story. ... It was a voluntary judgment which Archbishop Crammer inflicted on himself when he thrust that very hand into the fire, and burnt it, with which he had signed to the popish articles, crying out, "_Oh, my unworthy right hand_!" but who will deny that the hand of the Almighty was also concerned in it?--^William Turner in "Divine Judgments by way of Retaliation," 1697.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

We conclude with the joyful contrast. In this all these Psalms are agreed; they all exhibit the blessedness

of the righteous, and make its colours the more glowing by contrast with the miseries of the wicked. The bright jewel sparkles in a black foil. Praise is the occupation of the godly, their eternal work, and their present pleasure. Singing is the fitting embodiment for praise, and therefore do the saints make melody before the Lord Most High. The slandered one is now a singer: his harp was unstrung for a very little season, and now we leave him sweeping its harmonious chords, and flying on their music to the third heaven of adoring praise.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 17.--The excellent duty of praise.

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

Eighth Psalm

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

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

DIVISION.--The first and last verses (1,8) are a sweet song of admiration, in which the excellence of the name of God is extolled. The intermediate verses are made up of holy wonder at the Lord's greatness in creation, and at his condescension towards man. Poole, in his annotation, has well said, "It is a great question among interpreters, whether this Psalm speaks of man in general, and of the honour which God puts upon him in his creation; or only of the man Christ Jesus. Possibly both may be reconciled and put together, and the controversy, if rightly stated, may be ended, for the scope and business of this Psalm seems plainly to be this: to display and celebrate the great love and kindness of God to mankind, not only in his creation, but especially in his redemption by Jesus Christ, whom, as he was man, he advanced to the honour and dominion here mentioned, that he might carry on his great and glorious work. So Christ is the principal subject of this Psalm, and it is interpreted of him, both by our Lord himself (Mt 21:16), and by his holy apostle (1Co 15:27; Heb 2:6,7).

EXPOSITION.

Unable to express the glory of God, the Psalmist utters a note of exclamation. O Jehovah our Lord! We need not wonder at this, for no heart can measure, no tongue can utter, the half of the greatness of Jehovah. The whole creation is full of his glory and radiant with the excellency of his power; his goodness and his wisdom are manifested on every hand. The countless myriads of terrestrial beings, from man the head, to the creeping worm at the foot, are all supported and nourished by the Divine bounty. The solid fabric of the universe leans upon his eternal arm. Universally is he present, and everywhere is his name excellent. God worketh ever and everywhere. There is no _place_ where God is not. The miracles of his power await us on all sides. Traverse the silent valleys where the rocks enclose you on either side, rising like the battlements of heaven till you can see but a strip of the blue sky far overhead; you may be the only traveller who has passed through that glen; the bird may start up affrighted, and the moss may tremble beneath the first tread of human foot; but God is there in a thousand wonders, upholding yon rocky barriers, filling the flowercups with their perfume, and refreshing the lonely pines with the breath of his mouth. Descend, if you will, into the lowest depths of the ocean, where undisturbed the water sleeps, and the very sand is motionless in unbroken quiet, but the glory of the Lord is there, revealing its excellence in the silent palace of the sea. Borrow the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, but God is there. Mount to the highest heaven, or dive into the deepest hell, and God is in both hymned in everlasting song, or justified in terrible vengeance. Everywhere, and in every place, God dwells and is manifestly at work. Nor on earth alone is Jehovah extolled, for his brightness shines forth in the firmament above the earth. His glory exceeds the glory of the starry heavens; above the region of the stars he hath set fast his everlasting throne, and there he dwells in light ineffable. Let us adore him "who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south." (Job 9:8,9.) We can scarcely find more fitting words than those of Nehemiah, "Thou even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens,

with all their hosts, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." Returning to the text we are led to observe that this Psalm is addressed to God, because none but the Lord himself can fully know his own glory. The believing heart is ravished with what it sees, but God only knows the glory of God. What a sweetness lies in the little word *_our_*, how much is God's glory endeared to us when we consider our interest in him as our Lord. *_How excellent is thy name_!* no words can express that excellency; and therefore it is left as a note of exclamation. The very name of Jehovah is excellent, what must his person be. Note the fact that even the heavens cannot contain his glory, it is set *_above the heavens_*, since it is and ever must be too great for the creature to express. When wandering amid the alps, we felt that the Lord was infinitely greater than all his grandest works, and under that feeling we roughly wrote these few lines:--

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

Yon Alps, that lift their heads above the clouds And hold familiar converse with the stars, Are dust, at which the balance trembleth not, Compared with His divine immensity. The snow-crown'd summits fail to set Him forth, Who dwelleth in Eternity, and bears Alone, the name of High and Lofty One. Depths unfathomed are too shallow to express The wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord, The mirror of the creatures has no space To bear the image of the Infinite. 'Tis true the Lord hath fairly writ His name, And set His seal upon creation's brow. But as the skilful potter much excels The vessel which he fashions on the wheel, E'en so, but in proportion greater far, Jehovah's self transcends His noblest works. Earth's ponderous wheels would break, her axles snap, If freighted with the load of Deity. Space is too narrow for the Eternal's rest, And time too short a footstool for His throne. E'en avalanche and thunder lack a voice, To utter the full volume of His praise. How then can I declare Him! Where are words With which my glowing tongue may speak His name! Silent I bow, and humbly I adore.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Whole Psalm.--Now, consider but the scope of the Psalm, as the apostle quoteth it to prove the world to come. Heb 2. Any one that reads the Psalm would think that the Psalmist doth but set forth old Adam in his kingdom, in his paradise, made a little lower than the angels--for we have spirits wrapped up in flesh and blood, whereas they are spirits simply--a degree lower, as if they were dukes, and we marquises; one would think, I say, that this were all his meaning, and that it is applied to Christ but by way of allusion. But the truth is, the apostle bringeth it in to prove and to convince these Hebrews, to whom he wrote, that that Psalm was meant of Christ, of that man whom they expected to be the Messiah, the man Christ Jesus. And that he doth it, I prove by the sixth verse (Heb 2:6) --it is the observation that Beza hath---"One in a certain place," quoting David, *_diamartur"mai_ <1263>*, hath testified; so we may translate it, hath testified it, *_etiam atque etiam_*, testified most expressly; he bringeth an express proof for it that it was meant of the Man Christ Jesus; therefore it is not an allusion. And indeed it was Beza that did first begin that interpretation that I read of, and himself therefore doth excuse it and make an apology for it, that he diverteth out of the common road, though since many others have followed him.

Now the scope of the Psalm is plainly this: in Ro 5:14, you read that Adam was a type of him that was to come. Now in Ps 8, you find there Adam's world, the type of a world to come; he was the first Adam, and had a world, so the second Adam hath a world also appointed for him; there are his oxen and his sheep,

and the fowls of the air, whereby are meant other things, devils perhaps, and wicked men, the prince of the air; as by the heavens there, the angels, or the apostles rather--"the heavens declare the glory of God;" that is applied to the apostles, that were preachers of the gospel.

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

First, it was not meant of man in innocency properly and principally. Why? Because in the second verse (2) he saith, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." There were no babes in the time of Adam's innocency, he fell before there were any. Secondly, he addeth, "That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger;" the devil that is, for he showed himself the enemy there, to be a manslayer from the beginning. God would use man to still him; alas! he overcame Adam presently. It must be meant of another therefore, one that is able to still this enemy and avenger.

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

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

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

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

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

Verse 1.--" _Above the heavens_;" Not in the heavens, but " _above the heavens_;" even greater, beyond, and higher than they; "angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject unto him." As Paul says, he hath "ascended up far above all heavens." And with this his glory above the heaven is connected, his sending forth his name upon earth through his Holy Spirit. As the apostle adds in this passage, "He hath ascended up far above all heavens; and he gave some apostles." And thus here: "thy name excellent in

all the world;" "Thy glory above the heavens."--^Isaac Williams.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--"_O Lord, our Lord_"--Personal appropriation of the Lord as ours. The privilege of holding such a portion. "_How excellent_" etc. The excellence of the name and nature of God in all places, and under all circumstances. Sermon or lecture upon the glory of God in creation and providence. "_In all the earth_" The universal revelation of God in nature and its excellency. "_Thy glory above the heavens_" The incomprehensible and infinite glory of God. "_Above the heavens_" The glory of God outsoaring the intellect of angels, and the splendour of heaven.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 2.--"_Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength_" etc. In a prophetic manner, speaking of that which was to be done by children many hundreds of years after, for the asserting of his infinite mercy in sending his Son Jesus Christ into the world to save us from our sins. For so the Lord applieth their crying, "Hosannah to the Son of David" in the temple. And thus both Basil and other ancients, and some new writers also understand it. But Calvin will have it meant of God's wonderful providing for them, by turning their mothers' blood into milk, and giving them the faculty to suck, thus nourishing and preserving them, which sufficiently convinceth all gainsayers of God's wonderful providence towards the weakest and most shiftless of all creatures.--^John Mayer, 1653.

Verse 2.--Who are these "_babes and sucklings_"? 1. Man in general, who springeth from so weak and poor a beginning as that of babes and sucklings, yet is at length advanced to such power as to grapple with, and overcome the enemy and the avenger. 2. David in particular, who being but a ruddy youth, God used him as an instrument to discomfit Goliath of Gath. 3. More especially our Lord Jesus Christ, who assuming our nature and all the sinless infirmities of it, and submitting to the weakness of an infant, and after dying is gone in the same nature to reign in heaven, till he hath brought all his enemies under his feet. Ps 110:1; 1Co 15:27. Then was our human nature exalted above all other creatures, when the Son of God was made of a woman, carried in the womb. 4. The apostles, who to outward appearance were despicable, in a manner children and sucklings in comparison of the great ones of the world; poor

despised creatures, yet principal instruments of God's service and glory. Therefore 'tis notable, that when Christ glorifieth his Father for the wise and free dispensation of his saving grace (Mt 11:25), he saith, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," so called from the meanness of their condition. ... And you shall see it was spoken when the disciples were sent abroad, and had power given them over unclean spirits. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." This he acknowledged to be an act of infinite condescension in God. 5. Those children that cried Hosanna to Christ, make up part of the sense, for Christ defendeth their practice by this Scripture. ... 6. Not only the apostles, but all those that fight under Christ's banner, and are listed into his confederacy, may he called babes and sucklings; first, because of their condition; secondly, their disposition. ... 1. Because of their condition. ... God in the government of the world is pleased to subdue the enemies of his kingdom by weak and despised instruments. 2. Because of their disposition: they are most humble spirited. We are told (Mt 18:3), "Except ye be converted, and become as little children," etc. As if he had said, you strive for pre-eminence and worldly greatness in my kingdom; I tell you my kingdom is a kingdom of babes and containeth none but the humble, and such as are little in their own eyes, and are contented to be small and despised in the eyes of others, and so do not seek after great matters in the world. A young child knoweth not what striving or state meaneth, and therefore by all emblem and visible representation of a child set in the midst of them, Christ would take them off from the expectation of a carnal kingdom.--[^]Thomas Manton, 1620-1677.

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 3.--"_When I consider thy heavens_" etc. David surveying the firmament, broke forth into this consideration: "_When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast created, what is man_" etc. How cometh he to mention the moon and stars, and omit the sun? the other being but his pensioners, shining with that exhibition of light which the bounty of the sun allots them. It is answered, this was David's night meditation, when the sun, departing to the other world, left the lesser lights only visible in heaven; and as the sky is best beheld by day in the glory thereof, so too it is best surveyed by night in the variety of the same. Night was made for man to rest in. But when I cannot sleep, may I, with the Psalmist, entertain my waking with good thoughts. Not to use them as opium, to

invite my corrupt nature to slumber, but to bolt out bad thoughts, which otherwise would possess my soul.--^Thomas Fuller, 1608-1661.

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

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

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

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

Verse 3.--"When I consider thy heavens_" etc. It is truly a most Christian exercise to extract a sentiment of piety from the works and the appearances of nature. It has the authority of the sacred writers upon its side, and even our Saviour himself gives it the weight and the solemnity of his example. "Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet your heavenly Father careth for them." He expatiates on

the beauty of a single flower, and draws from it the delightful argument of confidence in God. He gives us to see that taste may be combined with piety, and that the same heart may be occupied with all that is serious in the contemplations of religion, and be at the same time alive to the charms and the loveliness of nature. The Psalmist takes a still loftier flight. He leaves the world, and lifts his imagination to that mighty expanse which spreads above it and around it. He wings his way through space, and wanders in thought over its immeasurable regions. Instead of a dark and unpeopled solitude, he sees it crowded with splendour, and filled with the energy of the divine presence. Creation rises in its immensity before him, and the world, with all which it inherits, shrinks into littleness at a contemplation so vast and so overpowering. He wonders that he is not overlooked amid the grandeur and the variety which are on every side of him; and, passing upward from the majesty of nature to the majesty of nature's Architect, he exclaims, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldst deign to visit him?" It is not for us to say whether inspiration revealed to the psalmist the wonders of the modern astronomy. But, even though the mind be a perfect stranger to the science of these enlightened times, the heavens present a great and an elevating spectacle, an immense concave reposing upon the circular boundary of the world, and the innumerable lights which are suspended from on high, moving with solemn regularity along its surface. It seems to have been at night that the piety of the Psalmist was awakened by this contemplation; when the moon and the stars were visible, and not when the sun had risen in his strength and thrown a splendour around him, which bore down and eclipsed all the lesser glories of the firmament.--^Thomas Chalmers, D.D., 1817.

Verse 3.--"_Thy heavens_"--

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

^Edward Young.

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

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

Verse 4.--"_What is man, that thou art mindful of him_" etc. My readers must be careful to mark the design of the Psalmist, which is to enhance, by this comparison, the infinite goodness of God; for it is, indeed, a wonderful thing that the Creator of heaven, whose glory is so surpassingly great as to ravish us with the highest admiration, condescends so far as graciously to take upon him the care of the human race. That the Psalmist makes this contrast may be inferred from the Hebrew word ^n"wsh_ <0582>, which we have rendered man, and which expresses the frailty of man rather than any strength or power which he possesses. ... Almost all interpreters render pfqad_ <06485>, the last word of this verse, to visit; and I am unwilling to differ from them, since this sense suits the passage very well. But as it sometimes signifies to remember, and as we will often find in the Psalms the repetition of the same thought in current words, it may here be very properly translated to remember; as if David had said, "This is a marvellous thing, that God thinks upon men, and remembers them continually_."--^John Calvin, 1509-1564.

Verse 4.--"_What is man_" But, O God, what a little lord hast thou made over this great world! The least corn of sand is not so small to the whole earth, as man is to the heaven. When I see the heavens, the sun, the moon, and stars, O God, what is man? Who would think thou shouldst make all these creatures

for one, and that one well-near the least of all? Yet none but he can see what thou hast done; none but he can admire and adore thee in what he seeth: how had he need to do nothing but this, since he alone must do it! Certainly the price and value of things consist not in the quantity; one diamond is worth more than many quarries of stone; one loadstone hath more virtue than mountains of earth. it is lawful for us to praise thee in ourselves. All thy creation hath not more wonder in it than one of us: other creatures thou madest by a simple command; Man, not without a divine consultation: others at once; man thou didst form, then inspire: others in several shapes, like to none but themselves; man, after thine own image: others with qualities fit for service; man, for dominion. Man had his name from thee; they had their names from man. How should we be consecrated to thee above all others, since thou hast bestowed more cost on us than other!--^Joseph Hall, D.D., Bishop of Norwich, 1574-1656.

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

Verse 4.-- _Man_, in Hebrew--infirm or miserable man--by which it is apparent that he speaks of man not according to the state of his creation, but as fallen into a state of sin, and misery, and mortality. _Art mindful of him_, i.e., carest for him, and conferrest such high favours upon him. _The son of man_, heb., _the son of Adam_ that great apostate from and rebel against God; the sinful son of a sinful father--his son by likeness of disposition and manners, no less than by procreation; all which tends to magnify the divine mercy. _That thou visitest him_ --not in anger, as that word is sometimes used, but with thy grace and mercy, as it is taken in Ge 21:1; Ex 4:31; Ps 65:9; 106:4; 144:3.

Verse 4.--" _What is man?_" The Scripture gives many answers to this question. Ask the prophet Isaiah, " _What is man?_" and he answers (Isa 40:6), man is "grass"--"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." Ask David, " _What is man?_" He answers (Ps 62:9), man is " _a lie_,"

not a liar only, or a deceiver, but "_a lie_," and a deceit. All the answers the Holy Ghost gives concerning man, are to humble man: man is ready to flatter himself, and one man to flatter another, but God tells us plainly what we are. ... It is a wonder that God should vouchsafe a gracious look upon such a creature as man; it is wonderful, considering the distance between God and man, as man is a creature and God the creator. "_What is man_," that God should take notice of him? Is he not a clod of earth, a piece of clay? But consider him as a sinful and an unclean creature, and we may wonder to amazement: what is an unclean creature that God should magnify him? Will the Lord indeed put value upon filthiness, and fix his approving eye upon an impure thing? One step further; what is rebellious man, man an enemy to God, that God should magnify him! what admiration can answer this question? Will God prefer his enemies, and magnify those who would cast him down? Will a prince exalt a traitor, or give him honour who attempts to take away his life? The sinful nature of man is an enemy to the nature of God, and would pull God out of heaven; yet God even at that time is raising man to heaven: sin would lessen the great God, and yet God greatens sinful man.--^Joseph Caryl.

Verse 4.--"_What is man_?" Oh, the grandeur and littleness, the excellence and the corruption, the majesty and meanness of man!--^Pascal, 1623-1662.

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

Verse 4.--"_What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him_?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

^Thomas Washbourne. D.D., 1654.

Verse 4.--" _What is man_?"--

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

^Edward Young, 1681-1775.

Verses 4-8.--" _What is man_, " etc.

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

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

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

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

The starres have us to bed; Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws; Musick and light attend our head. All things unto our _flesh_ are kinde In their _descent_ and _being_; to our _minde_ In their _ascent_ and _cause_.

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

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

^George Herbert, 1593.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels---a little lower in nature, since they are immortal, and but

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

Redeemer is represented as submitting to be humbled--"made a little lower than the angels," for the sake or with a view to the glory that was to be the recompense of his sufferings. This is a very important representation--one that should be most attentively considered; and from it may be drawn, we think, a strong and clear argument for the divinity of Christ.

We could never see how it could be humility in any creature, whatever the dignity of his condition, to assume the office of a Mediator and to work out our reconciliation. We do not forget to how extreme degradation a Mediator must consent to be reduced, and through what suffering and ignominy he could alone achieve our redemption; but neither do we forget the unmeasured exaltation which was to be the Mediator's reward, and which, if Scripture be true, was to make him far higher than the highest of principalities and powers; and we know not where would have been the amazing humility, where the unparalleled condescension, had any mere creature consented to take the office on the prospect of such a recompense. A being who knew that he should be immeasurably elevated if he did a certain thing, can hardly be commended for the greatness of his humility in doing that thing. The nobleman who should become a slave, knowing that in consequence he should be made a king, does not seem to us to afford any pattern of condescension. He must be the king already, incapable of obtaining any accession to his greatness, ere his entering the state of slavery can furnish an example of humility. And, in like manner, we can never perceive that any being but a divine Being can justly be said to have given a model of condescension in becoming our Redeemer ... If he could not lay aside the perfections, he could lay aside the glories of Deity; without ceasing to be God he could appear to be man; and herein we believe was the humiliation--herein that self-emptying which Scripture identifies with our Lord's having been "made a little lower than the angels." In place of manifesting himself in the form of God, and thereby centering on himself the delighted and reverential regards of all unfallen orders of intelligences, he must conceal himself in the form of a servant, and no longer gathering that rich tribute of homage, which had flowed from every quarter of his unlimited empire, produced by his power, sustained by his providence, he had the same essential glory, the same real dignity, which he had ever had. These belonged necessarily to his nature, and could no more be parted with, even for a time, than could that nature itself. But every outward mark of majesty and of greatness might be laid aside; and deity, in place of coming down with such dazzling manifestations of supremacy as would have compelled the world he visited to fall prostrate and adore, might so veil his splendours, and so hide himself in an ignoble form, that when men saw him there should be no "beauty that they should desire him." And this was what Christ did, in consenting to be "made a little lower than the angels;" and in doing this he emptied himself, or "made himself of no reputation." The very being who in the form of God had given its light and magnificence to heaven, appeared upon earth in the form of a servant; and not merely so--for every creature is God's servant, and therefore the form of a servant would have been assumed, had he appeared as an angel or an archangel--but in the form of the lowest of these servants, being "made in the likeness of men"--of men the degraded, the apostate, the perishing.--[^]Henry Melvill, B.D., 1854.

Verses 5,6.--God magnifies man in the work of creation. The third verse shows us what it was that raised the Psalmist to this admiration of the goodness of God to man: "_When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; Lord, what is man_?" God in the work of creation made all these things serviceable and instrumental for the good of man. What is man, that he should have a sun, moon, and stars, planted in the firmament for him? What creature is this? When great preparations are made in any place, much provisions laid in, and the house adorned with richest furnitures, we say, "_What is this man that comes to such a house_?" When such a goodly fabric was raised up, the goodly house of the world adorned and furnished, we have reason admirably to say, What is this man that must be the tenant or inhabitant of his house? There is yet a higher exaltation of man in the creation; man was magnified with the stamp of God's image, one part whereof the Psalmist describes in the sixth verse, "_Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet," etc. Thus man was magnified in creation. What was man that he should have the rule of the world given him? That he should be lord over the fish of the sea, and over the beasts of the field, and over the fowls of the air? Again, man was magnified in creation, in that God set him in the next degree to the angels; "_Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels_;" there is the first part of the answer to this question, man was magnified in being made so excellent a creature, and in having so many excellent creatures made for him. All which may be understood of man as created in God's image; but since the transgression it is peculiar to Christ, as the apostle applies it (Heb 2:6), and if those who have their blood and dignity restored by the work of redemption, which is the next part of man's

exaltation.--^Joseph Caryl.

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

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

Verse 6.--"*Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands*," etc. For thy help against wandering thoughts in prayer ... labour to keep thy distance to the world, and that sovereignty which God hath given thee over it in its profits and pleasures, or whatever else may prove a snare to thee. While the father and master know their place, and keep their distance, so long children and servants will keep theirs by being dutiful and officious; but when they forget this, the father grows fond of the one, and the master too familiar with the other, then they begin to lose their authority, and the others to grow saucy and under no command; bid them go, and it may be they will not stir; set them a task, and they will bid you do it yourself. Truly, thus it fares with the Christian; all the creatures are his servants, and so long as he keeps his heart at a holy distance from them, and maintains his lordship over them, not laying them in his bosom, which God hath put "*under his feet*," all is well; he marches to the duties of God's worship in a goodly order. He can be private with God, and these not be bold to crowd in to disturb him.--^William Gurnall.

Verses 7,8.--He who rules over the material world, is Lord also of the intellectual or spiritual creation represented thereby. The souls of the faithful, lowly and harmless are the sheep of his pasture; those who, like oxen, are strong to labour in the church, and who, by expounding the Word of Life, tread out the corn for the nourishment of the people, own him for their kind and beneficent Master; nay, tempers fierce and untractable as the beasts of the desert, are yet subject to his will; spirits of the angelic kind, that, like

the birds of the air, traverse freely the superior region, move at his command; and those evil ones whose habitation is in the deep abyss, even to the great leviathan himself, all are put under the feet of King Messiah.--^George Horne, D.D.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

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

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

Verse 6 (second clause).--The proper place for all worldly things, "_under his feet_."

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 9.--The wanderer in many climes enjoying the sweetness of his Lord's name in every condition.

Ninth Psalm

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

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

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

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

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

EXPOSITION.

With a holy resolution the songster begins his hymn; I will praise thee, O Lord. It sometimes needs all our determination to face the foe and bless the Lord in the teeth of his enemies; vowing that whoever else may be silent we will bless his name; here, however, the overthrow of the foe is viewed as complete, and the song flows with sacred fullness of delight. It is our duty to praise the Lord; let us perform it as a privilege. Observe that David's praise is all given to the Lord. Praise is to be offered to God alone; we may be grateful to the intermediate agent, but our thanks must have long wings and mount aloft to heaven. With my whole heart. Half heart is no heart. I will show forth. There is true praise in the thankful telling forth to others of our heavenly Father's dealings with us; this is one of the themes upon which the godly should speak often to one another, and it will not be casting pearls before swine if we make even the ungodly hear of the loving-kindness of the Lord to us. All thy marvellous works. Gratitude for one mercy refreshes the memory as to thousands of others. One silver link in the chain draws up a long series

of tender remembrances. Here is eternal work for us, for there can be no end to the showing forth of all his deeds of love. If we consider our own sinfulness and nothingness, we must feel that every work of preservation, forgiveness, conversion, deliverance, sanctification, &c., which the Lord has wrought for us, or in us is a marvellous work. Even in heaven, divine loving-kindness will doubtless be as much a theme of surprise as of rapture.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

Verse 1.--"I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, I will shew forth all thy marvellous works." The words, "With my whole heart," serve at once to show the greatness of the deliverances wrought for the psalmist, and to distinguish him from the hypocrites--the coarser, who praise the Lord for his goodness merely with the lips; and the more refined, who praise him with just half their heart, while they secretly ascribe the deliverance more to themselves than to him. "All thy wonders," the marvellous token of thy grace. The Psalmist shows by this term, that he recognised them in all their greatness. Where this is done, there the Lord is also praised with the whole heart.- Half-heartedness, and the depreciation of divine grace, go hand in hand. The I'b_ <03820> is the I'b_ instrum_. The heart is the instrument of praise, the mouth only its organ.--[^]E. W. Hengstenberg.

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

Verses 1,2.--"I will confess unto thee, O Lord, with my whole heart," etc. Behold, with what a flood of the most sweet affections he says that he "will confess," "show forth," "rejoice," "be glad," and "sing," being filled with ecstasy! He does not simply say, "I will confess," but, "with my heart," and "with my whole heart." Nor does he propose to speak simply of "works," but of the "marvellous works" of God, and of "all" those "works." Thus his spirit (like John in the womb) exults and rejoices in God his Saviour, who has done great things for him, and those marvellous things which follow. In which words are opened the subject of this Psalm: that is, that he therein sings the marvellous works of God. And these works are wonderful, because he converts, by those who are nothing, those who have all things, and, by the ALMUTH who live in hidden faith, and are dead to the world, he humbles those who flourish in glory, and are looked upon in the world. Thus accomplishing such mighty things without force, without arms, without labour, by the cross only and blood. But how will his saying, that he will show forth "all" his marvellous works, agree with that of Job 9:10, "which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number"? For who can show forth all the marvellous works of God? We may say, therefore, that these things are spoken in that excess of feeling in which he said (Ps 6:6), "I will water my

couch with my tears." That is, he hath such an ardent desire to speak of the wonderful works of God, that, as far as his wishes are concerned, he would set them "_all_" forth, though he could not do it, for love has neither bounds nor end: and as Paul saith (1Co 13:7), "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things;" hence it can do all things, and does do all things, for God looketh at the heart and spirit.--^Martin Luther.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--I. The only object of our praise--"thee, O Lord." II. The abundant themes of praise--"all thy marvellous works." III. The proper nature of praise-- "with my whole heart."--^B. Davies.

Verse 1.--"_I will show forth_" Endless employment and enjoyment.

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

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 2.--Sacred song: its connection with holy gladness. The duty, excellence, and grounds of holy cheerfulness.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

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

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

are overtaken and perish in the fall.--^Henry Hammond, D.D.

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 4.--(1) The rights of the righteous are sure to be assailed, (2) but equally sure to be defended.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

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

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6.--I. The great enemy. II. The destructions he has caused. III. The means of his overthrow. IV. the rest which shall ensue.

Exposition.

In the light of the past the future is not doubtful. Since the same Almighty God fills the throne of power, we can with unhesitating confidence, exult in our security for all time to come.

The enduring existence and unchanging dominion of our Jehovah, are the firm foundations of our joy. The enemy and his destructions shall come to a perpetual end, but God and his throne shall _endure for ever_. The eternity of divine sovereignty yields unfailing consolation. By the throne being _prepared for judgment_, are we not to understand the swiftness of divine justice. In heaven's court suitors are not worn out with long delays. Term-time lasts all the year round in the court of King's Bench above. Thousands may come at once to the throne of the Judge of all the earth, but neither plaintiff nor defendant shall have to complain that he is not prepared to give their cause a fair hearing.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 8.--"_He shall judge the world in righteousness_" In this judgment tears will not prevail, prayers will not be heard, promises will not be admitted, repentance will be too late; and as for riches, honourable titles, sceptres, and diadems, these will profit much less; and the inquisition shall be so curious and diligent, that not one light thought nor one idle word (not repented of in the life past), shall be forgotten. For truth itself hath said, not in jest, but in earnest, "Of every idle word which men have spoken, they shall give an account in the day of judgment." Oh, how many which now sin with great delight, yea, even with greediness (as if we served a God of wood or of stone, which seeth nothing, or can do nothing), will be then astonished, ashamed, and silent! Then shall the days of thy mirth be ended, and thou shalt be overwhelmed with everlasting darkness; and instead of thy pleasures, thou shalt have everlasting torments.--^Thomas Tymme.

Verse 8.--"_He shall judge the world in righteousness_" Even Paul, in his great address on Mars' Hill, a thousand years after, could find no better words in which to teach the Athenians the doctrine of the judgment-day than the Septuagint rendering of this clause.--^William S. Plumer.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

Ignorance is worst when it amounts to ignorance of God, and knowledge is best when it exercises itself upon _the name_ of God. This most excellent knowledge leads to the most excellent grace of faith. O, to learn more of the attributes and character of God. Unbelief, that hooting nightbird, cannot live in the light of divine knowledge, it flies before the sun of God's great and gracious name. If we read this verse literally, there is, no doubt, a glorious fullness of assurance in the names of God. We have recounted them in the "Hints for Preachers," and would direct the reader's attention to them. By knowing his name is also meant an experimental acquaintance with the attributes of God, which are everyone of them anchors

to hold the soul from drifting in seasons of peril. The Lord may hide his face for a season from his people, but he never has utterly, finally, really, or angrily, _forsaken them that seek him_. Let the poor seekers draw comfort from this fact, and let the finders rejoice yet more exceedingly, for what must be the Lord's faithfulness to those who find if he is so gracious to those who seek.

"O hope of every contrite heart, O joy of all the meek, To those who fall how kind thou art, How good to those who seek.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 10.--I. All-important knowledge--"know thy name." II. Blessed result--"will put their trust in thee." III. Sufficient reason--"for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."---T. W. Medhurst.

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

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

Exposition.

Being full of gratitude himself, our inspired author is eager to excite others to join the strain, and praise God in the same manner as he had himself vowed to do in the first and second verses. The heavenly spirit of praise is gloriously contagious, and he that hath it is never content unless he can excite all who surround him to unite in his sweet employ. Singing and preaching, as means of glorifying God, are here

joined together, and it is remarkable that, connected with all revivals of gospel ministry, there has been a sudden outburst of the spirit of song. Luther's Psalms and Hymns were in all men's mouths, and in the modern revival under Wesley and Whitfield, the strains of Charles Wesley, Cennick, Berridge, Toplady, Hart, Newton, and many others, were the outgrowth of restored piety. The singing of the birds of praise fitly accompanies the return of the gracious spring of divine visitation through the proclamation of the truth. Sing on brethren, and preach on, and these shall both be a token that the Lord still dwelleth in Zion. It will be well for us when coming up to Zion, to remember that the Lord dwells among his saints, and is to be had in peculiar reverence of all those that are about him.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 12.--" _When he maketh inquisition for blood he remembereth them_." There is a time when God will make inquisition for innocent blood. The Hebrew word *_doresh_*, from *_dfrash_* <01875>, that is here rendered inquisition, signifies not barely to seek, to search, but to seek, search, and enquire with all diligence and care imaginable. Oh, there is a time a-coming when the Lord will make a very diligent and careful search and enquiry after all the innocent blood of his afflicted and persecuted people, which persecutors and tyrants have spilt as water upon the ground; and woe to persecutors when God shall make a more strict, critical, and careful enquiry after the blood of his people than ever was made in the inquisition of Spain, where all things are carried with the greatest diligence, subtlety, secrecy, and severity. O persecutors, there is a time a-coming, when God will make a strict enquiry after the blood of Hooper, Bradford, Latimer, Taylor, Ridley, etc. There is a time a-coming, wherein God will enquire who silenced and suspended such-and-such ministers, and who stopped the mouths of such-and-such, and who imprisoned, confined, and banished such-and-such, who were once burning and shining lights, and who were willing to spend and be spent that sinners might be saved, and that Christ might be glorified. There is a time when the Lord will make a very narrow enquiry into all the actions and practices of ecclesiastical courts, high commissions, committees, assizes, etc, and deal with persecutors as they have dealt with his people.--^Thomas Brooks.

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

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 11.--I. Zion, what is it? II. Her glorious inhabitant, what doth he? III. The twofold occupation of her sons--"sing praises," "declare among the people his doings." IV. Arguments from the first part of the subject to encourage us in the double duty.

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

Exposition.

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

What a noble title is here given to the Most High. _Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death_! What a glorious lift! In sickness, in sin, in despair, in temptation, we have been brought very low, and the gloomy portal has seemed as if it would open to imprison us, but, underneath us were the everlasting arms, and, therefore, we have been uplifted even to the gates of heaven. Trapp quaintly says, "He commonly reserveth his hand for a dead lift, and rescueth those who were even talking of their graves." We must not overlook David's object in desiring mercy, it is God's glory: "_that I may show forth all thy praise_." Saints are not so selfish as to look only to self; they desire mercy's diamond that they may let others see it flash and sparkle, and may admire Him who gives such priceless gems to his beloved. The contrast between the gates of death and the gates of the New Jerusalem is very striking; let our songs be excited to the highest and most rapturous pitch by the double consideration of whence we are taken, and to what we have been advanced, and let our prayers for mercy be made more energetic and agonizing by a sense of the grace which such a salvation implies. When David speaks of his showing forth _all_ God's praise, he means that, in his deliverance grace in all its heights and depths would be magnified. Just as our hymn puts it:--

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 14.--"_That I may show forth all thy praise_" etc. to show forth _all_ God's praise is to enter largely into the work. An occasional "_God, I thank thee_" is no fit return for a perpetual stream of rich benefits.--[^]William S. Plumer.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 13.--"_Have mercy upon me, O Lord_" The publican's prayer expounded, commended, presented, and fulfilled.

Verse 13.--"_Thou liftest me up from the gates of death_" Deep distresses. Great deliverances. Glorious exaltations.

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

Exposition.

In considering this terrible picture of the Lord's overwhelming judgments of his enemies, we are called upon to ponder and meditate upon it with deep seriousness by the two untranslated words, Higgaion,

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

therefore shall it be written always before them in the place of their thralldom, that which way soever they look they may still behold it.--[^]Richard Baxter.

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

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

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 15.--_Lex talionis_. Memorable instances.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

Verse 17.--"The wicked shall be turned into hell." _li-she"wl-ah_ <07585>, _--head-long into hell, down into hell_. The original is very emphatic.--^Adam Clarke.

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

Horne, D.D.

Verse 17.-- Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.

^John Milton, 1608-1674.

Verse 17.-- Will without power, the element of hell, Abortive all its acts returning still Upon itself; ... Oh, anguish terrible! Meet guerdon of self-love, its proper ill! Malice would scowl upon the foe he fears; And he with lip of scorn would seek to kill; But neither sees the other, neither hears-- For darkness each in his own dungeon bars, Lust pines for dearth, and grief drinks its own tears-- Each in its solitude apart. Hate wars Against himself, and feeds upon his chain, Whose iron penetrates the soul it scars, A dreadful solitude each mind insane, Each its own place, its prison all alone, And finds no sympathy to soften pain.

^J. A. Heraud.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 17.--A warning to forgetters of God.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 18.--"_For the needy shall not always be forgotten_" etc. This is a sweet promise for a thousand occasions, and when pleaded before the throne in his name who comprehends in himself every promise, and is indeed himself the great promise of the Bible, it would be found like all others, yea and amen.--
^Robert Hawker, D.D., 1820.

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

Verse 18.--As sometimes God is said to hear us in not hearing, us, so we may say he should sometimes deny us if he did not delay us. It is (saith Chrysostom) like money, which lying long in the bank, comes home at last with a duck in its mouth, with use upon use; when money is out a great time, it makes a great return: we can stay thus upon men, and cannot we, shall not we, stay upon the Lord, and for the Lord, for a large return. God causeth us by delay to make the more prayers; and the more we pray, the longer we stay, the more comfort we shall have, and the more sure we are that we shall have it in the latter end. Distinguish between denying and delaying. ... In God _our Father_ are all dimensions of love, and that in an infinite degree; infinitely infinite: what if he defer us? so do we our children, albeit we mean no other but to give them their own asking, yet we love to see them wait, that so they may have from us the best things when they are at the best, in the best time, and in the best manner: if a mother should forget her only boy, yet God hath an infinite memory, he nor can, nor will forget; the expectation of the _waiter_ shall not fail _for ever_, that is, _never_.--^Richard Capel.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 19.--"Let not man prevail." A powerful plea. Cases when employed in Scripture. The reason of its power. Times for its use.

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 20.--"That the nations may know themselves to be but men." The original word is ^n"wsh <0582>; and therefore it is a prayer that they may know themselves to be but miserable, frail, and dying men. The word is in the singular number, but it is used collectively.--[^]John Calvin.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Tenth Psalm

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

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

DIVISION.--The first verse (1), in an exclamation of surprise, explains the intent of the Psalm, viz., to invoke the interposition of God for the deliverance of his poor and persecuted people. From verse 2-11, the character of the oppressor is described in powerful language. In verse 12, the cry of the first verse bursts forth again, but with a clearer utterance. In the next place (verses 13-15), God's eye is clearly beheld as regarding all the cruel deeds of the wicked; and as a consequence of divine omniscience the ultimate judgment of the oppressed is joyously anticipated (verses 16-18). To the Church of God during times of persecution, and to individual saints who are smarting under the hand of the proud sinner, this Psalm furnishes suitable language both for prayer and praise.

EXPOSITION.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.--There is not, in my judgment, a Psalm which describes the mind, the manners, the works, the words, the feelings, and the fate of the ungodly with so much propriety, fullness, and light, as this Psalm. So that, if in any respect there has not been enough said heretofore, or if there shall be anything wanting in the Psalms that shall follow, we may here find a perfect image and representation of iniquity. This Psalm, therefore, is a type, form, and description of that man, who, though he may be in the sight of himself and of men more excellent than Peter himself, is detestable in the eyes of God; and this it was that moved Augustine, and those who followed him, to understand the Psalm of ANTICHRIST. But as the Psalm is without a title, let us embrace the most general and common understanding of it (as I said), and let us look at the picture of ungodliness which it sets before us. Not that we would deny the propriety of the acceptance in which others receive it, nay, we will, in our general acceptance of the Psalm, include also its reference to ANTICHRIST. And, indeed, it will not be at all absurd if we join this Psalm with the preceding, in its order thus. That David, in the preceding spoke of the ungodly converted, and prayed for

those who were to be converted. But that here he is speaking of the ungodly that are still left so, and in power prevailing over the weak ALMUTH, concerning whom he has no hope, or is in a great uncertainty of mind, whether they ever will be converted or not.--^Martin Luther.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 2.--"_The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor_" THE OPPRESSOR'S PLEA. I seek but what is my own by law; it was his own free act and deed--the execution lies for goods and body; and goods or body I will have, or else my money. What if his beggarly children pine, or his proud wife perish? they perish at their own charge, not mine; and what is that to me? I must be paid, or he lie by it until I have my utmost farthing, or his bones. The law is just and good; and, being ruled by that, how can my fair proceedings be unjust? What is thirty in the hundred to a man of trade? Are we born to thrum caps or pick straws? and sell our livelihood for a few tears, and a whining face? I thank God they move me not so much as a howling dog at midnight. I'll give no day if heaven itself would be security. I must have present money, or his bones. ... Fifteen shillings in the pound composition! I'll hang first. Come, tell me not of a good conscience: a good conscience is no parcel of my trade; it hath made more bankrupts than all the loose wives in the universal city. My conscience is no fool: it tells me my own is my own, and that a well crammed bag is no deceitful friend, but will stick close to me when all my friends forsake me. If to gain a good estate out of nothing, and to regain a desperate debt which is as good as nothing, be the fruits and sign of a bad conscience, God help the good. Come, tell me not of griping and oppression. The world is hard, and he that hopes to thrive must gripe as hard. What I give I give, and what I lend I lend. If the way to heaven be to turn beggar upon earth, let them take it that like it. I know not what you call oppression, the law is my direction; but of the two, it is more profitable to oppress than to be oppressed. If debtors would be honest and discharge, our hands were bound; but when their failing offends my bags, they

touch the apple of my eye, and I must right them.--^Francis Quarles.

Verse 2.--That famous persecutor, Domitian, like others of the Roman emperors, assumed divine honours, and heated the furnace seven times hotter against Christians because they refused to worship his image. In like manner, when the popes of Rome became decorated with the blasphemous titles of _Masters of the World_, and _Universal Fathers_, they let loose their blood-hounds upon the faithful. Pride is the egg of persecution.--^C. H. S.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

"Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod, Rejudge his justice, be the god of God."

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

Verse 3.--"_The covetous_" Covetousness is the desire of possessing that which we have not, and

attaining unto great riches and worldly possessions. And whether this be not the character of trade and merchandise and traffic of every kind, the great source of those evils of over-trading which are everywhere complained of, I refer to the judgment of the men around me, who are engaged in the commerce and business of life. Compared with the regular and quiet diligence of our fathers, and their contentment with small but sure returns, the wild and widespread speculation for great gains, the rash and hasty adventures which are daily made, and the desperate gamester-like risks which are run, do reveal fully surely that a spirit of covetousness hath been poured out upon men within the last thirty or forty years. And the providence of God corresponding thereto, by wonderful and unexpected revolutions, by numerous inventions for manufacturing the productions of the earth, in order to lead men into temptation, hath impressed upon the whole face of human affairs, a stamp of earnest worldliness not known to our fathers: insomuch that our youth do enter life no longer with the ambition of providing things honest in the sight of men, keeping their credit, bringing up their family, and realising a competency, if the Lord prosper them, but with the ambition of making a fortune, retiring to their ease, and enjoying the luxuries of the present life. Against which crying sin of covetousness, dearly beloved brethren, I do most earnestly call upon you to wage a good warfare. This place is its seat, its stronghold, even this metropolitan city of Christian Britain; and ye who are called by the grace of God out of the great thoroughfare of Mammon, are so elected for the express purpose of testifying against this and all other the backslidings of the church planted here; and especially against this, as being in my opinion, one of the most evident and the most common of them all. For who hath not been snared in the snare of covetousness?--^Edward Irving, 1828.

Verse 3.--"_The covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth_." Christ knew what he spake when he said, "No man can serve two masters." Mt 6:24. Meaning God and the world, because each would have all. As the angel and the devil strove for the body of Moses (Jude 1:9), not who should have a part, but who should have the whole, so they strive still for our souls, who shall have all. Therefore, the apostle saith, "The love of this world is enmity to God (James 4:4), signifying such emulation between these two, that God cannot abide the world should have a part, and the world cannot abide that God should have a part. Therefore, the love of the world must needs be enmity to God, and therefore the lovers of the world must needs be enemies to God, and so no covetous man is God's servant, but God's enemy. For this cause covetousness is called idolatry (Eph 5:5), which is the most contrary sin to God, because as treason sets up another king in the king's place, so idolatry sets up another god in God's place.--^Henry Smith.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 3.--God's hatred of covetousness: show its justice.

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 4.--"_The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God_." He is judged a proud man (without a jury sitting on him), who when condemned will not submit, will not stoop so low as to accept of a pardon. I must indeed correct myself, men are willing to be justified, but they would have their duties to purchase their peace and the favour of God. Thousands will die and be damned rather than they

will have a pardon upon the sole account of Christ's merits and obedience. Oh, the cursed pride of the heart! When will men cease to be wiser than God? to limit God? When will men be contented with God's way of saving them by the blood of the everlasting covenant? How dare men thus to prescribe to the infinitely wise God? Is it not enough for thee that thy destruction is of thyself? But must thy salvation be of thyself too? Is it not enough that thou hast wounded thyself, but wilt thou die for ever, rather than be beholden to a plaister of free grace? Wilt be damned unless thou mayest be thine own Saviour? God is willing ("God so loved the world that he gave his only son"), art thou so proud as that thou wilt not be beholden to God? Thou wilt deserve, or have nothing. What shall I say? Poor thou art, and yet proud; thou hast nothing but wretchedness and misery, and yet thou art talking of a purchase. This is a provocation. "God resisteth the proud," especially the spiritually proud. He that is proud of his clothes and parentage, is not so contemptible in God's eyes as he that is proud of his abilities, and so scorns to submit to God's methods for his salvation by Christ, and by his righteousness alone.--^Lewis Stuckley.

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

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

Verse 4.--David speaks in Psalm 10 of great and potent oppressors and politicians, who see none on earth greater than themselves, none higher than they, and think therefore that they may _impune_ prey upon the smaller, as beasts use to do; and in the fourth verse this is made the root and ground of all, that God is not in all his thoughts. " _The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts_." The words are diversely read, and all make for this sense. Some read it, "No God in all his crafty presumptuous purposes;" others, "All his thoughts are, there is no God." The meaning whereof is not only that among the swarm and crowd of thoughts that fill his mind, the thought of God is seldom to be found, and comes not in among the rest, which yet is enough for the purpose in hand; but further, that in all his projects and plots, and consultations of his heart (the first reading of the

words intends), whereby he contrives and lays the plot, form, and draught of all his actions, he never takes God or his will into consideration or consultation, to square and frame all accordingly, but proceeds and goes on in all, and carries on all as if there were no God to be consulted with. He takes not him along with him, no more than if he were no God; the thoughts of him and his will sway him not. As you use to say, when a combination of men leave out some one they should advise with, that such a one is not of their counsel, is not in the plot; so nor is God in their purposes and advisings, they do all without him. But this is not all the meaning, but farther, all their thought is, that there is no God. This is there made the bottom, the foundation, the groundwork and reason of all their wicked plots and injurious projects, and deceitful carriages and proceedings, that seeing there is no God or power above them to take notice of it, to regard or requite them, therefore they may be bold to go on.--^Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 4.--"Of his countenance_" Which pride he carrieth engraven in his very countenance and forehead, and makes it known in all his carriages and gestures. "_Will not seek_" namely, he contemneth all divine and human laws, he feareth not, respecteth not God's judgments; he careth for nothing, so he may fulfil his desires; enquires after, nor examines nothing; all things are indifferent to him.--^John Diodati.

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

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

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

Verses 4,5.--The world hath a spiritual fascination and witchcraft, by which, where it hath once prevailed, men are enchanted to an utter forgetfulness of themselves and God, and being drunk with pleasures, they are easily engaged to a madness and height of folly. Some, like foolish children, are made to keep a great stir in the world for very trifles, for a vain show; they think themselves great, honourable, excellent, and for this make a great bustle, when the world hath not added one cubit to their stature of real worth. Others are by this Circe transformed into savage creatures, and act the part of lions and tigers. Others, like swine, wallow in the lusts of uncleanness. Others are unmanned, putting off all natural affections, care not who they ride over, so they may rule over or be made great. Others are taken with ridiculous frenzies, so that a man that stands in the cool shade of a sedate composure would judge them out of their wits. It would make a man admire to read of the frisks of Caius Caligula, Xerxes, Alexander, and many others, who because they were above many men, thought themselves above human nature. They forgot they were born and must die, and did such things as would have made them, but that their greatness overawed it, a laughing-stock and common scorn to children. Neither must we think that these were but some few or rare instances of worldly intoxication, when the Scripture notes it as a general distemper of all that bow down to worship this idol. They live "without God in the world," saith the apostle, that is, they so carry it as if there were no God to take notice of them to check them for their madness. "_God is not in

all his thoughts_." Verse 4. "_The judgments of God are far above out of his sight_;" he puffs at his enemies (ver. 5), and saith in his heart, he "_shall never be moved_." Verse 6. The whole Psalm describes the worldling as a man that hath lost all his understanding, and is acting the part of a frantic bedlam. What then can be a more fit engine for the devil to work with than the pleasures of the world?--[^]Richard Gilpin.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 5.--"_Grievous_," or troublesome; that is, all his endeavours and actions aim at nothing but at hurting others. "_Are far above_," for he is altogether carnal, he hath not any disposition nor correspondence with the justice of thy law, which is altogether spiritual; and therefore cannot lively represent unto himself thy judgments, and the issue of the wicked according to the said law. Ro 7:14; 1Co 2:14. "_He puffeth_;" he doth most arrogantly despise them, and is confident he can overthrow them with a puff.--[^]John Diodati.

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

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

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

Verse 5.--"_As for all his enemies he puffeth at them_;" literally, "_He whistles at them_." He is given over to the dominion of gloomy indifference, and he cares as little for others as for himself, whosoever may be imagined by him to be an enemy he cares not. Contempt and ridicule are his only weapons; and he has

forgotten how to use others of a more sacred character. His mental habits are marked by scorn; and he treats with contempt the judgments, opinions, and practices of the wisest of men.--^John Morison.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

The second crime is now to be proved. The fact that the man is proud and arrogant may go a long way to prove that he is vindictive and cruel. Haman's pride was the father of a cruel design to murder all the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar builds an idol; in pride he commands all men to bow before it; and then cruelty stands ready to heat the furnace seven times hotter for those who will not yield to his imperious will. Every proud thought is twin brother to a cruel thought. He who exalts himself will despise others, and one step further will make him a tyrant.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6.--The vain confidence of sinners.

Exposition.

Let us now hear the witnesses in court. Let the wretch speak for himself, for out of his own mouth he will be condemned. "_His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud_" There is not only a little evil there, but his mouth is full of it. A three-headed serpent hath stowed away its coils and venom within the den of his black mouth. There is _cursing_ which he spits against both God and men, _deceit_ with which he entraps the unwary, and _fraud_ by which, even in his common dealings, he robs his neighbours. Beware of such a man: have no sort of dealing with him: none but the silliest of geese would go to the fox's

sermon, and none but the most foolish will put themselves into the society of knaves. But we must proceed. Let us look under this man's tongue as well as in his mouth; "_under his tongue is mischief and vanity_" Deep in his throat are the unborn words which shall come forth as mischief and iniquity.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 7.--Cursing men are cursed men.--^John Trapp.

Verses 7-9. In Anne Askew's account of her examination by Bishop Bonner, we have an instance of the cruel craft of persecutors: "On the morrow after, my lord of London sent for me at one of the clock, his hour being appointed at three. And as I came before him, he said he was very sorry of my trouble, and desired to know my opinion in such matters as were laid against me. He required me also boldly in any wise to utter the secrets of my heart; bidding me not to fear in any point, for whatsoever I did say within his house no man should hurt me for it. I answered, 'For so much as your lordship hath appointed three of the clock, and my friends shall not come till that hour, I desire you to pardon me of giving answer till they come.'" Upon this Bale remarks: "In this preventing of the hour may the diligent perceive the greediness of this Babylon bishop, or bloodthirsty wolf, concerning his-prey. 'Swift are their feet,' saith David, 'in the effusion of innocent blood, which have fraud in their tongues, venom in their lips, and most cruel vengeance in their mouths.' David much marvelleth in the spirit that, taking upon them the spiritual governance of the people, they can fall into such frenzy or forgetfulness of themselves, as to believe it lawful thus to oppress the faithful, and to devour them with as little compassion as he that greedily devoureth a piece of bread. If such have read anything of God, they have little minded their true duty therein. 'More swift,' saith Jeremy, 'are our cruel persecutors than the eagles of the air. They follow upon us over the mountains, and lay privy wait for us in the wilderness.' He that will know the crafty hawking of bishops to bring in their prey, let him learn it here. Judas, I think, had never the tenth part of their cunning workmanship." ^John Bale, D.D., Bishop of Ossory, 1495-1563, in "_Examination of Anne Askew." Parker Society's Publications.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

although the cannon of the castles seem to command every foot of the way. Strange, most strange land! but it tallies wonderfully with its ancient story.--[^]W. M. Thomson, D.D., in "The Land and the Book," 1859.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

Quarles well pictures our danger in those memorable lines,--

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 9.--" _He doth catch the poor_" The poor man is the beast they hunt, who must rise early, rest late, eat the bread of sorrow, sit with many a hungry meal, perhaps his children crying for food, while all the fruit of his pains is served into Nimrod's table. Complain of this while you will, yet, as the orator said of Verres, *_pecuniosus nescit damnari_*. Indeed, a money-man may not be damnified, but he may be damned. For this is a crying sin, and the wakened ears of the Lord will hear it, neither shall his provoked hands forbear it. *_Si tacuerint pauperes loquentur lapides_*. If the poor should hold their peace, the very stones would speak. The fines, rackings, enclosures, oppressions, vexations, will cry to God for vengeance. "The stone will cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." Hab 2:11. You see the beasts they hunt. Not foxes, nor wolves, nor boars, bulls, nor tigers. It is a certain observation, no beast hunts its own kind to devour it. Now, if these should prosecute wolves, foxes, &c.,

they should then hunt their own kind; for they are these themselves, or rather worse than these, because here *_homo homini lupus_*. But though they are men they hunt, and by nature of the same kind, they are not so by quality, for they are lambs they persecute. In them there is blood, and flesh, and fleece to be had; and therefore on these do they gorge themselves. In them there is weak armour of defence against their cruelties; therefore over these they may domineer. I will speak it boldly: there is not a mighty Nimrod in this land that dares hunt his equal; but over his inferior lamb he insults like a young Nero. Let him be graced by high ones, and he must not be saluted under twelve score off. In the country he proves a termagant; his very scowl is a prodigy, and breeds an earthquake. He would be a Caesar, and tax all. It is well if he prove not a cannibal! Only Macro salutes Sejanus so long as he is in Tiberius's favour; cast him from that pinnacle, and the dog is ready to devour him.--[^]Thomas Adams.

Verse 9.--"*_He draweth him into his net_*." "They hunt with a net." Mic 7:2. They have their politic gins to catch men; gaudy wares and dark shops (and would you have them love the light that live by darkness, as many shopkeepers?) draw and tole customers in, where the crafty leeches can soon feel their pulses; if they must buy, they shall pay for their necessity. And though they plead, We compel none to buy our ware, *_caveat emptor_*; yet with fine voluble phrases, damnable protestations, they will cast a mist of error before an eye of simple truth, and with cunning devices hunt them in. So some among us have feathered their nests, not by open violence, but politic circumvention. They have sought the golden fleece, not by Jason's merit, but by Medea's subtlety, by Medea's sorcery. If I should intend to discover these hunters' plots, and to deal punctually with them, I should afford you more matter than you would afford me time. But I limit myself, and answer all their plans with Augustine. Their tricks may hold *_in jure fori_*, but not *_in jure poli_*--in the common-pleas of earth, not before the king's bench in heaven. [^]Thomas Adams.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 9.--The ferocity, craftiness, strength, and activity of Satan.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 10.--Designing humility unmasked.

Exposition.

As upon the former count, so upon this one; a witness is forthcoming, who has been listening at the keyhole of the heart. Speak up, friend, and let us hear your story. "*_He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it_*." This cruel man comforts himself with the idea that God is blind, or, at least, forgetful: a fond and foolish fancy, indeed. Men doubt Omniscience when they

persecute the saints. If we had a sense of God's presence with us, it would be impossible for us to ill-treat his children. In fact, there can scarcely be a greater preservation from sin than the constant thought of "thou, God, seest me."

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 11.--" _He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it_." Many say in their hearts, "God seeth them not," while with their tongues they confess he is an all-seeing God. The heart hath a tongue in it as well as the head, and these two tongues seldom speak the same language. While the head-tongue saith, "We cannot hide ourselves from the sight of God," the heart-tongue of wicked men will say, "God will hide himself from us, he will not see." But if their heart speak not thus, then as the prophet saith (Isa 29:15), "They dig deep to hide their counsel from the Lord;" surely they have a hope to hide their counsels, else they would not dig deep to hide them. Their digging is nor proper, but tropical; as men dig deep to hide what they would not have in the earth, so they by their wits, plots, and devices, do their best to hide their counsels from God, and they say, "Who seeth, who knoweth? We, surely, are not seen either by God or man."--^Joseph Caryl.

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

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

Verse 11.--" _He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it_." Because the Lord continues to spare them, therefore they go on to provoke him. As he adds to their lives,

so they add to their lusts. What is this, but as if a man should break all his bones because there is a surgeon who is able to set them again? ... Because justice seems to wink, men suppose her blind; because she delays punishment, they imagine she denies to punish them; because she does not always reprove them for their sins, they suppose she always approves of their sins. But let such know, that the silent arrow can destroy as well as the roaring cannon. Though the patience of God be lasting, yet it is not everlasting.--^William Secher.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 11.--Divine omniscience and the astounding presumption of sinners.

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

In these verses (13,14,15) the description of the wicked is condensed, and the evil of his character traced to its source, viz., atheistical ideas with regard to the government of the world. We may at once perceive that this is intended to be another urgent plea with the Lord to show his power, and reveal his justice. When the wicked call God's righteousness in question, we may well beg him to teach them terrible things in righteousness. In verse 13, the hope of the infidel and his heart-wishes are laid bare. He despises the Lord, because he will not believe that sin will meet with punishment: "he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it." If there were no hell for other men, there ought to be one for those who question the justice of it. This vile suggestion receives its answer in verse 14. "Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand." God is all-eye to see, and all-hand to punish his enemies. From Divine oversight there is no hiding, and from Divine justice there is no fleeing. Wanton mischief shall meet with woeful misery, and those who harbour spite shall inherit sorrow. Verily there is a God which judgeth in the earth. Nor is this the only instance of the presence of God in the world; for while he chastises the oppressor, he befriends the oppressed. "The poor committeth himself unto thee." They give themselves up entirely into the Lord's hands. Resigning their judgment to his enlightenment, and their wills to his supremacy, they rest assured that he will order all things for the best. Nor does he deceive their hope. He preserves them in times of need, and causes them to rejoice in his goodness. "Thou art the helper of the fatherless." God is the parent of all orphans. When the earthly father sleeps beneath the sod, a heavenly Father smiles from above. By some means or other, orphan children are fed, and well they may when they have such a Father.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verses 13,14.--What, do you think that God doth not remember our sins which we do not regard? for while we sin the score runs on, and the Judge setteth down in that table of remembrance, and his scroll reacheth up to heaven. Item, for lending to usury; item, for racking of rents; item, for starching thy ruffs; item, for curling thy hair; item, for painting thy face; item, for selling of benefices; item, for starving of

souls; item, for playing at cards; item, for sleeping in the church; item, for profaning the Sabbath-day, with a number more hath God to call to account, for every one must answer for himself. The fornicator, for taking of filthy pleasure; the careless prelate, for murdering so many thousand souls; the landlord, for getting money from his poor tenants by racking of his rents; see the rest, all they shall come like very sheep when the trumpet shall sound, and the heaven and earth shall come to judgment against them; when the heavens shall vanish like a scroll, and the earth shall consume like fire, and all the creatures standing against them; the rocks shall cleave asunder and the mountains shake and the foundation of the earth shall tremble, and they shall say to the mountain, Cover us, fall upon us, and hide us from the presence of his anger and wrath, whom we have not cared to offend. But they shall not be covered and hid; but then shall they go the back way, to the snakes and serpents, to be tormented of devils for ever.--[^]Henry Smith.

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

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

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

Verse 14.--" _Thou hast seen it_, " etc. If God did not see our ways, we might sin and go unpunished; but forasmuch as he seeth them with purer eyes than to behold iniquity and approve it, he is engaged both in justice and honour to punish all that iniquity of our ways which he seeth or beholdeth. David makes this the very design of God's superintendency over the ways of men: " _Thou hast seen it: for thou beholdest mischief and spite to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of

the fatherless_." Thus the Psalmist represents the Lord as having taken a view or survey of the ways of men. "_Thou hast seen_" What hath God seen? Even all that wickedness and oppression of the poor spoken of in the former part of the Psalm, as also the blasphemy of the wicked against himself (verse 13), "_Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it_" What saith the Psalmist concerning God, to this vain, confident man? "_Thou_" saith he, "_beholdest mischief and spite_" but to what purpose? the next words tell us that--"_to requite it with thy hand_" As thou hast seen what mischief they have done spitefully, so in due time thou wilt requite it righteously. The Lord is not a bare spectator, he is both a rewarder and an avenger. Therefore, from the ground of this truth, that the Lord seeth all our ways and counteth all our steps, we, as the prophet exhorts (Isa 3:10,11), may "say to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." We may also say, "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Only idols which have eyes and see not, have hands and strike not.--^Joseph Caryl.

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

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

Verses 14-18.--"_God delights to help the poor_" He loves to take part with the best, though the weakest side. Contrary to the course of most, who when a controversy arises use to stand in a kind of indifferency or neutrality, till they see which part is strongest, not which is justest. Now if there be any consideration (besides the cause) that draws or engages God, it is the weakness of the side. He joins with many, because they are weak, not with any, because they are strong; therefore he is called _the helper of the friendless, and with him the fatherless (the orphans) find mercy_. By fatherless we are not to understand such only whose parents are dead, but any one that is in distress; as Christ promiseseth his disciples; "_I will not leave you orphans_" that is, helpless, and (as we translate) _comfortless_; though ye are as children without a father, yet I will be a father to you. Men are often like those clouds which dissolve into the sea; they send presents to the rich, and assist the strong; but God sends his rain upon the dry land, and lends his strength to those who are weak. ... The prophet makes this report to God of himself (Isa 25:4): "_Thou hast been a strength to the poor_, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm," etc.--^Joseph Caryl.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 13 (first clause).--An astounding fact, and a reasonable enquiry.

Verse 13.--Future retribution: doubts concerning it. 1. By whom indulged: "_the wicked_." II. Where fostered: "_in his heart_." III. For what purpose: "_quieting of conscience_", etc. IV. With what practical tendency: "_contemn God_." He who disbelieves hell distrusts heaven.

Verses 13,14.--Divine government in the world. I. Who doubt it? and why? II. Who believe it? and what does this faith cause them to do?

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

Exposition.

In this verse we hear again the burden of the Psalmist's prayer: "_Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man_." Let the sinner lose his power to sin; stop the tyrant, arrest the oppressor, weaken the loins of the mighty, and dash in pieces the terrible. They deny thy justice: let them feel it to the full. Indeed, they shall feel it; for God shall hunt the sinner for ever: so long as there is a grain of sin in him it shall be sought out and punished. It is not a little worthy of note, that very few great persecutors have ever died in their beds: the curse has manifestly pursued them, and their fearful sufferings have made them own _that_ divine justice at which they could at one time launch defiance. God permits tyrants to arise as thorn-hedges to protect his church from the intrusion of hypocrites, and that he may teach his backsliding children by them, as Gideon did the men of Succoth with the briers of the wilderness; but he soon cuts up these Herods, like the thorns, and casts them into the fire. Thales, the Milesian, one of the wise men of Greece, being asked what he thought to be the greatest rarity in the world, replied, "To see a tyrant live to be an old man." See how the Lord breaks, not only the arm, but the neck of proud oppressors! To the men who had neither justice nor mercy for the saints, there shall be rendered justice to the full, but not a grain of mercy.

Exposition.

The Psalm ends with a song of thanksgiving to the great and everlasting King, because he has granted the desire of his humble and oppressed people, has defended the fatherless, and punished the heathen who trampled upon his poor and afflicted children. Let us learn that we are sure to speed well, if we carry our complaint to the King of kings. Rights will be vindicated, and wrongs redressed, at his throne. His government neglects not the interests of the needy, nor does it tolerate oppression in the mighty. Great God, we leave ourselves in thine hand; to thee we commit thy church afresh. Arise, O God, and let the man of the earth--the creature of a day--be broken before the majesty of thy power. Come, Lord Jesus, and glorify thy people. Amen and Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 17.--There is a humbling act of faith put forth in prayer. Others style it praying in humility; give me leave to style it praying in faith. In faith which sets the soul in the presence of that mighty God, and by the sight of him, which faith gives us, it is that we see our own vileness, sinfulness, and abhor ourselves, and profess ourselves unworthy of any, much less of those mercies we are to seek for. Thus the sight of God had wrought in the prophet (Isa 6:5), "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." And holy Job speaks thus (Job 42:5,6), "Now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This is as great a requisite to prayer as any other act; I may say of it alone, as the apostle (Jas 1:7), that without it we shall receive nothing at the hands of God! God loves to fill empty vessels, he looks to broken hearts. In the Psalms how often do we read that God hears the prayers of the humble; which always involves and includes faith in it. Ps 9:12, "He forgetteth not the cry of the humble," and Ps 10:17, "_Lord thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear_." To be deeply humbled is to have the heart prepared and fitted for God to hear the prayer; and therefore you find

the Psalmist pleading *sub forma pauperis*, often repeating, "I am poor and needy." And this prevents our thinking much if God do not grant the particular thing we do desire. Thus also Christ himself in his great distress (Ps 22), doth treat God (verse Ps 22:2), "O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season am not silent. Our fathers trusted in thee. They cried unto thee, and were delivered. But I am a worm, and no man; reproached of men, and despised of the people;" (verse Ps 22:6) "and he was heard in the end in what he feared." And these deep humblings of ourselves, being joined with vehement implorations upon the mercy of God to obtain, is reckoned into the account of praying by faith, both by God and Christ. Mt 8.--^Thomas Goodwin.

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

Verse 17.--"Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble," etc. How pleasant is it, that these benefits, which are of so great a value both on their own account, and that of the divine benignity from whence they come, should be delivered into our hands, marked, as it were, with this grateful inscription, *that they have been obtained by prayer!*--^Robert Leighton.

Verse 17.--"The desire of the humble." Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God in the name of Christ, for such things as are agreeable to his will. It is an offering of our desires. Desires are the soul and life of prayer; words are but the body; now as the body without the soul is dead, so are prayers unless they are animated with our desires: "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble." God heareth not words, but *desires*.--^Thomas Watson.

Verse 17.--God's choice acquaintances are humble men.--^Robert Leighton.

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

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

Verse 18.--"To judge the fatherless and the oppressed," etc. The tears of the poor fall down upon their cheeks, *et ascendunt ad coelum*, and go up to heaven and cry for vengeance before God, the judge of widows, the father of widows and orphans. Poor people be oppressed even by laws. Woe worth to them that make evil laws against the poor, what shall be to them that hinder and mar good laws? What will ye do in the day of great vengeance when God shall visit you? he saith he will hear the tears of the poor woman, when he goeth on visitation. For their sake he will hurt the judge, be he never so high, he will for widows' sakes change realms, bring them into temptation, pluck his judges' skins over their heads. Cambyses was a great emperor, such another as our master is, he had many lord deputies, lord presidents, and lieutenants under him. It is a great while ago since I read the history. It chanced he had under him in one of his dominions a briber, a gift-taker, a gratifier of rich men; he followed gifts as fast as he that followed the pudding; a handmaker in his office, to make his son a great man, as the old saying is "Happy is the child whose father goeth to the devil." The cry of the poor widow came to the emperor's ear, and caused him to slay the judge quick, and laid his skin in his chair of judgment, that all judges that should give judgment afterward, should sit in the same skin. Surely it was a goodly sign, a goodly monument, the sign of the judge's skin. I pray God we may once see the sign of the skin in England. Ye will say, peradventure, that this is cruelly and uncharitably spoken. No, no; I do it charitably, for a love I bear to my country. God saith, "I will visit." God hath two visitations; the first is when he revealeth his word

by preachers; and where the first is accepted, the second cometh not. The second visitation is vengeance. He went to visitation when he brought the judge's skin over his ears. If this word be despised, he cometh with the second visitation with vengeance.--^Hugh Latimer, 1480-1555.

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

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

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

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

Verse 18.--" _The man of the earth_." Man dwelling in the earth, and made of earth.--^Thomas Wilcocks.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 16.--The Eternal Kingship of Jehovah.

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

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

Eleventh Psalm

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

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

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

EXPOSITION.

These verses contain an account of a temptation to distrust God, with which David was, upon some unmentioned occasion, greatly exercised. It may be, that in the days when he was in Saul's court, he was advised to flee at a time when this flight would have been charged against him as a breach of duty to the king, or a proof of personal cowardice. His case was like that of Nehemiah, when his enemies, under the garb of friendship, hoped to entrap him by advising him to escape for his life. Had he done so, they could then have found a ground of accusation. Nehemiah bravely replied, "Shall such a man as I flee?" and David, in a like spirit, refuses to retreat, exclaiming, "_In the Lord put I my trust; how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain_?" When Satan cannot overthrow us by presumption, how craftily will he seek to ruin us by distrust! He will employ our dearest friends to argue us out of our confidence, and he will use such plausible logic, that unless we once for all assert our immovable trust in Jehovah, he will make us like the timid bird which flies to the mountain whenever danger presents itself. How forcibly the case is put! The bow is bent, the arrow is fitted to the string: "Flee, flee, thou defenceless bird, thy safety lies in flight; begone, for thine enemies will send their shafts into thy heart; haste, haste, for soon wilt thou be destroyed!" David seems to have felt the force of the advice, for it came home _to his soul_; but yet he would not yield, but would rather dare the danger than exhibit a distrust in the Lord his God. Doubtless, the perils which encompassed David were great and imminent; it was quite true that his enemies were _ready_ to _shoot privily_ at him; it was equally correct that the very _foundations_ of law and justice were _destroyed_ under Saul's unrighteous government: but what were all these things to the man whose trust was in God alone? He could brave the dangers, could escape the enemies, and defy the injustice which surrounded him. His answer to the question, "What can the righteous do?" would be the counter-question, "What cannot they do?" When prayer engages God on our side, and when faith secures the fulfillment of the promise, what cause can there be for flight, however cruel and mighty our enemies? With a sling and a stone, David had smitten a giant before whom the whole hosts of Israel were trembling, and the Lord, who delivered him from the uncircumcised Philistine, could surely deliver him from King Saul and his myrmidons. There is no such word as "impossibility" in the language of faith; that martial grace knows how to fight and conquer, but she knows not how to flee.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

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

against the calumnies of the world and the compromising counsel of man, in that confidence which is to be placed in God the Judge of all.--[^]W. Wilson, D.D., in loc., 1860.

Whole Psalm.--If one may offer to make a modest conjecture, it is not improbable this Psalm might be composed on the sad murder of the priests by Saul (1Sa 22:19), when after the slaughter of Abimelech, the high priest, Doeg, the Edomite, by command from Saul, "slew in one day fourscore and five persons which wore a linen ephod." I am not so carnal as to build the spiritual church of the Jews on the material walls of the priests' city at Nob (which then by Doeg was smitten with the edge of the sword), but this is most true, that "knowledge must preserve the people;" and (Mal 2:7), "The priests' lips shall preserve knowledge;" and then it is easy to conclude, what an earthquake this massacre might make in the _foundations of religion_.--[^]Thomas Fuller.

Whole Psalm.--Notice how remarkably the whole Psalm corresponds with the deliverance of Lot from Sodom. This verse, with the angel's exhortation, "Escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed," and Lot's reply, "I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil take me and I die." Ge 19:17-19. And again, "_The Lord's seat is in heaven, and upon the ungodly he shall rain snares, fire, brimstone, storm and tempest_" with "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven:" and again, "_His countenance will behold the thing that is just_" with "Delivered just Lot ... for that righteous man vexed his righteous soul with their ungodly deeds." 2Pe 2:7,8.--[^]Cassiodorus (A.D., 560) in John Mason Neale's "Commentary on the Psalms, from Primitive and Medieval Writers," 1860.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Like as the armed knight, On thee my care I cast, Appointed to the field, For all their cruel
spite: With this world will I fight, I set not by their haste; And Christ shall be my shield. For thou art my
delight. Faith is that weapon strong, I am not she that list Which will not fail at need: My anchor to
let fall My foes, therefore, among For every drizzling mist, Therewith will I proceed. My ship
substantial. As it is had in strength Not oft use I to write, And force of Christe's way, In prose,
nor yet in rhyme; It will prevail at length, Yet will I shew one sight Though all the devils say nay.
That I saw in my time. Faith in the fathers old I saw a royal throne, Obtained righteousness;
Where justice should have sit, Which make me very bold But in her stead was one To fear no
world's distress. Of moody, cruel wit. I now rejoice in heart, Absorbed was righteousness.
And hope bids me do so; As of the raging flood: For Christ will take my part, Satan, in his
excess, And ease me of my woe. Sucked up the guiltless blood. Thou say'st Lord, whoso
knock, Then thought I, Jesus Lord, To them wilt thou attend: When thou shall judge us all, Undo
therefore the lock, Hard it is to record And thy strong power send. On these men what will

fall. More enemies now I have Yet, Lord, I thee desire, Than hairs upon my head: For
that they do to me, Let them not me deprave, Let them not taste the hire But fight thou in my
stead. Of their iniquity.

Verse 1.--"How say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" We may observe, that David is much pleased with the metaphor in frequently comparing himself to a bird, and that of several sorts: first, to an eagle (Ps 103:5), "My youth is renewed like the eagle's;" sometimes to an owl (Ps 102:6), "I am like an owl in the desert;" sometimes to a pelican, in the same verse, "Like a pelican in the wilderness;" sometimes to a sparrow (Ps 102:7), "I watch, and am as a sparrow;" sometimes to a partridge, "As when one doth hunt a partridge." I cannot say that he doth compare himself to a dove, but he would compare himself (Ps 55:6), "O that I had the wings of a dove, for then I would flee away, and be at rest." Some will say, How is it possible that birds of so different a feather should all so fly together as to meet in the character of David? To whom we answer, That no two men can more differ one from another, than the same servant of God at several times differeth from himself. David in prosperity, when commanding, was like an eagle; in adversity, when contemned, like an owl; in devotion, when retired, like a pelican; in solitariness, when having no company, like a sparrow; in persecution, when fearing too much company (of Saul), like a partridge. This general metaphor of a bird, which David so often used on himself, his enemies in the first verse of this Psalm used on him, though not particularising the kind thereof: "Flee as a bird to your mountain;" that is, speedily betake thyself to thy God, in whom thou hopest for succour and security.

Seeing this counsel was both good in itself, and good at this time, why doth David seem so angry and displeased thereat? Those his words, "Why say you to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" import some passion, at leastwise, a disgust of the advice. It is answered, David was not offended with the counsel, but with the manner of the propounding thereof. His enemies did it ironically in a gibing, jeering way, as if his flying thither were to no purpose, and he unlikely to find there the safety he sought for. However, David was not hereby put out of conceit with the counsel, beginning this Psalm with this his firm resolution, "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye then to my soul," etc. Learn we from hence, when men give us good counsel in a jeering way, let us take the counsel, and practise it; and leave them the jeer to be punished for it. Indeed, corporal cordials may be envenomed by being wrapped up in poisoned papers; not so good spiritual advice where the good matter receives no infection from the ill manner of the delivery thereof. Thus, when the chief priests mocked our Saviour (Mt 27:43), "He trusteth in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him." Christ trusted in God never a whit the less for the fleere and flout which their profaneness was pleased to bestow upon him. Otherwise, if men's mocks should make us to undervalue good counsel, we might in this age be mocked out of our God, and Christ, and Scripture, and heaven; the apostle Jude, verse Jude 1:18, having foretold that in the last times there should be mockers, walking after their own lusts.--^Thomas Fuller.

Verse 1.--It is as great an offence to make a new, as to deny the true God. "In the Lord put I my trust;" how then "say ye unto my soul" (ye seducers of souls), "that she should fly unto the mountains as a bird;" to seek unnecessary and foreign helps, as if the Lord alone were not sufficient? "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and he that delivereth me, my God, and my strength; in him will I trust: my shield, the horn of my salvation, and my refuge. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be safe from mine enemies." "Whom have I in heaven but thee," amongst those thousands of angels and saints, what Michael or Gabriel, what Moses or Samuel, what Peter, what Paul? "and there is none in earth that I desire in comparison of thee."--^John King, 1608.

Verse 1.--In temptations of inward trouble and terror, it is not convenient to dispute the matter with Satan. David in Ps 42:11, seems to correct himself for his mistake; his soul was cast down within him, and for the cure of that temptation, he had prepared himself by arguments for a dispute; but perceiving himself in a wrong course, he calls off his soul from disquiet to an immediate application to God and the promises, "Trust still in God, for I shall yet praise him;" but here he is more aforehand with his work; for while his enemies were acted by Satan to discourage him, he rejects the temptation at first, before it settled upon his thoughts, and chaseth it away as a thing that he would not give ear to. "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" And there are weighty reasons that should dissuade us from entering the lists with Satan in temptation of inward trouble.--^Richard Gilpin.

Verse 1.--The shadow will not cool except in it. What good to have the shadow though of a mighty rock,

when we sit in the open sun? To have almighty power engaged for us, and we to throw ourselves out of it, by bold sallies in the mouth of temptation! The saints' falls have been when they have run out of their trench and stronghold; for, like the conies, they are a weak people in themselves, and their strength lies in the rock of God's almightiness, which is their habitation.--^William Gurnall.

Verse 1.--The saints of old would not accept deliverances on base terms. They scorned to fly away for the enjoyment of rest except it were with the wings of a dove, covered with silver innocence. As willing were many of the martyrs to die, as to dine. The tormentors were tired in torturing Blandina. "We are ashamed, O Emperor! The Christians laugh at your cruelty, and grow the more resolute," said one of Julian's nobles. This the heathen counted obstinacy; but they knew not the power of the Spirit, nor the secret armour of proof which saints wear about their hearts.--^John Trapp.

Verse 2.--" _For, lo, the wicked bend their bow_, " etc. This verse presents an unequal combat betwixt _armed power, advantaged with policy_, on the one side; and _naked innocence_ on the other. First, _armed power_: " _They bend their-bows, and make ready their arrows_, " being all the artillery of that age; secondly, _advantaged with policy_: " _that they may privily shoot_, " to surprise them with an ambush unawares, probably pretending amity and friendship unto them; thirdly, _naked innocence_: if innocence may be termed naked, which is its own armour; " _at the upright in heart_. "--^Thomas Fuller.

Verse 2.--" _For, lo, the ungodly bend their bow, and make ready their arrows within the quiver: that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart_. " The plottings of the chief priests and Pharisees that they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill him. They bent their bow, when they hired Judas Iscariot for the betrayal of his Master; they made ready their arrows within the quiver when they sought "false witnesses against Jesus to put him to death." Mt 26:59. " _Them which are true of heart_. " Not alone the Lord himself, the only true and righteous, but his apostles, and the long line of those who should faithfully cleave to him from that time to this. And as with the Master, so with the servants: witness the calumnies and the revilings that from the time of Joseph's accusation by his mistress till the present day, have been the lot of God's people.--^Michael Ayguan, 1416, in J. M. Neale's Commentary.

Verse 2.--" _That they may secretly shoot at them which are upright in heart_. " They bear not their bows and arrows as scarecrows in a garden of cucumbers, to fray, but _to shoot_, not at stakes, but men; their arrows are _jacula mortifera_ (Ps 7.), deadly arrows, and lest they should fail to hit, they take advantage of the dark, of privacy and secrecy; they shoot _privily_. Now this is the covenant of hell itself. For what created power in the earth is able to dissolve that work which _cruelty_ and _subtlety_, like Simeon and Levi, brothers in evil, are combined and confederate to bring to pass? Where subtlety is ingenious, insidious to invent, cruelty barbarous to execute, subtlety giveth counsel, cruelty giveth the stroke. Subtlety ordereth the time, the place, the means, accommodateth, concinnateth circumstances; cruelty undertaketh the act: subtlety hideth the knife, cruelty cutteth the throat: subtlety with a cunning head layeth the ambush, plotteth the train, the stratagem; and cruelty with as savage a heart, sticketh not at the dreadfullest, direfullest objects, ready to wade up to the ankles, the neck, in a whole red sea of human, yea, country blood: how fearful is their plight that are thus assaulted!--^John King.

Verse 3.--" _If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do_?" But now we are met with a giant objection, which with Goliath must be removed, or else it will obstruct our present proceedings. Is it possible that the _foundations of religion_ should be destroyed? Can God be in so long a sleep, yea, so long a lethargy, as patiently to permit the ruins thereof? If he looks on, and yet doth not see these _foundations_ when destroyed, where then is his _omniscience_? If he seeth it, and cannot help it, where then is his _omnipotence_? If he seeth it, can help it, and will not, where then is his _goodness_ and _mercy_? Martha said to Jesus (Joh 11:21), "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." But many will say, Were God effectually present in the world with his aforesaid attributes, surely the _foundations_ had not _died_, had not been _destroyed_. We answer negatively, that it is impossible that the _foundations_ of religion should ever be totally and finally _destroyed_, either in relation to the church in general, or in reference to every true and lively member thereof. For the first, we have an express promise of Christ. Mt 16:18. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." _Fundamenta tamen stant inconcussa Sionis_. And as for every particular Christian (2Ti 2:19), "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." However, though for the reasons aforementioned in the objections (the inconsistency thereof with the attributes of God's omnipotence, omniscience, and goodness), the _foundations_ can never totally and finally, yet may they partially be

destroyed, quoad gradum, in a fourfold degree, as followeth. First, in the desires and utmost endeavours of wicked men.

- 1. Hoc velle, They bring their - 2. Hoc agere, - 3. Totum posse.

If they destroy not the foundations, it is no thanks to them, seeing all the world will bear them witness they have done their best (that is, their worst), what their might and malice could perform. Secondly, in their own vainglorious imaginations: they may not only vainly boast, but also verily believe that they have destroyed the foundations. Applicable to this purpose, is that high rant of the Roman emperor (Lu 2:1): "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." All the world! whereas he had, though much, not all in Europe, little in Asia, less in Africa, none in America, which was so far from being conquered, it was not so much as known to the Romans. But hyperbole is not a figure, but the ordinary language of pride; because indeed Augustus had very much, he proclaimeth himself to have all the world. ... Thirdly, the foundations may be destroyed as to all outward visible illustrious apparition. The church in persecution is like unto a ship in a tempest; down go all their masts, yea, sometimes for the more speed they are forced to cut them down: not a piece of canvas to play with the winds, no sails to be seen; they lie close knotted to the very keel, that the tempest may have the less power upon them, though when the storm is over, they can hoist up their sails as high, and spread their canvas as broad as ever before. So the church in the time of persecution feared, but especially felt, loseth all gayness and gallantry which may attract and allure the eyes of beholders, and contenteth itself with its own secrecy. In a word, on the work-days of affliction she weareth her worst clothes, whilst her best are laid up in her wardrobe, in sure and certain hope that God will give her a holy and happy day, when with joy she shall wear her best garments. Lastly, they may be destroyed in the jealous apprehensions of the best saints and servants of God, especially in their melancholy fits. I will instance in no puny, but in a star of the first magnitude and greatest eminency, even Elijah himself complaining (1Ki 19:10): "And I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."--^Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3.-- "If." It is the only word of comfort in the text, that what is said is not positive, but suppositive; not thetical, but hypothetical. And yet this comfort which is but a spark (at which we would willingly kindle our hopes), is quickly saddled with a double consideration. First, impossible suppositions produce impossible consequences, "As is the mother, so is the daughter." Therefore, surely God's Holy Spirit would not suppose such a thing but what was feasible and possible, but what either had, did, or might come to pass. Secondly, the Hebrew word is not the conditional im, si, si forte, but chi, quia, quoniam, because, and (although here it be favourably rendered if), seemeth to import, more therein, that the sad case had already happened in David's days. I see, therefore, that this if, our only hope in the text, is likely to prove with Job's friends, but a miserable comforter. Well, it is good to know the worst of things, that we may provide ourselves accordingly; and therefore let us behold this doleful case, not as doubtful, but as done; not as feared, but felt; not as suspected, but at this time really come to pass.--^Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3.-- "If the foundations," etc. My text is an answer to a tacit objection which some may raise; namely, that the righteous are wanting to themselves, and by their own easiness and inactivity (not daring and doing so much as they might and ought), betray themselves to that bad condition. In whose defence David shows, that if God in his wise will and pleasure seeth it fitting, for reasons best known to himself to suffer religion to be reduced to terms of extremity, it is not placed in the power of the best man alive to remedy and redress the same. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" My text is hung about with mourning, as for a funeral sermon, and contains: First, a sad case supposed, "If the foundations be destroyed." Secondly, a sad question propounded, "What can the righteous do?" Thirdly, a sad answer implied, namely, that they can do just nothing, as to the point of re-establishing the destroyed foundation.--^Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3.-- "If the foundations be destroyed," etc. The civil foundation of a nation or people, is their laws and constitutions. The order and power that's among them, that's the foundation of a people; and when once this foundation is destroyed, "What can the righteous do?" What can the best, the wisest in the world, do in such a case? What can any man do, if there be not a foundation of government left among men? There is no help nor answer in such a case but that which follows in the fourth verse of the Psalm, "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the

children of men_;" as if he had said, in the midst of these confusions, when as it is said (Ps 82:5), "All the foundations of the earth are out of course_;" yet God keeps his course still, he is where he was and as he was, without variableness or shadow of turning.--^Joseph Caryl.

Verse 3.--"_The righteous_." The righteous indefinitely, equivalent to the righteous universally; not only the righteous as a single arrow, but in the whole sheaf; not only the righteous in their personal, but in their diffusive capacity. Were they all collected into one body, were all the righteous living in the same age wherein the foundations are destroyed, summoned up and modelled into one corporation, all their joint endeavours would prove ineffectual to the re-establishing of the fallen foundations, as not being man's work, but only God's work to perform.--^Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3.--"_The foundations_." Positions, the things formerly fixed, placed, and settled. It is not said, if the roof be ruinous, or if the side walls be shattered, but if the _foundations_.

Verse 3.--"_Foundations be destroyed_." In the plural. Here I will not warrant my skill in architecture, but conceive this may pass for an undoubted truth: it is possible that a building settled on several entire _foundations_ (suppose them _pillars_) close one to another, if one of them fall, yet the structure may still stand, or rather hang (at the least for a short time) by virtue of the _complicative_, which it receiveth from such foundations which still stand secure. But in case there be a total rout, and an utter ruin of all the _foundations_, none can fancy to themselves a possibility of that building's subsistence.--^Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3.--"_What CAN the righteous_?" The _can_ of the righteous is a limited _can_, confined to the rule of God's word; they _can_ do nothing but what they _can_ lawfully do. 2Co 13:8. "For we _can_ do nothing against the truth, but for the truth: " _Illud possumus, quod jure possumus_. Wicked men can do anything; their conscience, which is so wide that it is none at all, will bear them out to act anything how unlawful soever, to stab, poison, massacre, by any means, at any time, in any place, whosoever standeth betwixt them and the effecting their desires. Not so the righteous; they have a rule whereby to walk, which they will not, they must not, they dare not, cross. If therefore a righteous man were assured, that by the breach of one of God's commandments he might restore decayed religion, and re-settle it _statu quo prius_, his hands, head, and heart are tied up, he _can_ do nothing, because _their damnation is just who say_ (Ro 3:8), "_Let us do evil that good may come thereof_."

Verse 3.--"_Do_." It is not said, _What can they think_? It is a great blessing which God hath allowed injured people, that though otherwise oppressed and straitened, they may freely enlarge themselves in their thoughts.--^Thomas Fuller.

Verse 3.--Sinning times have ever been the saints' praying times: this sent Ezra with a heavy heart to confess the sin of his people, and to bewail their abomination, before the Lord. Ezr 9. And Jeremiah tells the wicked of his degenerate age, that "his soul should weep in secret places for their pride." Jer 13:17. Indeed, sometimes sin comes to such a height, that this is almost all the godly can do, to get into a corner, and bewail the general pollutions of the age. "_If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do_?" Such dismal days of national confusion our eyes have seen when foundations of government were destroyed, and all hurled into military confusion. When it is thus with a people, "_What can the righteous do_?" Yes, this they may, and should do, "fast and pray." There is yet a God in heaven to be sought to, when a people's deliverance is thrown beyond the help of human policy or power. Now is the fit time to make their appeal to God, as the words following hint: "_The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven_;" in which words God is presented sitting in heaven as a temple, for their encouragement, I conceive, in such a desperate state of affairs, to direct their prayers thither for deliverance. And certainly this hath been the engine that hath been instrumental, above any, to restore this poor nation again, and set it upon the foundation of that lawful government from which it had so dangerously departed.--^William Gurnall.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--Faith's bold avowal, and brave refusal.

Verse 1.--Teacheth us to trust in God, how great soever our dangers be; also that we shall be many times assaulted to make us put far from us this trust, but yet that we must cleave unto it, as the anchor of our souls, sure and steadfast.--^Thomas Wilcocks.

Verse 1.--The advice of cowardice, and the jeer of insolence, both answered by faith. Lesson--Attempt no

other answer.

Verse 2.--The craftiness of our spiritual enemies.

Verse 3.--This may furnish a double discourse. I. _If God's oath and promise could remove_, what could we do? Here the answer is easy. II. _If all earthly things fail_, and the very State fall to pieces, what can we do? We can suffer joyfully, hope cheerfully, wait patiently, pray earnestly, believe confidently, and triumph finally.

Verse 3.--Necessity of holding and preaching foundation truths.

Exposition.

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

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

"_Jehovah's throne is in the heavens_;" he reigns supreme. Nothing can be done in heaven, or earth, or hell, which he doth not ordain and over-rule. He is the world's great Emperor. Wherefore, then, should we flee? If we trust this King of kings, is not this enough? Cannot he deliver us without our cowardly retreat? Yes, blessed be the Lord our God, we can salute him as Jehovah-nissi; in his name we set up our banners, and, instead of flight, we once more raise the shout of war.

"_His eyes behold_." The eternal watcher never slumbers; his eyes never know a sleep. "_His eyelids try the children of men_;" he narrowly inspects their actions, words and thoughts. As men, when intently and narrowly inspecting some very minute object, almost close their eyelids to exclude every other object, so will the Lord look all men through and through. God sees each man as much and as perfectly as if there were no other creature in the universe. He sees us always; he never removes his eye from us; he sees us entirely, reading the recesses of the soul as readily as the glancing of the eye. Is not this a sufficient ground of confidence, and an abundant answer to the solicitations of despondency? My danger is not hid from him; he knows my extremity, and I may rest assured that he will not suffer me to perish while I rely alone on him. Wherefore, then, should I take the wings of the timid bird, and flee from the dangers which beset me.

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

'Tis my happiness below Not to live without the cross; But the Saviour's power to know, Sanctifying every loss. * * * Trials make the promise sweet; Trials give new life to prayer; Trials bring me to his feet-- Lay me low, and keep me there.

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

Bastards may escape the rod, Sunk in earthly vain delight; But the true-born child of God Must not--would not, if he might.'

^William Cowper.

Is not this a very cogent reason why we should not distrustfully endeavour to shun a trial?--for in so doing we are seeking to avoid a blessing.

"_But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth_:" why, then, shall I flee from these wicked

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 4.--The infinite understanding of God doth exactly know the sins of men; he knows so as to consider. He doth not only know them, but intently behold them: "_His eyelids try the children of men_" a metaphor taken from men, that contract the eyelids when they would wistly and accurately behold a thing: it is not a transient and careless look.--^Stephen Charnock.

Verse 4.--"_His eyes behold_" etc. God searcheth not as man searcheth, by enquiring into that which before was hid from him; his searching is no more but his beholding; he seeth the heart, he beholdeth the reins; God's very sight is searching. Heb 4:13. "All things are naked and opened unto his eyes," _tetrach`lisme'na_ (pf. pass. ptep. of _trach`liz_ <5136>), _dissected or anatomised_. He hath at once as exact a view of the most hidden things, the very entrails of the soul, as if they had been with never so great curiosity anatomised before him.--^Richard Alleine, 1611-1681.

Verse 4.--"_His eyes behold_" etc. Consider that God not only sees into all you do, but he sees it to that very end that he may examine and search into it. He doth not only behold you with a common and indifferent look, but with a searching, watchful, and inquisitive eye: he pries into the reasons, the motives, the ends of all your actions. "_The Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men_" Re 1:14, where Christ is described, it is said, _his eyes are as a flame of fire_: you know the

property of fire is to search and make trial of those things which are exposed unto it, and to separate the dross from the pure metal: so, God's eye is like fire, to try and examine the actions of men: he knows and discerns how much your very purest duties have in them of mixture, and base ends of formality, hypocrisy, distractedness, and deadness: he sees through all your specious pretences, that which you cast as a mist before the eyes of men when yet thou art but a juggler in religion: all your tricks and sleights of outward profession, all those things that you use to cozen and delude men withal, cannot possibly impose upon him: he is a God that can look through all those fig-leaves of outward profession, and discern the nakedness of your duties through them.--^Ezekiel Hopkins, D.D.

Verse 4.--" _His eyes behold_," etc. Take God into thy counsel. Heaven overlooks hell. God at any time can tell thee what plots are hatching there against thee.--^William Gurnall.

Verse 4.--" _His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men_." When an offender, or one accused for any offence, is brought before a judge, and stands at the bar to be arraigned, the judge looks upon him, eyes him, sets his eye upon him, and he bids the offender look up in his face; "Look upon me," saith the judge, "and speak up:" guiltiness usually clouds the forehead and clothes the brow; the weight of guilt holds down the head! _the evil doer hath an ill look_, or dares not look up; how glad is he if the judge looks off him. We have such an expression here, speaking of the Lord, the great Judge of heaven and earth: " _His eyelids try the children of men_," as a judge tries a guilty person with his eye and reads the characters of his wickedness printed in his face. Hence we have a common speech in our language, such a one _looks suspiciously_, or, _he hath a guilty look_. At that great gaol-delivery described in Re 6:16, All the prisoners cry out _to be hid from the face of him that sat upon the throne_. They could not look upon Christ, and they could not endure Christ should look on them; the eyelids of Christ try the children of men. ... Wickedness cannot endure to be under the observation of any eye, much less of the eye of justice. Hence the actors of it say, " _Who seeth us_?" It is very hard not to show the guilt of the heart in the face, and it is as hard to have it seen there.--^Joseph Caryl.

Verse 5.--" _The Lord trieth the righteous_." Except our sins, there is not such plenty of anything in all the world as there is of troubles which come from sin, as one heavy messenger came to Job after another. Since we are not in paradise, but in the wilderness, we must look for one trouble after another. As a bear came to David after a lion, and a giant after a bear, and a king after a giant, and Philistines after a king, so, when believers have fought with poverty, they shall fight with envy; when they have fought with envy, they shall fight with infamy; when they have fought with infamy, they shall fight with sickness; they shall be like a labourer who is never out of work.--^Henry Smith.

Verse 5.--" _The Lord trieth the righteous_."--Times of affliction and persecution will distinguish the precious from the vile, it will difference the counterfeit professor from the true. Persecution is a Christian's touchstone, it is a _lapis lydius_ that will try what metal men are made of, whether they be silver or tin, gold or dross, wheat or chaff, shadow or substance, carnal or spiritual, sincere or hypocritical. Nothing speaks out more soundness and uprightness than a pursuing after holiness, even then when holiness is most afflicted, pursued, and persecuted in the world: to stand fast in fiery trials argues much integrity within.--^Thomas Brooks.

Verse 5.--Note the singular opposition of the two sentences. God hates the wicked, and therefore in contrast he loves the righteous; but it is here said that he tries them: therefore it follows that to try and to love are with God the same thing.--C. H. S.

Verse 6.--" _Upon the wicked he shall rain snares_." Snares to hold them; then if they be not delivered, follow fire and brimstone, and they cannot escape. This is the case of a sinner if he repent not; if God pardon not, he is in the snare of Satan's temptation, he is in the snare of divine vengeance; let him therefore cry aloud for his deliverance, that he may have his feet in a large room. The wicked lay snares for the righteous. but God either preventeth them that their souls ever escape them, or else he subverteth them: "The snares are broken, and we are delivered." No snares hold us so fast as those of our own sins; they keep down our heads, and stoop us that we cannot look up: a very little ease they are to him that hath not a seared conscience.--^Samuel Page, 1646.

Verse 6.--" _He shall rain snares_." As in hunting with the lasso? the huntsman casts a snare from above upon his prey to entangle its head or feet, so shall the Lord from above with many twistings of the line of terror, surround, bind, and take captive the haters of his law.--^C. H. S.

Verse 6.--" _He shall rain snares_, " etc. He shall rain upon them when they least think of it even in the midst of their jollity, as rain falls on a fair day. Or, he shall rain down the vengeance when he sees good, for it rains not always. Though he defers it, yet will it rain.--^William Nicholson, Bishop of Gloucester, in "David's Harp Strung and Tuned," 1662.

Verse 6.--" _Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest_. " The strange dispensation of affairs in this world is an argument which doth convincingly prove that there shall be such a day wherein all the _involucra_ and entanglements of providence shall be clearly unfolded. Then shall the riddle be dissolved, why God hath given this and that profane wretch so much wealth, and so much power to do mischief: is it not _that they might be destroyed for ever_? Then shall they be called to a strict account for all that plenty and prosperity for which they are now envied; and the more they have abused, the more dreadful will their condemnation be. Then it will be seen that God gave them not as mercies, but as "_snares_." It is said that God "_will rain on the wicked snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest_:" when he scatters abroad the desirable things of this world, riches, honours, pleasures, etc., then he rains "_snares_" upon them; and when he shall call them to an account for these things, then he will rain upon them "_fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest_" of his wrath and fury. Dives, who caroused on earth, yet, in hell could not obtain so much as one poor drop of water to cool his scorched and flaming tongue: had not his excess and intemperance been so great in his life, his fiery thirst had not been so tormenting after death; and therefore, in that sad item that Abraham gives him (Lu 16:25), he bids him "_remember, that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented_." I look upon this as a most bitter and a most deserved sarcasm; upbraiding him for his gross folly, in making the trifles of this life his good things. Thou hast received thy good things, but now thou art tormented. Oh, never call Dives's purple and delicious fare _good things_, if they thus end in torments! Was it good for him to be wrapped in purple who is now wrapped in flames? Was it good for him to fare deliciously who was only thereby fattened up against the day of slaughter?--^Ezekiel Hopkins.

Verse 6.--" _Snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup_. " After the judgment follows the condemnation: pre-figured as we have seen, by the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. "_Snares_" because the allurements of Satan in this life will be their worst punishments in the next; the fire of anger, the brimstone of impurity, the tempest of pride, the lust of the flesh, the lust; of the eyes, and the pride of life. "_This shall be their portion_;" compare it with the Psalmist's own saying, "The Lord himself is the portion of my inheritance and my cup." Ps 16:5.--^Cassiodorus, in J. M. Neale's Commentary.

Verse 6.--" _The portion of their cup_. " Heb., the allotment of their cup. The expression has reference to the custom of distributing to each guest his mess of meat.--^William French and George Skinner, 1842.

Verse 7.--That God may give grace without glory is intelligible; but to admit a man to communion with him in glory without grace, is not intelligible. It is not agreeable to God's holiness to make any inhabitant of heaven, and converse freely with him in a way of intimate love, without such a qualification of grace: "_The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright_;" he looks upon him with a smiling eye, and therefore he cannot favourably look upon an unrighteous person; so that this necessity is not founded only in the command of God that we should be renewed, but in the very nature of the thing, because God, in regard of his holiness, cannot converse with an impure creature. God must change his nature, or the sinner's nature must be changed. There can be no friendly communion between two of different natures without the change of one of them into the likeness of the other. Wolves and sheep, darkness and light, can never agree. God cannot love a sinner as a sinner, because he hates impurity by a necessity of nature as well as a choice of will. It is as impossible for him to love it as to cease to be holy.--^Stephen Charnock.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 4.--The elevation, mystery, supremacy, purity, everlastingness, invisibility, etc., of the throne of God.

Verses 4,5.--In these verses mark the fact that the children of men, as well as the righteous, are tried; work out the contrast between the two trials in their design and result, etc.

Verse 5.--" _The Lord trieth the righteous_. " I. Who are tried? II. What in them is tried?--Faith, love, etc. III. In what manner?--Trials of every sort. IV. How long? V. For what purposes?

Verse 5.--" _His soul hateth_." The thoroughness of God's hatred of sin. Illustrate by providential judgments, threatenings, sufferings of the Surety, and the terrors of hell.

Verse 5.--The trying of the gold, and the sweeping out of the refuse.

Verse 6. " _He shall rain_." Gracious rain and destroying rain.

Verse 6.--The portion of the impenitent.

Verse 7.--The Lord possesses righteousness as a personal attribute, loves it in the abstract, and blesses those who practise it.

Twelfth Psalm

TITLE. This Psalm is headed, "_To the Chief Musician upon Sheminith, a Psalm of David_," which title is identical with that of the sixth Psalm, except that Neginoth is here omitted. We have nothing new to add, and therefore refer the reader to our remarks on the dedication of Ps 6. As Sheminith signifies the eight, the Arabic version says it is concerning the end of the world, which shall be the eighth day, and refers it to the coming of the Messiah: without accepting so fanciful an interpretation, we may read this song of complaining faith in the light of His coming who shall break in pieces the oppressor. The subject will be the better before the mind's eye if we entitle this Psalm: "GOOD THOUGHTS IN BAD TIMES". It is supposed to have been written while Saul was persecuting David, and those who favoured his cause.

DIVISION.--In the first and second verses (1,2) David spreads his plaint before the Lord concerning the treachery of his age; verses 3,4 denounce judgments upon proud traitors; in verse 5, Jehovah himself thunders out his wrath against oppressors; hearing this, the Chief Musician sings sweetly of the faithfulness of God and his care of his people, in verses 6,7; but closes on the old key of lament in verse 8, as he observes the abounding wickedness of his times. Those holy souls who dwell in Mesech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar, may read and sing these sacred stanzas with hearts in full accord with their mingled melody of lowly mourning and lofty confidence.

EXPOSITION.

"_Help, Lord_." A short, but sweet, suggestive, seasonable, and serviceable prayer; a kind of angel's sword, to be turned every way, and to be used on all occasions. Ainsworth says the word rendered "help," is largely used for all manner of saving, helping, delivering, preserving, etc. Thus it seems that the prayer is very full and instructive. The Psalmist sees the extreme danger of his position, for a man had better be among lions than among liars; he feels his own inability to deal with such sons of Belial, for "he who shall touch them must be fenced with iron;" he therefore turns himself to his all-sufficient Helper, the Lord, whose help is never denied to his servants, and whose aid is enough for all their needs. "_Help, Lord_," is a very useful ejaculation which we may dart up to heaven on occasions of emergency, whether in labour, learning, suffering, fighting, living, or dying. As small ships can sail into harbours which larger vessels, drawing more water, cannot enter, so our brief cries and short petitions may trade with heaven when our soul is wind-bound, and business-bound, as to longer exercises of devotion, and when the stream of grace seems at too low an ebb to float a more laborious supplication. "_For the godly man ceaseth_;" the death, departure, or decline of godly men should be a trumpet-call for more prayer. They say that fish smell first at the head, and when godly men decay, the whole commonwealth will soon go rotten. We must not, however, be rash in our judgment on this point, for Elijah erred in counting himself the only servant of God alive, when there were thousands whom the Lord held in reserve. The present times always appear to be peculiarly dangerous, because they are nearest to our anxious gaze, and whatever evils are rife are sure to be observed, while the faults of past ages are further off, and are more easily overlooked. Yet we expect that in the latter days, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold," and then we must the more thoroughly turn from man, and address ourselves to the Churches' Lord, by whose help the gates of hell shall be kept from prevailing against us. "_The faithful fail from among the children of men_;" when godliness goes, faithfulness inevitably follows; without fear of God, men have no love of truth. Common honesty is no longer common, when common irreligion leads to universal godlessness. David had his eyes on Doeg, and the men of Ziph and Keilah, and perhaps remembered the murdered priests of Nob, and the many banished ones who consorted with him in the cave of Adullam, and wondered where the state would drift without the anchors of its godly and faithful men. David, amid the general misrule, did not betake himself to seditious plottings, but to solemn petitionings; nor did he join with the multitude to do evil, but took up the arms of prayer to withstand their attacks upon virtue.

"_They speak vanity every one with his neighbour_." They utter that which is vain _to hear_, because of its frivolous, foolish, want of worth; vain to _believe_, because it was false and lying; vain to _trust to_, since it was deceitful and flattering; vain to _regard_, for it lifted up the hearer, filling him with proud conceit of himself. It is a sad thing when it is the fashion to talk vanity. "Ca' me, and I'll ca' thee," is the old Scotch proverb; give me a high-sounding character, and I will give you one. Compliments and fawning

congratulations are hateful to honest men; they know that if they take they must give them, and they scorn to do either. These accommodation-bills are most admired by those who are bankrupt in character. Bad are the times when every man thus cajoles and cozens his neighbour. "_With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak_" He who puffs up another's heart, has nothing better than wind in his own. If a man extols me to my face, he only shows me one side of his heart, and the other is black with contempt for me, or foul with intent to cheat me. Flattery is the sign of the tavern where duplicity is the host. The Chinese consider a man of two hearts to be a very base man, and we shall be safe in reckoning all flatterers to be such.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 1. "_Help, Lord_" 'Twas high time to call to heaven for help, when Saul cried, "Go, kill me up the priests of Jehovah" (the occasion as it is thought of making this Psalm), and therein committed the sin against the Holy, as some grave divines are of opinion. 1Sa 22:17. David, after many sad thoughts about that slaughter, and the occasion of it, Doeg's malicious information, together with the paucity of his fast friends, and the multitude of his sworn enemies at court, breaks forth abruptly into these words, "_Help Lord_" help at a dead lift. The Arabic version hath it, "_Deliver me by main force_" as with weapons of war, for "the Lord is a man of war." Ex 15:3.--^John Trapp.

Verse 1.--"_The faithful_" "_A faithful man_" as a parent, a reprover, an adviser, one "without guile," "who can find?" Pr 20:6. Look close. View thyself in the glass of the word. Does thy neighbour or thy friend, find thee _faithful_ to him? What does our daily intercourse witness? Is not the attempt to speak what is agreeable oft made at the expense of truth? Are not professions of regard sometimes utterly inconsistent with our real feelings? In common life, where gross violations are restrained, a thousand petty offences are allowed, that break down the wall between sin and duty, and, judged by the divine standard, are indeed guilty steps upon forbidden ground.--^Charles Bridges, 1850.

Verse 1.--A "_faithful_" man must be, first of all, faithful to himself; then, he must be faithful to God; and then, he must be faithful to others, particularly the church of God. And this, as it regards ministers, is of peculiar importance.--^Joseph Irons, 1840.

Verse 1.--Even as a careful mother, seeing her child in the way when a company of unruly horses run through the streets in full career, presently whips up her child in her arms and taketh him home; or as the hen, seeing the ravenous kite over her head, clucks and gathers her chickens under her wings; even so when God hath a purpose to bring a heavy calamity upon a land, it hath been usual with him to call and cull out to himself, such as are his dearly beloved. He takes his choice servants from the evil to come. Thus was Augustine removed a little before Hippo (wherein he dwelt) was taken; Pareus died before Heidelberg was sacked; and Luther was taken off before Germany was overrun with war and bloodshed.--^Ed. Dunsterville in a Sermon at the Funeral of Sir Sim. Harcourt, 1642.

Verse 1.--"_Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth_" etc.:-

Back then, complainer, loathe thy life no more, Nor deem thyself upon a desert shore, Because the rocks the nearer prospect close. Yet in fallen Israel are there hearts and eyes, That day by day in prayer like thine arise; Thou knowest them not, but their Creator known, Go, to the world return, nor fear to cast Thy bread upon the waters, sure at last In joy to find it after many days.

^John Keble, 1792-1866.

Verses 1,2,4.--Consider our markets, our fairs, our private contracts and bargains, our shops, our cellars, our weights, our measures, our promises, our protestations, our politic tricks and villanous Machiavelism, our enhancing of the prices of all commodities, and tell, whether the twelfth Psalm may not as fitly be applied to our times as to the days of the man of God; in which the feigning, and lying, and facing, and guile, and subtlety of men provoked the psalmist to cry out, "_Help, Lord; for there is not a godly man left: for the faithful are failed from among the children of men: they speak deceitfully every one with his neighbour, flattering with their lips, and speak with a double heart, which have said, With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own: who is Lord over us_"--R. Wolcombe. 1612.

Verse 2.--"_They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak_" The feigned zeal is just like a water-man, that looks one way and rows another way; for this man _pretends_ one thing and _intends_ another thing; as Jehu pretended the zeal of God's glory, but his

aim was at his master's kingdom; and his zeal to God's service was but to bring him to the sceptre of the kingdom. So Demetrius professed great love unto Diana, but his drift was to maintain the honour of his profession; and so we have too many that make great show of holiness, and yet their hearts aim at other ends; but they may be sure, though they can deceive the world and destroy themselves, yet not God, who knoweth the secrets of all hearts.--[^]Gr. Williams, 1636.

Verse 2.--"They speak vanity."--

Faithless is earth, and faithless are the skies! Justice is fled, and truth is now no more!

[^]Virgil's, *Aeneid*, IV. 373.

Verse 2.--" _With a double heart_." Man is nothing but insincerity, falsehood, and hypocrisy, both in regard to himself and in regard to others. He does not wish that he should be told the truth, he shuns saying it to others; and all these moods, so inconsistent with justice and reason, have their roots in his heart.--Blaise Pascal.

Verse 2.--" _With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak_." There is no such stuff to make a cloak of as religion; nothing so fashionable, nothing so profitable: it is a livery wherein a wise man may serve two masters, God and the world, and make a gainful service by either. I serve both, and in both myself, by prevaricating with both. Before man none serves his God with more severe devotion: for which, among the best of men, I work my own ends, and serve myself. In private, I serve the world; not with so strict devotion, but with more delight; where fulfilling of her servants' lusts, I work my end and serve myself. The house of prayer who more frequents than I? In all Christian duties who more forward than I? I fast with those that fast, that I may eat with those that eat. I mourn with those that mourn. No hand more open to the cause than mine, and in their families none prays longer and with louder zeal. Thus when the opinion of a holy life hath cried the goodness of my conscience up, my trade can lack no custom, my wares can want no price, my words can need no credit, my actions can lack no praise. If I am covetous it is interpreted providence; if miserable, it is counted temperance; if melancholy, it is construed godly sorrow; if merry, it is voted spiritual joy; if I be rich, it is thought the blessing of a godly life; if poor, supposed the fruit of conscionable dealing; if I be well spoken of, it is the merit of holy conversation; if ill, it is the malice of malignants. Thus I sail with every wind, and have my end in all conditions. This cloak in summer keeps me cool, in winter warm, and hides the nasty bag of all my secret lusts. Under this cloak I walk in public fairly with applause, and in private sin securely without offence, and officiate wisely without discovery. I compass sea and land to make a proselyte; and no sooner made, but he makes me. At a fast I cry Geneva, and at a feast I cry Rome. If I be poor, I counterfeit abundance to save my credit; if rich, I dissemble poverty to save charges. I most frequent schismatical lectures, which I find most profitable; from thence learning to divulge and maintain new doctrines; they maintain me in suppers thrice a week. I use the help of a lie sometimes, as a new stratagem to uphold the gospel; and I colour oppression with God's judgments executed upon the wicked. Charity I hold an extraordinary duty, therefore not ordinarily to be performed. What I openly reprove abroad, for my own profit, that I secretly act at home, for my own pleasure. But stay, I see a handwriting in my heart which damps my soul. It is charactered in these said words, "Woe be to you, hypocrites." Mt 23:13.--[^]Francis Quarles' "Hypocrite's Soliloquy."

Verse 2.--" _With flattering lips_," etc. The world indeed says that society could not exist if there were perfect truthfulness and candour between man and man; and that the world's propriety would be as much disturbed if every man said what he pleased, as it was in those days of Israelitish history, when every man did that which was right in his own eyes. The world is assuredly the best judge of its own condition and mode of government, and therefore I will not say what a libel does such a remark contain, but oh, what a picture does it present of the social edifice, that its walls can be cemented and kept together only by flattery and falsehood.--[^]Barton Bouchier.

Verse 2.--" _Flattering lips_!" The philosopher Bion being asked what animal he thought the most hurtful, replied, "That of wild creatures a tyrant, and of tame ones a flatterer." The flatterer is the most dangerous enemy we can have. Raleigh, himself a courtier, and therefore initiated into the whole art of flattery, who discovered in his own career and fate its dangerous and deceptive power, its deep artifice and deeper falsehood, says, "A flatterer is said to be a beast that biteth smiling. But it is hard to know them from friends--they are so obsequious and full of protestations; for, as a wolf resembles a dog, so doth a flatterer a friend."--[^]The Book of Symbols, 1844.

Verse 2.--" _They speak with a double heart_." The original is, "A heart and a heart_:" one for the church, another for the change; one for Sundays, another for working-days; one for the king, another for the pope. A man without a heart is a wonder, but a man with two hearts is a monster. It is said of Judas "There were many hearts in one man;" and we read of the saints, "There was one heart in many men." Ac 4:32. _Dabo illis cor unum_ ; a special blessing.--^Thomas Adams.

Verse 2.--When men cease to be faithful to their God, he who expects to find them so to each other will be much disappointed. The primitive sincerity will accompany the primitive piety in her flight from the earth; and then interest will succeed conscience in the regulation of human conduct, till one man cannot trust another farther than he holds him by that tie. Hence, by the way, it is, that though many are infidels themselves, yet few choose to have their families and dependants such; as judging, and rightly judging, that true Christians are the only persons to be depended on for the exact discharge of social duties.--^George Horne.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--" _Help, Lord_." I. The Prayer itself, short, suggestive, seasonable, rightly directed, vehement. II. Occasions for its use. III. Modes of its answer. IV. Reasons for expecting gracious reply.

First two clauses.--Text for funeral of an eminent believer.

Whole verse.--I. _The fact bewailed_--describe godly and faithful, and show how they fail. II. _The feeling excited_ . Mourning the loss, fears for church, personal need of such companions, appeal to God. III. _The forebodings aroused_ . Failure of the cause, judgments impending, etc. IV. _The faith remaining_ : "Help, Lord."

Verse 1.--Intimate connection between yielding honour to God and honesty to man, since they decline together.

verse 2 (first clause).--A discourse upon the prevalence and perniciousness of vain talk.

The whole verse.--Connection between flattery and treachery.

" _A double heart_." Right and wrong kinds of _hearts_ , and the disease of duplicity.

Exposition.

Total destruction shall overwhelm the lovers of flattery and pride, but meanwhile how they hector and fume! Well did the apostle call them "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame." Free-thinkers are generally very free-talkers, and they are never more at ease than when railing at God's dominion, and arrogating to themselves unbounded license. Strange is it that the easy yoke of the Lord should so gall the shoulders of the proud, while the iron bands of Satan they bind about themselves as chains of honour: they boastfully cry unto God, "Who is lord over us?" and hear not the hollow voice of the evil one, who cries from the infernal lake, "I am your lord, and right faithfully do ye serve me." Alas, poor fools, their pride and glory shall be cut off like a fading flower! May God grant that our soul may not be gathered with them. It is worthy of observation that flattering lips, and tongues speaking proud things, are classed together: the fitness of this is clear, for they are guilty of the same vice, the first flatters another, and the second flatters himself, in both cases a lie is in their right hands. One generally imagines that flatterers are such mean parasites, so cringing and fawning, that they cannot be proud; but the wise man will tell you that while all pride is truly meanness, there is in the very lowest meanness no small degree of pride. Caesar's horse is even more proud of carrying Caesar, than Caesar is of riding him. The mat on which the emperor wiped his shoes, boasts vaingloriously, crying out, "I cleaned the imperial boots." None are so detestably domineering as the little creatures who creep into office by cringing to the great; those are bad times, indeed, in which these obnoxious beings are numerous and powerful. No wonder that the justice of God in cutting off such injurious persons is matter for a Psalm, for both earth and heaven are weary of such provoking offenders, whose presence is a very plague to the people afflicted thereby. Men cannot tame the tongues of such boastful flatterers; but the Lord's remedy if sharp is sure, and is an unanswerable answer to their swelling words of vanity.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 3.--" _The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips_," etc. They who take pleasure in deceiving others, will at the last find themselves most of all deceived, when the Sun of truth, by the brightness of his rising,

shall at once detect and consume hypocrisy.--^George Horne.

Verse 3.--" _Cut off lips and tongues_." May there not be here an allusion to those terrible but suggestive punishments which Oriental monarchs were wont to execute on criminals? Lips were cut off and tongues torn out when offenders were convicted of lying or treason. So terrible and infinitely more so are the punishments of sin. ^C. H. S.

Verses 3,4.--It need not now seem strange to tell you that the Lord is the owner of our bodies, that he has so much propriety therein that they are more his than ours. The apostle tells us as much. 1Co 6:20. "Glorify God in your bodies which are his." Our bodies and every member thereof, are his: for if the whole be so, no part is exempted. And therefore they spake proud things, and presumptuously usurped the propriety of God, who said, " _Our lips are our own_;" as though their lips had not been his who is Lord and Owner of all, but they had been lords thereof, and might have used them as they list. This provoked God to show what right he had to dispose of such lips and tongues, by _cutting them off_.--^David Clarkson.

Verse 4.--" _Who have said, With our tongues will we prevail; who is Lord over us_?" So it was: twelve poor and unlearned men on the one side, all the eloquence of Greece and Rome arrayed on the other. From the time of Tertullus to that of Julian the apostate, every species of oratory, learning, wit, was lavished against the church of God; and the result, like the well-known story of that dispute between the Christian peasant and the heathen philosopher, when the latter, having challenged the assembled fathers of a synod to silence him, was put to shame by the simple faith of the former "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I command thee to be dumb." _Who is Lord over us_? "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" Ex 5:2. "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?" Job 21:15. "Who is that God that shall deliver you?" Da 3:15.--^Michael Agyuan, in J. M. Neale's Commentary.

Verse 4.--" _Our lips are our own_." If we have to do with God, we must quit claim to ourselves and look on God as our owner; but this is fixed in the hearts of men, We will be our own; we will not consent to the claim which God makes to us: " _Our lips are our own_." Wicked men might as well say the same thing of their whole selves; our bodies, strength, time, parts, etc., are our own, and who is Lord over us?--^John Howe.

Verse 4.--From the faults of the wicked we must learn three contrary lessons; to wit: 1. That nothing which we have is our own. But, 2. Whatsoever is given to us of God is for service to be done to him. 3. That whatsoever we do or say, we have a Lord over us to whom we must be answerable when he calleth us to account.--^David Dickson.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 3.--God's hatred of those twin sins of the lips--Flattery and Pride (which is self flattery). Why he hates them. How he shows his hatred. In whom he hates them most. How to be cleansed from them.

Verse 3,4.--I. _The revolt of the tongue_. Its claim of power, self-possession, and liberty. Contrast between this and the believer's confession, "we are not our own." II. _The method of its rebellion_--"flattery, and speaking proud things." III. _The end of its treason_--" cut off."

Exposition.

In due season the Lord will hear his elect ones, who cry day and night unto him, and though he bear long with their oppressors, yet will he avenge them speedily. Observe that the mere oppression of saints, however silently they bear it, is in itself a cry to God: Moses was heard at the Red Sea, though he said nothing; and Hagar's affliction was heard despite her silence. Jesus feels with his people, and their smart are mighty orators with him. By-and-by, however, _they_ begin to sigh and express their misery, and then relief comes post-haste. Nothing moves a father like the cries of his children ; he bestirs himself, wakes up his manhood, overthrows the enemy, and sets his beloved in safety. A _puff_ is too much for the child to bear, and the foe is so haughty, that he laughs the little one to scorn; but the Father comes, and then it is the child's turn to laugh, when he is set above the rage of his tormentor. What virtue is there in a poor man's sighs, that they should move the Almighty God to arise from his throne. The needy did not dare to speak, and could only sigh in secret, but the Lord heard, and could rest no longer, but girded on his sword for the battle. It is a fair day when our soul brings God into her quarrel, for when his bare arm is seen, Philistia shall rue the day. The darkest hours of the Church's night are those which precede the break of

day. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Jesus will come to deliver just when his needy ones shall sigh, as if all hope had gone for ever. O Lord, set thy now near at hand, and rise up speedily to our help. Should the afflicted reader be able to lay hold upon the promise of this verse, let him gratefully fetch a fullness of comfort from it. Gurnal says, "As one may draw out the wine of a whole hogshead at one tap, so may a poor soul derive the comfort of the whole covenant to himself through one promise, if he be able to apply it." He who promises to set us in safety, means thereby preservation on earth, and eternal salvation in heaven.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 5.--"For the oppression of the poor," etc. When oppressors and persecutors do snuff and puff at the people of God, when they defy them, and scorn them, and think that they can with a blast of their breath blow them away, then God will arise to judgment, as the Chaldee has it; at that very nick of time when all seems to be lost, and when the poor, oppressed, and afflicted people of God can do nothing but sigh and weep, and weep and sigh, then the Lord will arise and ease them of their oppressions, and make their day of extremity a glorious opportunity to work for his own glory and his people's good. Mt 22:6,7. "And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."--[^]Thomas Brooks.

Verse 5.--Fear ye, whosoever ye be, that do wrong the poor; you have power and wealth, and the favour of the judges, but they have the strongest weapons of all, sighings and groanings, which fetch help from heaven for them. These weapons dig down houses, throw up foundations, overthrow whole nations.--[^]Chrysostom.

Verse 5.--"For the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord." God is pleased to take notice of every grace, even the least and lowest, and every gracious inclination in any of his servants. To fear his name is no great matter, yet these have a promise. To think on his name less, yet set down in a "book of remembrance." God sets down how many good thoughts a poor soul hath had. As evil thoughts in wicked men are taken notice of--they are the first fruits of the evil heart (Mt 15:19)--so good thoughts are they which lie uppermost, and best discover a good heart. A desire is a small matter, especially of the poor man, yet God regards the desire of the poor, and calls a good desire the greatest kindness; "The desire of a man is his kindness." A tear makes no great noise, yet hath a voice, "God hath heard the voice of my weeping." It is no pleasant water, yet God bottles it up. A groan is a poor thing, yet is the best part of a prayer sometimes (Ro 8:26); a sigh is less, yet God is awakened and raised up by it. Ps 12:5. A look is less than all these, yet this is regarded (Jon 2:4); breathing is less, yet (La 3:56), the church could speak of no more; panting is less than breathing, when one is spent for lack of breath, yet this is all the godly can sometimes boast of. Ps 42:1. The description of a godly man is oftentimes made from his least quod sic. Blessed are the poor, the meek, they that mourn, and they who hunger and thirst. Never did Hannah pray better than when she could get out never a word, but cried, "Hard, hard heart." Nor did the publican, than when he smote his breast and cried, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." Nor Mary Magdalene, than when she came behind Christ, sat down, wept, but kept silence. How sweet is music upon the waters! How fruitful are the lowest valleys! Mourning hearts are most musical, lowest most fruitful. The good shepherd ever takes most care of his weak lambs and feeble sheep. The father makes most of the least, and the mother looks most after the sick child. How comfortable is that of our-Saviour, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish!" And that heaven is not to be entered but by such as are like the little child.--[^]John Sheffield, 1654.

Verse 5.--"The oppression of the poor." Insolent and cruel oppressing of the poor is a sin that brings desolating and destroying judgments upon a people. God sent ten wasting judgments one after another upon Pharaoh, his people, and land, to revenge the cruel oppression of his poor people. "Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: for the Lord will plead their cause." Pr 22:22,23. To rob and oppress the rich is a great sin; but to rob and oppress the poor is a greater; but to rob and oppress the poor because he is poor, and wants money to buy justice, is the top of all inhumanity and impiety. To oppress any one is sin; but to oppress the oppressed is the height of sin. Poverty, and want, and misery, should be motives to pity; but oppressors make them the whetstones of their cruelty and severity, and therefore the Lord will plead the cause of his poor oppressed people against their

oppressors without fee or fear; yea, he will plead their cause with pestilence, blood, and fire. Gog was a great oppressor of the poor (Eze 38:8-14), and God pleads against him with pestilence, blood, and fire (verse Eze 38:22); "and I will plead against him, with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone."--^Thomas Brooks.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 5.--The Lord aroused--How! Why! What to do! When!

Last clause.--Peculiar danger of believers from those who despise them and their special safety. Good practical topic.

Exposition.

What a contrast between the vain words of man, and the pure words of Jehovah. Man's words are yea and nay, but the Lord's promises are yea and amen. For truth, certainty, holiness, faithfulness, the words of the Lord are pure as well-refined silver. In the original there is an allusion to the most severely-purifying process known to the ancients, through which silver was passed when the greatest possible purity was desired; the dross was all consumed, and only the bright and precious metal remained; so clear and free from all alloy of error or unfaithfulness is the book of the words of the Lord. The Bible has passed through the furnace of persecution, literary criticism, philosophic doubt, and scientific discovery, and has lost nothing but those human interpretations which clung to it as alloy to precious ore. The experience of saints has tried it in every conceivable manner, but not a single doctrine or promise has been consumed in the most excessive heat. What God's words are, the words of his children should be. If we would be Godlike in conversation, we must watch our language, and maintain the strictest purity of integrity and holiness in all our communications.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Verse 6.--" _The words of the Lord are pure words_, " etc. How beautifully is this verse introduced, by way of contrast to what was said before concerning! Do sinners talk of vanity? let saints then speak of Jesus and his gospel. Do they talk impure words? then let the faithful use the pure words of God, which like silver, the more used, the more melted in the fire, the more precious will they be. It is true, indeed, despisers will esteem both God and his word as trifling; but oh, what an unknown treasure doth the word, the promises, the covenant relation of the divine things of Jesus contain! They are more to be desired than gold, yea, than pure gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.--^Robert Hawker.

Verse 6.--" _The words of the Lord are pure words_, " etc. They that purify silver to the purpose, use to put it in the fire again and again, that it may be thoroughly tried. So is the truth of God; there is scarce any truth but hath been tried over and over again, and still if any dross happen to mingle with it, then God calls it in question again. If in former times there have been Scriptures alleged that have not been pertinent to prove it, that truth shall into the fire again, that what is dross may be burnt up; the Holy Ghost is so curious, so delicate, so exact, he cannot bear that falsehood should be mingled with the truths of the gospel. That is the reason, therefore, why that God doth still, age after age, call former things in question, because that there is still some dross one way or other mingled with them; either in the stating the opinions themselves, or else in the Scriptures that are brought and alleged for them, that have passed for current, for he will never leave till he have purified them. The doctrine of God's free grace hath been tried over, and over, and over again. Pelagius begins, and he mingles his dross with it: he saith, grace is nothing but nature in man. Well, his doctrine was purified, and a great deal of dross purged out. Then come the semi-Pelagians, and they part stakes; they say, nature can do nothing without grace, but they make nature to concur with grace, and to have an influence as well as grace; and the dross of that was burnt up. The Papists, they take up the same quarrel, but will neither be Pelagians nor semi-Pelagians, yet still mingle dross. The Arminians, they come, and they refine popery in that point anew; still they mingle dross. God will have this truth tried seven times in the fire, till he hath brought it forth as pure as pure may be. And I say it is because that truth is thus precious.--^Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 6.--The Scripture is the sun; the church is the clock. The sun we know to be sure, and regularly constant in his motions; the clock, as it may fall out, may go too fast or too slow. As then, we should condemn him of folly that should profess to trust the clock rather than the sun, so we cannot but justly tax the credulity of those who would rather trust to the church than to the Scripture.--^Bishop Hall.

Verse 6.--" _The words of the Lord are pure words_." Men may inspect detached portions of the Book, and please themselves with some things, which, at first view, have the semblance of conniving at what is wrong. But let them read it, let them read the whole of it; let them carry along in their minds the character of the persons to which the different portions of it were addressed; the age of the world, and the circumstances under which the different parts of it were written, and the particular objects which even those portions of it have in view, which to an infidel mind appear the most exceptionable; and they may be rationally convinced that, instead of originating in the bosom of an impostor, it owes its origin to men who wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Let them scrutinise it with as much severity as they please; only let their scrutiny be well informed, wisely directed, and with a fair and ingenuous mind, and we have no fears for the issue. There are portions of it on which ignorance and folly have put constructions that are forced and unnatural, and which impure minds have viewed in shadows reflected from their own impurity. Montesquieu said of Voltaire, *_Lorsque Voltaire lit un livre, il le fait, puis il erit contre ce qu'il a fait_.* "When Voltaire reads a book, he makes it what he pleases, and then writes against what he has made." It is no difficult matter to besmear and blot its pages, and then impute the foul stains that men of corrupt minds have cast upon it, to its stainless Author. But if we honestly look at it as it is, we shall find that like its Author, it is without blemish and without spot.--[^]Gardiner Spring, D.D.

Verse 6.--" _The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times_." The expression may import two things: first, the infallible certainty of the word; and, secondly, the exact purity. First, the infallible certainty of the word, as gold endureth in the fire when the dross is consumed. Vain conceits comfort us not in a time of trouble; but the word of God, the more it is tried, the more you will find the excellency of it--the promise is tried, as well as we are tried, in deep afflictions; but, when it is so, it will be found to be most pure, "The word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him" (Pr 30:5); as pure gold suffers no loss by the fire, so the promises suffer no loss when they are tried, but stand to us in our greatest troubles. Secondly, it notes the exact perfection of the word: there is no dross in silver and gold that hath been often refined; so there is no defect in the word of God.--[^]Thomas Mantou.

Verse 6.--Fry thus translates this verse:--

The words of Jehovah are pure words-- Silver refined in the crucible-- Gold, seven times washed from the earth.

Zfqaq <02212> though sometimes applied to express the purity of silver, is more strictly an epithet of gold, from the peculiar method made use of in separating it from the soil by repeated washings and decantations.--[^]John Fry, in loc.

Verse 6.--" _Seven times_." I cannot but admit that there may be a mystic meaning in the expression "*_seven times_*," in allusion to the seven periods of the church, or to that perfection, implied in the figure seven, to which it is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This will be more readily allowed by those who admit of the prophetic interpretation of the seven epistles of the Book of Revelation. [^]W. Wilson, D.D., in loc.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6.--The purity, trial, and permanency of the words of the Lord.

Seven crucibles in which believers try the word. A little thought will suggest these.

Exposition.

To fall into the hands of an evil generation, so as to be baited by their cruelty, or polluted by their influence, is an evil to be dreaded beyond measure; but it is an evil foreseen and provided for in the text. In life many a saint has lived a hundred years before his age, as though he had darted his soul into the brighter future, and escaped the mists of the beclouded present; he has gone to his grave unreverenced and misunderstood, and lo! as generations come and go, upon a sudden the hero is unearthed, and lives in the admiration and love of the excellent of the earth; preserved for ever from the generation which stigmatised him as a sower of sedition, or burned him as a heretic. It should be our daily prayer that we may rise above our age as the mountain-tops above the clouds, and may stand out as heaven-pointing pinnacle high above the mists of ignorance and sin which roll around us. O Eternal Spirit, fulfil in us the faithful saying of this verse! Our faith believes those two assuring words, and cries, "*_Thou shalt_*," "*_thou*

shalt_."

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 7.--Preservation from one's generation in life and for ever. A very suggestive theme.

Exposition.

Here we return to the fount of bitterness, which first made the Psalmist run to the wells of salvation, namely, the prevalence of wickedness. When those in power are vile, their underlings will be no better. As a warm sun brings out noxious flies, so does a sinner in honour foster vice everywhere. Our turf would not so swarm with abominables if those who are styled honourables did not give their countenance to the craft. Would to God that the glory and triumph of our Lord Jesus would encourage us to walk and work on every side; as like acts upon like, since an exalted sinner encourages sinners, our exalted Redeemer must surely excite, cheer, and stimulate his saints. Nerved by a sight of his reigning power we shall meet the evils of the times in the spirit of holy resolution, and shall the more hopefully pray, "Help, Lord."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 8.--" _When the vilest men are exalted_:" Heb., vilities, Gr., _outisanoi_ the abstract for the concrete, _quisquiliae_. Oft, empty vessels swim aloft, rotten posts are gilt with adulterate gold, the worst weeds spring up bravest. Chaff will get to the top of the fan, when good corn, as it lieth at the bottom of the heap, so it falls low at the feet of the fanner. The reason why wicked men "_walk_" on every side, are so brisk, so busy (and who but they?) is given to be this, because losels and rioters were exalted. See Pr 28:12,18; 29:2. As rheums and catarrhs fall from the head to the lungs and cause a consumption of the whole body, so it is in the body politic. As a fish putrefies first in the head and then in all the parts, so here. Some render the text thus, "_When they (that is, the wicked) are exalted_," it is a "_shame_" for the sons of men," that other men who better deserve preferment, are not only slighted, but vilely handled by such worthless ambitionists, who yet the higher they climb, as apes, the more they discover their deformities."-- ^John Trapp.

Verse 8.--Good thus translates this verse:--

Should the wicked advance on every side; Should the dregs of the earth be uppermost?

The original is given literally, _zull-wth_ <02149>, means "foeces, foeculences, dregs." _r-wm_ <07311> is here an adverb, and imports _uppermost_, rather than _exalted_.--^J. Mason Good, in loc.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 8.--_Sin in high places specially infectious_. Call to the rich and prominent to remember their responsibility. Thankfulness for honourable rulers. Discrimination to be used in choice of our representatives, or civic magistrates.

Thirteenth Psalm

OCCASION.--The Psalm cannot be referred to any especial event or period in David's history. All attempts to find it a birthplace are but guesses. It was, doubtless, more than once the language of that much tried man of God, and is intended to express the feelings of the people of God in those ever-returning trials which beset them. If the reader has never yet found occasion to use the language of this brief ode, he will do so ere long, if he be a man after the Lord's own heart. We have been wont to call this the "How Long Psalm." We had almost said the Howling Psalm, from the incessant repetition of the cry "how long?"

DIVISION.--This Psalm is very readily to be divided into three parts:--the question of anxiety, 1,2; the cry of prayer, 3,4; the song of faith, 5,6.

EXPOSITION.

"_How long_?"--This question is repeated no less than four times. It betokens very intense desire for deliverance, and great anguish of heart. And what if there be some impatience mingled therewith; is not this the more true a portrait of our own experience? It is not easy to prevent desire from degenerating into impatience. O for grace that, while we wait on God, we may be kept from indulging a murmuring spirit!

"_How long_?" Does not the oft-repeated cry become a very HOWLING? And what if grief should find no other means of utterance? Even then, God is not far from the voice of our roaring; for he does not regard the music of our prayers, but his own Spirit's work in them in exciting desire and inflaming the affections.

"_How long_?" Ah! how long do our days appear when our soul is cast down within us!

"How wearily the moments seem to glide O'er sadness! How the time Delights to linger in its flight!"

Time flies with full-fledged wing in our summer days, but in our winters he flutters painfully. A week within prison-walls is longer than a month at liberty. Long sorrow seems to argue abounding corruption; for the gold which is long in the fire must have had much dross to be consumed, hence the question "how long?" may suggest deep searching of heart. "_How long wilt thou forget me_?" Ah, David! how like a fool thou talkest! Can God _forget_? Can Omniscience fail in memory? Above all, can Jehovah's heart forget his own beloved child? Ah! brethren, let us drive away the thought, and hear the voice of our covenant God by the mouth of the prophet, "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." "_For ever_?" Oh, dark thought! It was surely bad enough to suspect a temporary forgetfulness, but shall we ask the ungracious question, and imagine that the Lord will for ever cast away his people? No, his anger may endure for a night, but his love shall abide eternally. "_How long wilt thou hide thy face from me_?" This is a far more rational question, for God may hide his face, and yet he may remember still. A hidden face is no sign of a forgetful heart. It is in love that his face is turned away; yet to a real child of God, this hiding of his Father's face is terrible, and he will never be at ease until once more he hath his Father's smile. "_How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily_?" There is in the original the idea of "laying up" counsels in his heart, as if his devices had become innumerable but unavailing. Herein we have often been like David, for we have considered and reconsidered day after day, but have not discovered the happy device by which to escape from our trouble. Such store is a sad sore. Ruminating upon trouble is bitter work. Children fill their mouths with bitterness when they rebelliously chew the pill which they ought obediently to have taken at once. "_How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me_?" This is like wormwood in the gall, to see the wicked enemy exulting while our soul is bowed down within us. The laughter of a foe grates horribly upon the ears of grief. For the devil to make mirth of our misery is the last ounce of our complaint, and quite breaks down our patience; therefore let us make it one chief argument in our plea with mercy.

Thus the careful reader will remark that the question "how long?" is put in four shapes. The writer's grief is viewed, as it seems to be, as it is, as it affects himself within, and his foes without. We are all prone to play most on the worst string. We set up monumental stones over the graves of our joys, but who thinks of erecting monuments of praise for mercies received? We write four books of Lamentations and only one of Canticles, and are far more at home in wailing out a _Miserere_ than in chanting a _Te Deum_.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 1.--" _How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord_?" etc. The departures of God from true believers are never final; they may be tedious, but they are temporary. As the evil spirit is said to depart from Christ for a season (Lu 4:13; though he quitted that temptation, he did not quit his design, so as to tempt no more), so the good Spirit withdraws from those that are Christ's for a season only, 'tis with a purpose of coming again. When he hath most evidently forsaken, 'tis as unquestionable that sooner or later he will return; and the happiness of his return will richly recompense for the sadness of his desertion; Isa 54:7, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee;" here is not only a gathering after a forsaking, but " _great mercies_ " to make amends for " _a small moment_ ." He who hath engaged to be our God for ever, cannot depart for ever.--^Timothy Cruso, 1696.

Verse 1.--" _How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord_?" Whatever be the pressing need of Christ's followers in troubles, and their constant cleaving to duty for all that; and whatever be Christ's purpose of love towards them, yet he seeth it fit oftentimes not to come to them at first, but will let the trial go on till it come to a height, and be a trial indeed, and put them seriously to it; for before he came he lets them row "about five and twenty or thirty furlongs" (the last of which make near four miles, eight furlongs going to a mile); and (Mr 6:48) he came not till the fourth watch of the night, which is the morning watch. We are indeed very sparing of ourselves in trouble, and do soon begin to think that we are low and tried enough, and therefore would be delivered; but our wise Lord seeth that we need more.--^George Hutcheson, 1657.

Verse 1.--" _How long_," etc. Enquire into the cause of God's anger. He is never angry but when there is very great reason, when we force him to be so. What is that accursed thing in our hearts, or in our lives, for which God hides his face, and frowns upon us? What particular disobedience to his commands is it for which he has taken up the rod? Job 10:2; "I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me;" as if he should say, Lord, my troubles and my sorrows are very well known. ... We must not cease to be solicitous to know what are the particular sins that have made him to tear us up by the roots, to throw us down as with a whirlwind; what is it that has made him so long angry with us, and so long to delay his help, that if any evil be undiscovered in our souls, we may lament it with a seasonable grief, and get a pardon for it. It is not the common course of God's providence to cover his servants with so thick a darkness as this is, which our troubled souls labour under in the day, or rather in the night of his displeasure; and, therefore, we may with humility desire to know why he proceeds with us in a way that is so singular; for it is some way delightful to the understanding to pierce into the reasons and causes of things.--^Timothy Rogers.

Verse 1.--" _How long wilt thou forget me_," etc. For God _to forget_ David, not to mind him, or look after him, is much! If his eye be never so little once off us, the spiritual adversary is ready presently to seize on us, as the kite on the chick if the hen look not carefully after it. ... As a father will sometimes cross his son to try the child's disposition, to see how he will take it, whether he will mutter and grumble at it, and grow humorous and wayward, neglect his duty to his father because his father seemeth to neglect him, or make offer to run away and withdraw himself from his father's obedience because he seemeth to carry himself harshly and roughly towards him, and to provoke him thereunto; so doth God likewise oftentimes cross his children and seemeth to neglect them, so to try their disposition, what metal they are made of, how they stand affected towards him: whether they will neglect God because God seemeth to neglect them, forbear to serve him because he seemeth to forget them, cease to depend upon him because he seemeth not to look after them, to provide for them, or to protect them. Like Joram's prophane pursuivant, "This evil," saith he, "is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?" Or whether they will still constantly cleave to him, though he seem not to regard them, nor to have any care of them; and say with Isaiah, "Yet will I wait upon God, though he have hid his face from us, and I will look for him though he look not on us;" for, "They are blessed that wait on him; and he will not fail in due time to show mercy unto all them that do so constantly wait on him." Isa 8:17; 30:18. As Samuel dealt with Saul; he kept away till the last hour, to see what Saul would do when Samuel seemed not to keep touch with him. So doth God with his saints, and with those that be in league with him; he withdraweth himself oft, and keeps aloof oft for a long time together to try what they will do, and what courses they will take when God seemeth to break with them and to leave them in the suds, as we say; amidst many difficulties much perplexed, as it was with David at this time.--^Thomas Gataker, 1637.

Verse 1.--1. For desertions. I think them like lying fallow of lean and weak land for some years, while it

gathers sap for a better crop. It is possible to gather gold, where it may be had, with moonlight. Oh, if I could but creep one foot, or half a foot, nearer in to Jesus, in such a dismal night as that when he is away, I should think it a happy absence! 2. If I knew that the Beloved were only gone away for trial, and further humiliation, and not smoked out of the house with new provocations, I would forgive desertions and hold my peace at his absence. But Christ's bought absence (that I bought with my sin), is two running boils at once, one upon each side; and what side then can I lie on? 3. I know that, as night and shadows are good for flowers, and moonlight and dews are better than a continual sun, so is Christ's absence of special use, and that it hath some nourishing virtue in it, and giveth sap to humility, and putteth an edge on hunger, and furnisheth a fair field to faith to put forth itself, and to exercise its fingers in gripping it seeth not what.--^Samuel Rutherford, 1600-1661.

Verses 1,2--That which the French proverb hath of sickness is true of all evils, that they come on horseback and go away on foot; we have often seen that a sudden fall, or one meal's surfeit, has stuck by many to their graves; whereas pleasures come like oxen, slow and heavily, and go away like post-horses, upon the spur. Sorrows, because they are lingering guests, I will entertain but moderately, knowing that the more they are made of the longer they will continue: and for pleasures, because they stay not, and do but call to drink at my door, I will use them as passengers with slight respect. He is his own best friend that makes the least of both of them.--^Joseph Hall.

Verses 1,2.--"_How LONG wilt thou forget me? _How LONG wilt thou hide thy face from me? How LONG shall I take counsel in my soul_?" The intenseness of the affliction renders it trying to our fortitude; but it is by the continuance of it that patience is put to the test. It is not under the sharpest, but the longest trials, that we are most in danger of fainting. In the first case, the soul collects all its strength, and feels in earnest to call in help from above; but, in the last, the mind relaxes, and sinks into despondency. When Job was accosted with evil tidings, in quick succession, he bore it with becoming fortitude; but when he could see no end to his troubles, he sunk under them.--^Andrew Fuller.

Verses 1-4.--Everything is strangely changed; all its comeliness, and beauty, and glory, vanishes when the _life_ is gone: life is the pleasant thing; 'tis sweet and comfortable; but death with its pale attendants, raises a horror and aversion to it everywhere. The saints of God dread the removal of his favour, and the hiding of his face; and when it is hid, a faintness and a cold amazement and fear seizes upon every part, and they feel strange bitterness, and anguish, and tribulation, which makes their joints to tremble, and is to them as the very pangs of death.--^Timothy Rogers.

Verses 1,5,6.--Prayer helps towards the increase and growth of grace, by drawing the habits of grace into exercise. Now, as exercise brings benefit to the body, so does prayer to the soul. Exercise doth help to digest or breathe forth those humours that clog the spirits. One that stirs little we see grow puffy, and is soon choked up with phlegm, which exercise clears the body of. Prayer is the saint's exercise-field, where his graces are breathed; it is as the wind to the air, it brightens the soul; as bellows to the fire, which clears the coal of those ashes that smother them. The Christian, while in this world, lives in an unwholesome climate; one while, the delights of it deaden and dull his love of Christ; another while, the trouble he meets in it damps his faith on the promise. How now should the Christian get out of these distempers, had he not a throne of grace to resort to, where if once his soul be in a melting frame, he (like one laid in a kindly sweat), soon breathes out the malignity of his disease, and comes into his right temper again? How often do we find the holy prophet, when he first kneels down to pray, full of fears and doubts, who, before he and the duty part, grows into a sweet familiarity with God, and repose in his own spirit! (Ps 13:1) He begins his prayer as if he thought God would never give him a kind look more: "_How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?_" But by that time he had exercised himself a little in duty, his distemper wears off, the mists scatter, and his faith breaks out as the sun in its strength, verses 5,6: "_I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord_" Thus his faith lays the cloth, expecting a feast ere long to be set on: he that now questioned whether he should ever hear good news from heaven, is so strong in faith as to make himself merry with the hopes of that mercy which he is assured will come at last. Abraham began with fifty, but his faith got ground on God every step till he brought down the price of their lives to ten.--^William Gurnall.

Verses 1,6.--Whatever discouragements thou meetest with in thine attendance on God in ordinances, be like the English jet, fired by water, and not like our ordinary fires, quenched by it; let them add to, not diminish, thy resolution and courage; let not one repulse beat thee off; be violent, give a second storm to

the kingdom of heaven. Parents sometimes hide themselves to make their children continue seeking. He that would not at first open his mouth, nor vouchsafe the woman of Canaan a word, doth, upon her continued and fervent petitions, at last open his hand and give her whatsoever she asks: "O woman, be it unto thee as thou wilt." Continued importunity is undeniable oratory. And truly, if after all thy pains thou findest Jesus Christ, will it not make amends for thy long patience? Men that venture often at a lottery, though they take blanks twenty times, if afterwards they get a golden bason and ewer, it will make them abundant satisfaction. Suppose thou shouldst continue knocking twenty, nay, forty years, yet if at last, though but one hour before thou diest thy heart be opened to Christ, and he be received into thy soul, and when thou diest heaven be opened to thee, and thy soul received into it, will it not infinitely requite thee for all thy labour? Oh, think of it, and resolve never to be dumb while God is deaf, never to leave off prayer till God return a gracious answer. And for thy comfort, know that he who began his Psalm with, "_How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me_?" comes to conclude it with, "_I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me_."--^George Swinnock.

Verse 2.--"_How long_?" There are many situations of the believer in this life in which the words of this Psalm may be a consolation, and help to revive sinking faith. A certain man lay at the pool of Bethesda, who had an infirmity thirty and eight years. Joh 5:5. A woman had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, before she was "loosed." Lu 13:11. Lazarus all his life long laboured under disease and poverty, till he was released by death and transferred to Abraham's bosom. Lu 16:20-22. Let every one, then, who may be tempted to use the complaints of this Psalm, assure his heart that God does not forget his people, help will come at last, and, in the meantime, all things shall work together for good to them that love him.--^W. Wilson, D.D.

Verse 2.--"_How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily_?" There is such a thing as to pore on our guilt and wretchedness, to the overlooking of our highest mercies. Though it be proper to know our own hearts, for the purposes of conviction, yet, if we expect consolation from this quarter, we shall find ourselves sadly disappointed. Such, for a time, appears to have been the case of David. He seems to have been in great distress; and as is common in such cases, his thoughts turned inward, casting in his mind what he should do, and what would be the end of things. While thus exercised, he had _sorrow in his heart daily_: but, betaking himself to God for relief, he succeeded, _trusting in his mercy, his heart rejoiced in his salvation_. There are many persons, who, when in trouble, imitate David in the former part of this experience: I wish we may imitate him in the latter.--^Andrew Fuller.

Verses 2,4.--"_How shall mine enemy be exalted over me_?" 'Tis a great relief to the miserable and afflicted, to be pitied by others. It is some relief when others, though they cannot help us, yet seem to be truly concerned for the sadness of our case; when by the kindness of their words and of their actions they do a little smooth the wounds they cannot heal; but 'tis an unspeakable addition to the cross, when a man is brought low under the sense of God's displeasure, to have men to mock at his calamity, or to revile him, or to speak roughly; this does inflame and exasperate the wound that was big enough before; and it is a hard thing when one has a dreadful sound in his ears to have every friend to become a son of thunder. It is a small matter for people that are at ease, to deal severely with such as are afflicted, but they little know how their severe speeches and their angry words pierce them to the very soul. 'Tis easy to blame others for complaining, but if such had felt but for a little while what it is to be under the fear of God's anger, they would find that they could not but complain. It cannot but make any person restless and uneasy when he apprehends that God is his enemy. It is no wonder if he makes every one that he sees, and every place that he is in, a witness of his grief; but now it is a comfort in our temptations and in our fears, that we have so compassionate a friend as Christ is to whom we may repair, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb 4:15.--^Timothy Rogers.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--The apparent length of sorrow, only apparent. Contrast with days of joy, with eternal misery and eternal joy. Impatience, and other evil passions, cause the seeming length. Means of shortening, by refusing to forestall, or to repine afterwards.

Verse 1 (second clause).--Hiding of the divine face. Why at all? Why from me? Why so long?

Verse 2.--Advice to the dejected, or the soul directed to look out of itself for consolation.--^A. Fuller.

Verse 2 (first clause).--Self-torture, its cause, curse, crime, and cure.

Verse 2.--" _Having sorrow in my heart daily_." I. The cause of daily sorrow. Great enemy, unbelief, sin, trial, loss of Jesus' presence, sympathy with others, mourning for human ruin. II. The necessity of daily sorrow. Purge corruptions, excite graces, raise desires heavenward. III. The cure of daily sorrow. Good food from God's table, old wine of promises, walks with Jesus, exercise in good works, avoidance of everything unhealthy.--^B. Davis.

Verse 2.--(second clause).--Time anticipated when defeat shall be turned into victory.

Exposition.

But now prayer lifteth up her voice, like the watchman who proclaims the daybreak. Now will the tide turn, and the weeper shall dry his eyes. The mercy-seat is the life of hope and the death of despair. The gloomy thought of God's having forsaken him is still upon the Psalmist's soul, and he therefore cries, " _Consider and hear me_." He remembers at once the root of his woe, and cries aloud that it may be removed. The final absence of God is Tophet's fire, and his temporary absence brings his people into the very suburbs of hell. God is here entreated to _see_ and _hear_, that so he may be doubly moved to pity. What should we do if we had no God to turn to in the hour of wretchedness?

Note the cry of faith, " _O Lord MY God!_" Is it not a very glorious fact that our interest in our God is not destroyed by all our trials and sorrows? We may lose our gourds, but not our God. The title-deed of heaven is not written in the sand, but in eternal brass.

" _Lighten mine eyes_:" that is, let the eye of my faith be clear, that I may see my God in the dark; let my eye of watchfulness be wide open, lest I be entrapped, and let the eye of my understanding be illuminated to see the right way. Perhaps, too, here is an allusion to that cheering of the spirits so frequently called the enlightening of the eyes because it causes the face to brighten, and the eyes to sparkle. Well may we use the prayer, "Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord!" for in many respects we need the Holy Spirit's illuminating rays. " _Lest I sleep the sleep of death_." Darkness engenders sleep, and despondency is not slow in making the eyes heavy. From this faintness and dimness of vision, caused by despair, there is but a step to the iron sleep of death. David feared that his trials would end his life, and he rightly uses his fear as an argument with God in prayer; for deep distress has in it a kind of claim upon compassion, not a claim of right, but a plea which has power with grace. Under the pressure of heart sorrow, the Psalmist does not look forward to the sleep of death with hope and joy, as assured believers do, but he shrinks from it with dread, from which we gather that bondage from fear of death is no new thing.

Another plea is urged in the fourth verse, and it is one which the tried believer may handle well when on his knees. We make use of our arch-enemy for once, and compel him, like Samson, to grind in our mill while we use his cruel arrogance as an argument in prayer. It is not the Lord's will that the great enemy of our souls should overcome his children. This would dishonour God, and cause the evil one to boast. It is well for us that our salvation and God's honour are so intimately connected, that they stand or fall together.

Our covenant God will complete the confusion of all our enemies, and if for awhile we become their scoff and jest, the day is coming when the shame will change sides, and the contempt shall be poured on those to whom it is due.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 3.--" _Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death_." In time of sickness and grief, the "eyes" are dull and heavy; and they grow more and more so as death approaches, which closes them in darkness. On the other hand, health and joy render the organs of vision bright and sparkling, seeming, as it were, to impart "light" to them from within. The words, therefore, may be fitly applied to a recovery of the body natural, and thence, of the body politic, from their respective maladies. Nor do they less significantly describe the restoration of the soul to a state of spiritual health and holy joy, which will manifest themselves in like manner, by "the eyes of the understanding being enlightened;" and in this case, the soul is saved from the sleep of sin, as the body is in the other, from the sleep of death.--^George Horne.

Verse 3.--Why dost thou hide thy face? happily thou wilt say, None can see thy face and live. Ah, Lord, let me die, that I may see thee; let me see thee, that I may die: I would not live, but die; that I may see Christ, I desire death; that I may live with Christ, I despise life.--[^]Augustine.

Verse 3.--"How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" Oh, excellent hiding, which is become my perfection! My God, thou hidest thy treasure to kindle my desire! Thou hidest thy pearl, to inflame the seeker; thou delayest to give, that thou mayest teach me to importune; seemest not to hear, to make me persevere.--[^]John Anselem, 1034-1109.

Verse 4.-- Ah! can you bear contempt; the venom'd tongue Of those whom ruin pleases, the keen sneer, The lewd reproaches of the rascal herd; Who for the selfsame actions, if successful, Would be as grossly lavish in your praise? To sum up all in one--can you support The scornful glances, the malignant joy, Or more detested pity of a rival-- Of a triumphant rival?

[^]James Thomson, 1700-1748.

Verse 4.--"And those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved"--compose comedies out of my tragedies.--[^]John Trapp.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 3.--By accommodating the text to the believer. I. True character of Satan, "enemy." II. Remarkable fact that his enemy is exalted over us. III. Pressing enquiry, "How long?"--[^]B. Davis.

Verse 3.--"Lighten mine eyes." A prayer fit for (1) Every benighted sinner. (2) Every seeker of salvation. (3) Every learner in Christ's school. (4) Every tried believer. (5) Every dying saint.--[^]B. Davis.

Verse 4.--Noteth the nature of the wicked two ways; namely, the more they prevail the more insolent they are; they wonderfully exult over those that are afflicted.--[^]T. Wilcocks.

Exposition.

What a change is here! Lo, the rain is over and gone, and the time of the singing of birds is come. The mercy-seat has so refreshed the poor weeper, that he clears his throat for a song. If we have mourned with him, let us now dance with him. David's heart was more often out of tune than his harp. He begins many of his Psalms sighing, and ends them singing; and others he begins in joy and ends in sorrow; "so that one would think," says Peter Moulin, "that those Psalms had been composed by two men of a contrary humour." It is worthy to be observed that the joy is all the greater because of the previous sorrow, as calm is all the more delightful in recollection of the preceding tempest.

"Sorrows remembered sweeten present joy."

Here is his avowal of his confidence: "But I have trusted in thy mercy." For many a year it had been his wont to make the Lord his castle and tower of defence, and he smiles from behind the same bulwark still. He is sure of his faith, and his faith makes him sure; had he doubted the reality of his trust in God, he would have blocked up one of the windows through which the sun of heaven delights to shine. Faith is now in exercise, and consequently is readily discovered; there is never a doubt in our heart about the existence of faith while it is in action; when the hare or partridge is quiet we see it not, but let the same be in motion and we soon perceive it. All the powers of his enemies had not driven the Psalmist from his stronghold. As the shipwrecked mariner clings to the mast, so did David cling to his faith; he neither could nor would give up his confidence in the Lord his God. O that we may profit by his example, and hold by our faith as by our very life!

Now hearken to the music which faith makes in the soul. The bells of the mind are all ringing, "My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation." There is joy and feasting within doors, for a glorious guest has come, and the fatted calf is killed. Sweet is the music which sounds from the strings of the heart. But this is not all; the voice joins itself in the blessed work, and the tongue keeps tune with the soul, while the writer declares, "I will sing unto the Lord."

"I will praise thee every day. Now thine anger's turned away; Comfortable thoughts arise From the bleeding sacrifice.'

The Psalm closes with a sentence which is a refutation of the charge of forgetfulness which David had uttered in the first verse, "He hath dealt bountifully with me." So shall it be with us if we wait awhile. The

complaint which in our haste we utter shall be joyfully retracted, and we shall witness that the Lord hath dealt bountifully with us.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 5.--" _I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation_." Faith rejoiceth in tribulations, and triumpheth before the victory. The patient is glad when he feels his physic to work, though it make him sick for the time, because he hopes it will procure health. We rejoice in afflictions, not that they are joyous for the present, but because they shall work for our good. As faith rejoiceth, so it triumpheth in assurance of good success; for it seeth not according to outward appearance, but when all means fail, it keepeth God in sight, and beholdeth him present for our succour.--^John Ball.

Verse 5.--" _I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation_." Though passion possess our bodies, let "patience possess our souls." The law of our profession binds us to a warfare; _patiendo vincimus_, our troubles shall end, our victory is eternal. Here David's triumph (Ps 18:38-40), "I have wounded them, that they were not able to rise; they are fallen under my feet. Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. Thou hast also given me the neck of mine enemies," etc. They have wounds for their wounds; and the treaders down of the poor are trodden down by the poor. The Lord will subdue those to us that would have subdued us to themselves; and though for a short time they rode over our heads, yet now at last we shall everlastingly tread upon their necks. Lo, then, the reward of humble patience and confident hope. _Speramus et superamus_. De 32:31. "Our God is not as their God, even our enemies being judges." Ps 20:7. "Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses." But no chariot hath strength to oppose, nor horse swiftness to escape, when God pursues. Verse 8. "They are brought down and fallen; we are risen and stand upright." Their trust hath deceived them; down they fall, and never to rise. Our God hath helped us; we are risen, not for a breathing space, but to stand upright for ever.--^Thomas Adams.

Verse 5.--None live so easily, so pleasantly, as those that live by faith.--^Matthew Henry.

Verse 5.--Wherefore I say again, "Live by faith; " again I say, always live by it, rejoice through faith in the Lord. I dare boldly say it is thy fault and neglect of its exercise if thou suffer either thy own melancholy humour or Satan to interrupt thy mirth and spiritual alacrity, and to detain thee in dumps and pensiveness at any time. What if thou beest of a sad constitution? of a dark completion? Is not faith able to rectify nature? Is it not stronger than any hellebore? Doth not an experienced divine and physician worthily prefer one dram of it before all the drugs in the apothecary's shop for this effect? Hath it not sovereign virtue in it, to excerebrate all cares, expectorate all fears and griefs, evacuate the mind of all ill thoughts and passions, to exhilarate the whole man? But what good doth it to any to have a cordial by him if he use it not? To wear a sword, soldier-like, by his side, and not to draw it forth in an assault? When a dump overtakes thee, if thou wouldst say to thy soul in a word or two, "Soul, why art thou disquieted? know and consider in whom thou believest," would it not presently return to its rest again? Would not the Master rebuke the winds and storms, and calm thy troubled mind presently? Hath not every man something or other he useth to put away dumps, to drive away the evil spirit, as David with his harp? Some with merry company, some with a cup of sack, most with a pipe of tobacco, without which they cannot ride or go. If they miss it a day together they are troubled with rheums, dulness of spirits. They that live in fens and ill airs dare not stir out without a morning draught of some strong liquor. Poor, silly, smoky helps, in comparison with the least taste (but for dishonouring faith I would say whiff) or draught of faith.--^Samuel Ward, 1577-1653.

Verse 6.--" _I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me_." Faith keeps the soul from sinking under heavy trials, by bringing in former experiences of the power, mercy, and faithfulness of God to the afflicted souls. Hereby was the Psalmist supported in distress. Oh, saith faith, remember what God hath done both for thy outward and inward man: he hath not only delivered thy body when in trouble, but he hath done great things for thy soul; he hath brought thee out of a state of black nature, entered into a covenant relation with thee, made his goodness pass before thee; he hath helped thee to pray, and many times hath heard thy prayers and thy tears. Hath he not formerly brought thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and put a new song in thy mouth, and made thee to resolve never to give way to such unbelieving thoughts and fears again? and how unbecoming is it for thee now to sink in trouble?--^John Willison, 1680-1750.

Verse 6.--" _I will sing unto the Lord_" Mr. John Philpot having lain for some time in the bishop of London's coal-house, the bishop sent for him, and amongst other questions, asked him why they were so merry in prison? singing (as the prophet speaks) _Exultantes in rebus pessimis_, rejoicing in your naughtiness, whereas you should rather lament and be sorry. Mr. Philpot answered, "My Lord, the mirth which we make is but in singing certain Psalms, as we are commanded by Paul to rejoice in the Lord, singing together hymns and Psalms, for we are in a dark, comfortless place, and therefore, we thus solace ourselves. I trust, therefore, your lordship will not be angry, seeing the apostle saith, 'if any be of an upright heart, let him sing Psalms;' and we, to declare that we are of an upright mind to God, though we are in misery, yet refresh ourselves with such singing." After some other discourse, saith he, "I was carried back to my lord's coal-house, where I, with my six fellow prisoners, do rouze together in the straw, as cheerfully (I thank God) as others do in their beds of down." And in a letter to a friend, he thus writes: "Commend me to Mr. Elsing and his wife, and thank them for providing me some ease in my prison; and tell them that though my lord's coal-house be very black, yet it is more to be desired of the faithful than the Queen's palace. The world wonders how we can be so merry under such extreme miseries; but our God is omnipotent, who turns misery into felicity. Believe me, there is no such joy in the world, as the people of God have under the cross of Christ: I speak by experience, and therefore believe me, and fear nothing that the world can do unto you, for when they imprison our bodies, they set our souls at liberty to converse with God; when they cast us down, they lift us up; when they kill us, then do they send us to everlasting life. What greater glory can there be than to be made conformable to our Head, Christ? And this is done by affliction. O good God, what am I, upon whom thou shouldst bestow so great a mercy? This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the way, though it be narrow, which is full of the peace of God, and leadeth to eternal bliss. Oh, how my heart leapeth for joy that I am so near the apprehension thereof! God forgive me my unthankfulness and unworthiness of so great glory. I have so much joy, that though I be in a place of darkness and mourning, yet I cannot lament; but both night and day am so full of joy, as I never was so merry before; the Lord's name be praised for ever. Our enemies do fret, fume, and gnash their teeth at it. O pray instantly that this joy may never be taken from us; for it passeth all the delights in this world. This is the peace of God that passeth all understanding. This peace, the more his chosen be afflicted, the more they feel it, and therefore cannot faint neither for fire nor water."--^Samuel Clarke's "Mirrour," 1671.

Verse 6.--" _I will sing unto the Lord_" How far different is the end of this Psalm from the beginning!--
^John Trapp.

Verse 6.--" _I will sing unto the Lord_" etc. I never knew what it was for God to stand by me at all turns, and at every offer of Satan to afflict me, etc., as I have found him since I came in hither; for look how fears have presented themselves, so have supports and encouragements; yet, when I have started, even as it were at nothing else but my shadow, yet God, as being very tender of me, hath not suffered me to be molested, but would with one Scripture or another, strengthen me against all; insomuch that I have often said, _Were it lawful, I could pray for greater trouble, for the greater comfort's sake_. Ec 7:14; 2Co 1:5.--
^John Bunyan, 1628-1688.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 5.--Experience and perseverance. "I have," "my heart shall."

Verse 6.--The bountiful giver and the hearty singer.

The whole Psalm would make a good subject, showing the stages from mourning to rejoicing, dwelling especially upon the turning point, prayer. There are two verses for each, mourning, praying, rejoicing.--^A. G. Brown.

Fourteenth Psalm

TITLE.--This admirable ode is simply headed, "_To the Chief Musician by David_." The dedication to the Chief Musician stands at the head of fifty-three of the Psalms, and clearly indicates that such Psalms were intended, not merely for the private use of believers, but to be sung in the great assemblies by the appointed choir at whose head was the overseer, or superintendent, called in our version, "the Chief Musician," and by Ainsworth, "the master of the Music." Several of these Psalms have little or no praise in them, and were not addressed directly to the Most High, and yet were to be sung in public worship; which is a clear indication that the theory of Augustine lately revived by certain hymn-book makers, that nothing but praise should be sung, is far more plausible than Scriptural. Not only did the ancient Church chant hallowed doctrine and offer prayer amid her spiritual songs, but even the wailing notes of complaint were put into her mouth by the sweet singer of Israel who was inspired of God. Some persons grasp at any nicety which has a gloss of apparent correctness upon it, and are pleased with being more fancifully precise than others; nevertheless it will ever be the way of plain men, not only to magnify the Lord in sacred canticles, but also, according to Paul's precept, to teach and admonish one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts unto the Lord.

As no distinguishing title is given to this Psalm, we would suggest as an assistance to the memory, the heading--CONCERNING PRACTICAL ATHEISM. The many conjectures as to the occasion upon which it was written are so completely without foundation, that it would be a waste of time to mention them at length. The apostle Paul, in Ro 3, has shown incidentally that the drift of the inspired writer is to show that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin; there was, therefore, no reason for fixing upon any particular historical occasion, when all history reeks with terrible evidence of human corruption. With instructive alterations, David has given us in Ps 43 a second edition of this humiliating psalm, being moved of the Holy Ghost thus doubly to declare a truth which is ever distasteful to carnal minds.

DIVISION.--The world's foolish creed (verse 1); its practical influence in corrupting morals, 1,2,3. The persecuting tendencies of sinners, 4; their alarms, 5; their ridicule of the godly, 6; and a prayer for the manifestation of the Lord to his people's joy.

EXPOSITION.

"_The fool_." The Atheist is _the_ fool pre-eminently, and a fool universally. He would not deny God if he were not a fool by nature, and having denied God it is no marvel that he becomes a fool in practice. Sin is always folly, and as it is the height of sin to attack the very existence of the Most High, so is it also the greatest imaginable folly. To say there is no God is to belie the plainest evidence, which is obstinacy; to oppose the common consent of mankind, which is stupidity; to stifle consciousness, which is madness. If the sinner could by his atheism destroy the God whom he hates there were some sense, although much wickedness, in his infidelity; but as denying the existence of fire does not prevent its burning a man who is in it, so doubting the existence of God will not stop the Judge of all the earth from destroying the rebel who breaks his laws; nay, this atheism is a crime which much provokes heaven, and will bring down terrible vengeance on the fool who indulges it. The proverb says, "A fool's tongue cuts his own throat," and in this instance it kills both soul and body for ever: would to God the mischief stopped even there, but alas! one fool makes hundreds, and a noisy blasphemer spreads his horrible doctrines as lepers spread the plague. Ainsworth, in his "Annotations," tells us that the word here used is *nfbfl* <05036> <05034>, which has the signification of fading, dying, or falling away, as a withered leaf or flower; it is a title given to the foolish man as having lost the juice and sap of wisdom, reason, honesty, and godliness. Trapp hits the mark when he calls him "that sapless fellow, that carcase of a man, that walking sepulchre of himself, in whom all religion and right reason is withered and wasted, dried up and decayed." Some translate it _the apostate_, and others _the wretch_. With what earnestness should we shun the appearance of doubt as to the presence, activity, power and love of God, for all such mistrust is of the nature of folly, and who among us would wish to be ranked with the fool in the text? Yet let us never forget that all unregenerate men are more or less such fools.

The fool "_hath said in his heart_." May a man with his mouth profess to believe, and yet in heart say the reverse? Had he hardly become audacious enough to utter his folly with his tongue? Did the Lord look upon his thoughts as being in the nature of words to him though not to man? Is this where man first

becomes an unbeliever?--in his heart, not in his head? And when he talks atheistically, is it a foolish heart speaking and endeavouring to clamour down the voice of conscience? We think so. If the affections were set upon truth and righteousness, the understanding would have no difficulty in settling the question of a present personal Deity, but as the heart dislikes the good and the right, it is no wonder that it desires to be rid of that Elohim, who is the great moral Governor, the Patron of rectitude and the Punisher of iniquity. While men's hearts remain what they are, we must not be surprised at the prevalence of scepticism; a corrupt tree will bring forth corrupt fruit. "Every man," says Dickson, "so long as he lieth unrenewed and unreconciled to God is nothing in effect but a madman." What wonder then if he raves? Such fools as those we are now dealing with are common to all time, and all countries; they grow without watering, and are found all the world over. The spread of mere intellectual enlightenment will not diminish their number, for since it is an affair of the heart, this folly and great learning will often dwell together. To answer sceptical cavillings will be labour lost until grace enters to make the mind willing to believe; fools can raise more objections in an hour than wise men can answer in seven years, indeed it is their mirth to set stools for wise men to stumble over. Let the preacher aim at the heart, and preach the all-conquering love of Jesus, and he will by God's grace win more doubters to the faith of the gospel than any hundred of the best reasoners who only direct their arguments to the head.

"_The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God_" or "_no God_." So monstrous is the assertion, that the man hardly dared to put it as a positive statement, but went very near to doing so. Calvin seems to regard this saying "no God," as hardly amounting to a syllogism, scarcely reaching to a positive, dogmatical declaration; but Dr. Alexander clearly shows that it does. It is not merely the wish of the sinner's corrupt nature, and the hope of his rebellious heart, but he manages after a fashion to bring himself to assert it, and at certain seasons he thinks that he believes it. It is a solemn reflection that some who worship God with their lips may in their hearts be saying, "no God." It is worthy of observation that he does not say there is no Jehovah, but there is no Elohim; Deity in the abstract is not so much the object of attack, as the covenant, personal, ruling and governing presence of God in the world. God as ruler, lawgiver, worker, Saviour, is the butt at which the arrows of human wrath are shot. How impotent the malice! How mad the rage which raves and foams against him in whom we live and move and have our being! How horrible the insanity which leads a man who owes his all to God to cry out, "_No God_"! How terrible the depravity which makes the whole race adopt this as their hearts' desire, "no God"!

"They are corrupt." This refers to all men, and we have the warrant of the Holy Ghost for so saying; see the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Where there is enmity to God, there is deep, inward depravity of mind. The words are rendered by eminent critics in an active sense, "they have done corruptly:" this may serve to remind us that sin is not only in our nature passively as the source of evil, but we ourselves actively fan the flame and corrupt ourselves, making that blacker still which was black as darkness itself already. We rivet our own chains by habit and continuance.

"_They have done abominable works_" When men begin with renouncing the Most High God, who shall tell where they will end? When the Master's eyes are put out, what will not the servants do? Observe the state of the world before the flood, as portrayed in Ge 6:12, and remember that human nature is unchanged. He who would see a terrible photograph of the world without God must read that most painful of all inspired Scriptures, the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Learned Hindoos have confessed that the description is literally correct in Hindostan at the present moment; and were it not for the restraining grace of God, it would be so in England. Alas! it is even here but too correct a picture of things which are done of men in secret. Things loathsome to God and man are sweet to some palates.

"_There is none that doeth good_" Sins of omission must abound where transgressions are rife. Those who do the things which they ought not to have done, are sure to leave undone those things which they ought to have done. What a picture of our race is this! Save only where grace reigns, there is none that doeth good; humanity, fallen and debased, is a desert without an oasis, a night without a star, a dunghill without a jewel, a hell without a bottom.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.--There is a peculiar mark upon this Psalm, in that it is twice in the Book of Psalms. The fourteenth Psalm and the fifty-third Psalm are the same with the alteration of one or two expressions at most. And there is another mark put upon it, that the apostle transcribes a great part of it.--Ro 3:10-12.

It contains a description of a most deplorable state of things in the world--ay, in Israel; a most deplorable state, by reason of the general corruption that was befallen all sorts of men, in their principles, and in their practices, and in their opinions.

First, it was a time when there was a mighty prevalent _principle_ of atheism got into the world, got among the great men of the world. Saith he, "That is their principle, they say in their hearts. 'There is no God.'" It is true, they did not absolutely profess it; but it was the principle whereby all their actings were regulated and which they conformed unto. "_The fool_" saith he, "_hath said in his heart, There is no God_" Not this or that particular man, but the fool--that is, those foolish men; for in the next word he tells you "_They are corrupt_" and verse 3, "_They are all gone aside_" "The fool" is taken indefinitely for the great company and society of foolish men, to intimate that whatsoever they were divided about else, they were all agreed in this. "They are all a company of atheists," saith he, "practical atheists."

Secondly, their _affections_ were suitable to this principle, as all men's affections and actions are suitable to their principles. What are you to expect from men whose principle is, that there is no God? Why, saith he, for their affections, "They are corrupt;" which he expresseth again (verse 3), "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy." "All gone aside." The word in the original is, "They are all grown sour;" as drink, that hath been formerly of some use, but when grown vapid--lost all its spirits and life--it is an insipid thing, good for nothing. And, saith he, "_They are altogether become filthy_"--"become stinking," as the margin hath it. They have corrupt affections, that have left them no life, no savour; but stinking, corrupt lusts prevail in them universally. They say, "There is no God;" and they are filled with stinking, corrupt lusts.

Thirdly, if this be their principle and these their affections, let us look after their actions, to see if they be any better. But consider their actions. They be of two sorts:--1. How they act in the world, 2. How they act towards the people of God.

1. How do they act in the world? Why, consider that, as to their duties which they omit, and as to the wickednesses which they perform. What good do they do? Nay, saith he, "_None of them doeth good_" Yea, some of them. "_No, not one_" Saith he, verses 1,3, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." If there was any one among them that did attend to what was really good and useful in the world, there was some hope. "No," saith he, "their principle is atheism, their affections are corrupt; and for good, there is not one of them doeth any good-- they omit all duties."

What do they do for evil? Why saith he, "_They have done abominable works_" --"works." saith he, "not to be named, not to be spoken of--works which God abhors, which all good men abhor." "Abominable works," saith he, "such as the very light of nature would abhor;" and give me leave to use the expression of the Psalmist--"Stinking, filthy works." So he doth describe the state and condition of things under the reign of Saul, when he wrote this Psalm.

2. "If thus it be with them, and if thus it be with their own ways, yet they let the people of God alone; they will not add that to the rest of their sins." Nay, it is quite otherwise, saith he, "_They eat up my people as they eat bread_" "Those workers of iniquity have no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD." What is the reason why he brings it in in that manner? Why could he not say, "They have no knowledge that do such abominable things;" but brings it in thus, "They have no knowledge who eat up my people as they eat bread"? "It is strange, that after all my dealings with them and declaration of my will, they should be so brutish as not to know this would be their ruin. Don't they know this will devour them, destroy them, and be called over again in a particular manner?" In the midst of all the sins, and greatest and highest provocations that are in the world, God lays a special weight upon the eating of his people. They may feed upon their own lusts what they will; but, "Have they no knowledge, that they eat up my people as they eat bread?"

There are very many things that might be observed from all this; but I aim to give but a few hints from the Psalm.

Well, what is the state of things now? You see what it was with them. How was it with the providence of God in reference unto them? Which is strange, and a man would scarce believe it in such a course as this is, he tells you (verse 5), notwithstanding all this, they were in great fear. "_There were they in great fear_" saith he. May be so, for they saw some evil coming upon them. No, there was nothing but the hand of God in it; for in Ps 53:5, where these words are repeated, it is, "There were they in great fear,

where no fear was"--no visible cause of fear; yet they were in great fear.

God by his providence seldom gives an absolute, universal security unto men in their height of sin, and oppression, and sensuality, and lusts; but he will secretly put them in fear where no fear is: and though there be nothing seen that should cause them to have any fear, they shall act like men at their wits' end with fear.

But whence should this fear arise? Saith he, it ariseth from hence, "_For God is in the generation of the righteous_" Plainly they see their work doth not go on; their meat doth not digest with them; their bread doth not go well down. "They were eating and devouring my people, and when they came to devour them, they found God was among them (they could not digest their bread); and this put them in fear; quite surprised them." They came, and thought to have found them a sweet morsel: when engaged, God was there filling their mouth and teeth with gravel; and he began to break out the jawbone of the terrible ones when they came to feed upon them. Saith he, "God was there." (Verse 5.)

The Holy Ghost gives an account of the state of things that was between those two sorts of people he had described--between the fool and the people of God--them that were devouring, and them that had been utterly devoured, had not God been among them. Both were in fear--they that were to be devoured, and those that did devour. And they took several ways for their relief; and he showeth what those ways were, and what judgment they made upon the ways of one another. Saith he, "_Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge_"

There are the persons spoken of--they are "the poor;" and that is those who are described in the verses foregoing, the people that were ready to be eaten up and devoured.

And there is the hope and refuge that these poor had in such a time as this, when all things were in fear; and that was "the LORD." The poor maketh the Lord his refuge.

And you may observe here, that as he did describe all the wicked as one man, "the fool," so he describes all his own people as one man, "the poor"--that is, the poor man: "Because the LORD is his refuge." He keeps it in the singular number. Whatsoever the people of God may differ in, they are all as one man in this business.

And there is the way whereby these poor make God their refuge. They do it by "counsel," saith he. It is not a thing they do by chance, but they look upon it as their wisdom. They do it upon consideration, upon advice. It is a thing of great wisdom.

Well, what thoughts have the others concerning this acting of theirs? The poor make God their refuge; and they do it by counsel. What judgment, now, doth the world make of this counsel of theirs? Why, they "shame it;" that is, they cast shame upon it, contemn it as a very foolish thing, to make the Lord their refuge. "Truly, if they could make this or that great man their refuge, it were something; but to make the Lord their refuge, this is the foolishest thing in the world," say they. To shame men's counsel, to despise their counsel as foolish, is as great contempt as they can lay upon them.

Here you see the state of things as they are represented in this Psalm, and spread before the Lord; which being laid down, the Psalmist showeth what our duty is upon such a state of things--what is the duty of the people of God, things being thus stated. Saith he, "Their way is to go to prayer:" verse 7, "_O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad_" If things are thus stated, then cry, then pray, "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion," etc. There shall a revenue of praise come to God out of Zion, to the rejoicing of his people.--^John Owen.

Verse 1.--"_The fool_" That sapless fellow, that carcase of a man, that walking sepulchre of himself, in whom all religion and right reason is withered and wasted, dried up and decayed. That apostate in whom natural principles are extinct, and from whom God is departed, as when the prince is departed, hangings are taken down. That mere animal that hath no more than a reasonable soul, and for little other purpose than as salt, to keep his body from putrefying. That wicked man hereafter described, that studieth atheism.--^John Trapp.

Verse 1.--"_The fool_" etc. The world we live in is a world of fools. The far greater part of mankind act a part entirely irrational. So great is their infatuation, that they prefer time to eternity, momentary enjoyments

to those that shall never have an end, and listen to the testimony of Satan in preference to that of God. Of all folly, that is the greatest, which relates to eternal objects, because it is the most fatal and when persisted in through life, entirely remediless. A mistake in the management of temporal concerns may be afterwards rectified. At any rate, it is comparatively of little importance. But an error in spiritual and eternal matters, as it is in itself of the greatest moment, if carried through life, can never be remedied; because after death there is no redemption. The greatest folly that any creature is capable of, is that of denying or entertaining unjust apprehensions of the being and perfections of the great Creator. Therefore, in a way of eminence, the appellation of *fool* is given by the Spirit of God, to him who is chargeable with this guilt. "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*"--[^]John Jamieson, M.A., 1789.

Verse 1.--"*The fool*," a term in Scripture signifying a wicked man, used also by the heathen philosophers to signify a vicious person, *ἄφρων* as coming from *ἀφρο* signifies the extinction of life in men, animals, and plants; so the word *ἄφρων* is taken, Isa 40:7, *ἡ ἄφρων ἡ ἄφρων* "the flower fadeth" (Isa 28:1), a plant that hath lost all that juice that made it lovely and useful. So a fool is one that hath lost his wisdom and right notion of God and divine things, which were communicated to man by creation; one dead in sin, yet one not so much void of rational faculties, as of grace in those faculties; not one that wants reason, but abuses his reason.--[^]Stephen Charnock.

Verse 1.--"*The fool hath said,*" etc. This folly is bound up in every heart. It is sound, but it is not tongued; it speaks blasphemous things against God, *it says,* there is "*no God.*" There is a difference indeed in the language: gross sins speak this louder, there are crying sins; but though less sins speak it not so loud they whisper it. But the Lord can hear the language of the heart, the whisperings of its motions, as plainly as we hear one another in our ordinary discourse. Oh, how heinous is the least sin, which is so injurious to the very being of the great God!--[^]David Clarkson.

Verse 1.--"*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*" If you will turn over some few leaves as far as the fifty-third Psalm, you shall not only find my text, but this whole Psalm, without any alteration, save only in the fifth verse, and that not at all in the sense neither. What shall we say? Took the Holy Spirit of God such especial particular notice of the sayings and deeds of a *fool*, that one expression of them would not serve the turn? Or, does the babbling and madness of a fool so much concern us, as that we need to have them urged upon us once and again, and a third time in the third of the Romans? Surely not any one of us present here, is this fool! Nay, if any one of us could but tell where to find such a fool as this, that would offer to say, though in his heart, "*There is no God,*" he should not rest in quiet, he should soon perceive we were not of his faction, *We* that are able to tell David an article or two of faith more than ever he was acquainted with! Nay, more; can we with any imaginable ground of reason be supposed liable to any suspicion of atheism, that are able to read to David a lecture out of his own Psalms, and explain the meaning of his own prophecies much clearer than himself which held the pen to the Holy Spirit of God? Though we cannot deny but that in other things there may be found some spice of folly and imperfection in us, but it cannot be imagined that we, who are almost cloyed with the heavenly manna of God's word, that can instruct our teachers, and are able to maintain opinions and tenets, the scruples whereof not both the universities in this land, nor the whole clergy are able to resolve, that it should be possible for us ever to come to that perfection and excellency of folly and madness, as to entertain thought that *there is no God*: nay, we are not so uncharitable as to charge a Turk or an infidel with such a horrible imputation as this.

Beloved Christians, be not wise in your own conceits: if you will seriously examine the third of Romans (which I mentioned before), you shall find that Paul, out of this Psalm, and the like words of Isaiah, doth conclude the whole posterity of Adam (Christ only excepted), under sin and the curse of God; which inference of his were weak and inconcluding, unless every man of his own nature were such a one as the prophet here describes; and the same apostle in another place expresses, "*Even altogether without God in the world,*" i.e., not maintaining it as an opinion which they would undertake by force of argument to confirm, That there is no God: for we read not of above three or four among the heathens that were of any fashion, which went thus far; but such as though in their discourse and serious thoughts they do not question a deity, but would abhor any man that would not liberally allow unto God all his glorious attributes, yet in their hearts and affections they deny him; they live as if there was no God, having no respect at all to him in all their projects and therefore, indeed and in God's esteem, become formally, and in strict propriety of speech very atheists.---[^]William Chillingworth, 1602-1643.

Verse 1.--"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God_." Why do men resist God's authority, against which they cannot dispute? and disobey his commands, unto which they cannot devise to frame an exception? What but the spirit of enmity, can make them regret "so easy a yoke," reject so "light a burden," shun and fly off from so peaceful and pleasant paths? yea, and take ways that so manifestly "take hold of hell, and lead down to the chambers of death," rather choosing to perish than obey? Is not this the very height of enmity? What further proof would we seek of a disaffected and implacable heart? Yet to all this we may cast in that fearful addition, their saying in their heart, "_No God_;" as much as to say, "O that there were none!" This is enmity not only to the highest pitch of wickedness, to wish their common parent extinct, the author of their being, but even unto madness itself. For in the forgetful heat of this transport, it is not thought on that they wish the most absolute impossibility; and that, if it were possible, they wish, with his, the extinction of their own and of all being; and that the sense of their hearts, put into words, would amount to no less than a direful and most horrid execration and curse upon God and the whole creation of God at once! As if, by the blasphemy of their poisonous breath, they would wither all nature, blast the whole universe of being, and make it fade, languish, and droop into nothing. This is to set their mouth against heaven and earth, themselves, and all things at once, as if they thought their feeble breath should overpower the omnipotent Word, shake and shiver the adamantine pillars of heaven and earth, and the Almighty fiat be defeated by their nay, striking at the root of all! So fitly is it said "The fool hath in his heart" muttered thus. Nor are there few such fools; but this is plainly given us as the common character of apostate man, the whole revolted race, of whom it is said in very general terms, "They are all gone back, there is none that doeth good." This is their sense, one and all, that is, comparatively; and the true state of the case being laid before them, it is more their temper and sense to say, "No God," than to repent, "and turn to him." What mad enmity is this! Nor can we devise into what else to resolve it.--[^]John Howe.

Verse 1.--"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God_." He that shall deny there is a God, sins with a very high hand against the light of nature; for every creature, yea, the least gnat and fly, and the meanest worm that crawls upon the ground will confute and confound that man that disputes whether there be a God or no. The name of God is written in such full, fair and shining characters upon the whole creation, that all men may run and read that there is a God. The notion of a deity is so strongly and deeply impressed upon the tables of all men's hearts, that to deny a God is to quench the very principles of common nature; yea, it is formally deicidium, a killing of God, as much as in the creature lies. There are none of these atheists in hell, for the devils believe and tremble. Jas 2:19. The Greek word phrissousi <5425>, that is here used, signifies properly the roaring of the sea; it implies such an extreme fear, as causeth not only trembling, but also a roaring and screeching out. Mr 6:49; Ac 16:29. The devils believe and acknowledge four articles of our faith. Mt 8:29. (1.) They acknowledge God; (2.) Christ; (3) The day of judgment; (4.) That they shall be tormented then; so that he that doth not believe that there is a God, is more vile than a devil. To deny there is a God, is a sort of atheism that is not to be found in hell.

"On earth are atheists many, In hell there is not any."

Augustine, speaking of atheists saith, "That albeit there be some who think, or would persuade themselves, that there is no God, yet the most vile and desperate wretch that ever lived would not say, there was no God." Seneca hath a remarkable speech, Mentiuntur qui dicunt se non sentire Deum esse: nam etsi tibi affirmant interdum noctu tamen dubitant. They lie, saith he, who say they perceive not there is a God; for although they affirm it to thee in the daytime, yet by night they doubt of it. Further, saith the same author, I have heard of some that deny that there was a God; yet never knew the man, but when he was sick he would seek unto God for help; therefore they do but lie that say there is no God; they sin against the light of their own consciences; they who most studiously go about to deny God, yet cannot do it but some check of conscience will fly in their faces. Tully would say that there was never any nation under heaven so barbarous as to deny that there was a God.--[^]T. Brooks.

Verse 1.--"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God_." Popery has not won to itself so great wits as atheism; it is the superfluity of wit that makes atheists. These will not be beaten down with impertinent arguments; disordered hail-shot of Scriptures will never scare them; they must be convinced and beaten by their own weapons. "Hast thou appealed to Caesar? To Caesar thou shalt go." Have they appealed to reason? Let us bring reason to them, that we may bring them to reason. We need not fear the want of weapons in that armoury, but our own ignorance and want of skill to use them. There is enough even in philosophy to convince atheism, and make them confess, "We are foiled with our own weapons;" for with

all their wit atheists are fools.--^Thomas Adams.

Verse 1.--As there is no wound more mortal than that which plucketh forth man's heart or soul; so, likewise, is there no person or pestilence of greater force suddenly in men to kill all faith, hope, and charity, with the fear of God, and consequently to cast them headlong into the pit of hell, than to deny the principle and foundation of all religion--namely, that there is a God.--^Robert Cawdray's "Treasury or Storehouse of Similes," 1609.

Verse 1.--" _The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God_."--Who in the world is a verier fool, a more ignorant, wretched person, than he that is an atheist? A man may better believe there is no such man as himself, and that he is not in being, than that there is no God; for himself can cease to be, and once was not, and shall be changed from what he is, and in very many periods of his life knows not that he is; and so it is every night with him when he sleeps; but none of these can happen to God; and if he knows it not, he is a fool. Can anything in this world be more foolish than to think that all this rare fabric of heaven and earth can come by chance, when all the skill of art is not able to make an oyster? To see rare effects, and no cause; an excellent government and no prince; a motion without an immovable; a circle without a centre; a time without eternity; a second without a first; a thing that begins not from itself, and therefore, not to perceive there is something from whence it does not begin, which must be without beginning; these things are so against philosophy and natural reason, that he must needs be a beast in his understanding that does not assent to them; this is the atheist: " _The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God_." That is his character; the thing framed, says that nothing framed it; the tongue never made itself to speak, and yet talks against him that did; saying, that which is made, is, and that which made it, is not. But this folly is as infinite as hell, as much without light or bound, as the chaos of the primitive nothing.--^Jeremy Taylor, 1613-1667.

Verse 1.--" _The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God_." A wise man, that lives up to the principles of reason and virtue, if one considers him in his solitude as taking in the system of the universe, observing the mutual dependence and harmony by which the whole frame of it hangs together, beating down his passions, or swelling his thoughts with magnificent ideas of providence, makes a nobler figure in the eye of an intelligent being, than the greatest conqueror amidst the pomps and solemnities of a triumph. On the contrary, there is not a more ridiculous animal than an atheist in his retirement. His mind is incapable of rapture or elevation: he can only consider himself as an insignificant figure in a landscape, and wandering up and down in a field or a meadow, under the same terms as the meanest animals about him, and as subject to as total a mortality as they, with this aggravation, that he is the only one amongst them who lies under the apprehension of it. In distresses he must be of all creatures the most helpless and forlorn; he feels the whole pressure of a present calamity, without being relieved by the memory of anything that is past, or the prospect of anything that is to come. Annihilation is the greatest blessing that he proposes to himself, and a halter or a pistol the only refuge he can fly to. But if you would behold one of these gloomy miscreants in his poorest figure, you must consider them under the terrors or at the approach of death. About thirty years ago, I was a shipboard with one of these vermin, when there arose a brisk gale, which could frighten nobody but himself. Upon the rolling of the ship he fell upon his knees, and confessed to the chaplain, that he had been a vile atheist and had denied a Supreme being ever since he came to his estate. The good man was astonished, and a report immediately ran through the ship, that there was an atheist upon the upper deck. Several of the common seamen, who had never heard the word before, thought it had been some strange fish; but they were more surprised when they saw it was a man, and heard out of his own mouth, "That he never believed till that day that there was a God." As he lay in the agonies of confession, one of the honest tars whispered to the boatswain, "That it would be a good deed to heave him overboard." But we were now within sight of port, when of a sudden the wind fell, and the penitent relapsed, begging all of us that were present, as we were gentlemen, not to say anything of what had passed. He had not been ashore above two days, when one of the company began to rally him upon his devotion on shipboard, which the other denied in so high terms, that it produced the lie on both sides, and ended in a duel. The atheist was run through the body, and after some loss of blood, became as good a Christian as he was at sea, till he found that his wound was not mortal. He is at present one of the free-thinkers of the age, and now writing a pamphlet against several received opinions concerning the existence of fairies.--^Joseph Addison (1671-1719), in "The Tattler."

Verse 1.-- "'There is no God,' the fool in secret said. 'There is no God that rules or earth or sky.' Tear off the band that binds the wretch's head, That God may burst upon his faithless eye! Is there no God?--The

stars in myriads spread, If he look up, the blasphemy deny; While his own features, in the mirror read, Reflect the image of Divinity. Is there no God?--The stream that silver flows, The air he breathes, the ground he treads, the trees, The flowers, the grass, the sands, each wind that blows, All speak of God; throughout, one voice agrees, And, eloquent, his dread existence shows: Blind to thyself, ah, see him, fool, in these!"

^Giovanni Cotta.

Verse 1.-- "The owl, Atheism, Sailing on obscene wings across the noon, Drops his blue-fringed lids, and shuts them close, And, hooting at the glorious sun in heaven, Cries out, 'Where is it?'"

^Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772-1834.

Verse 1.--"They are corrupt, they have done abominable works." Sin pleaseth the flesh. Omne simile nutrit simile. Corruption inherent is nourished by the accession of corrupt actions. Judas's covetousness is sweetened with unjust gain. Joab is heartened and hardened with blood. 1Ki 2:5. Theft is fitted to and fattened in the thievish heart with obvious booties. Pride is fed with the officious compliments of observant grooms. Extortion battens in the usurer's affections by the trolling in of his moneys. Sacrilege thrives in the church-robber by the pleasing distinctions of those sycophant priests, and helped with their not laborious profit. Nature is led, is fed with sense. And when the citadel of the heart is once won, the turret of the understanding will not long hold out. As the suffumigations of the oppressed stomach surge up and cause the headache, or as the thick spummy mists, which vapour up from the dark and foggy earth, do often suffocate the brighter air, and to us more than eclipse the sun, the black and corrupt affections, which ascend out of the nether part of the soul, do no less darken and choke the understanding. Neither can the fire of grace be kept alive at God's altar (man's heart), when the clouds of lust shall rain down such showers of impiety on it. Perit omne judicium, cum res transit ad affectum. Farewell the perspicuity of judgment, when the matter is put to the partiality of affection.--^Thomas Adams.

Verse 1.--"They are corrupt, they have done abominable things: there is none that doeth good." "Men," says Bernard, "because they are corrupt in their minds, become abominable in their doings: corrupt before God, abominable before men. There are three sorts of men of which none doeth good. There are those who neither understand nor seek God, and they are the dead: there are others who understand him, but seek him not, and they are the wicked. There are others that seek him but understand him not, and they are the fools." "O God," cries a writer of the middle ages, "how many are here at this day who, under the name of Christianity, worship idols, and are abominable both to thee and to men! For every man worships that which he most loves. The proud man bows down before the idol of worldly power; the covetous man before the idol of money; the adulterer before the idol of beauty; and so of the rest." And of such, saith the apostle, "They profess that they know God, but in works deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Tit 1:16. "There is none that doeth good." Notice how Paul avails himself of this testimony of the epistle to the Romans, where he is proving concerning "both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." Ro 3:9.--^John Mason Neale, in loc.

Verse 1.--The argument of my text is the atheist's divinity, the brief of his belief couched all in one article, and that negative too, clean contrary to the fashion of all creeds, "There is no God." The article but one; but so many absurdities tied to the train of it, and itself so irreligious, so prodigiously profane, that he dares not speak it out, but saith it softly to himself, in secret, "in his heart." So the text yields these three points; Who is he? A "fool." What he saith, "no God." How he speaks it, "in his heart." A fool, his bolt, and his draught. I will speak of them severally ... There is a child in year's, and there is a child in manners, aetate et moribus, saith Aristotle. So there is a fool; for fools and children both are called n^pioi <3516>, There is a fool in wit, and there is a fool in life; stultus in scientia, et stultus in conscientia, a witless and a graceless fool. The latter is worthy of the title as the first; both void of reason; not of the faculty but of the use. Yea, the latter fool is indeed the more kindly of the twain; for the sot would use his reason if he could; the sinner will not though he may. It is not the natural, but the moral fool that David means, the wicked and ungracious person, for so is the sense of the original term ... It is time we leave the person, and come unto the act. What hath this fool done? Surely nothing; he hath only said. What hath he said? Nay, nothing either; he hath only thought: for to say in heart, is but to think. There are two sorts of saying in the Scripture, one meant indeed so properly, the other but in hope; one by word of mouth, the other by thought of heart. You see the Psalmist means here the second

sort. The bolt the fool here shoots is atheism: he makes no noise at the loss of it, as bowmen use; he draws and delivers closely, and stilly, out of sight, and without sound he saith, "_God is not_" but "_in heart_" The heart hath a mouth; _intus est os cordis_, saith Augustine. God, saith Cyprian, is _cordis auditor_, he hears the heart; then belike it hath some speech. When God said to Moses, _quare clamas_? why criest thou? we find no words he uttered: _silens auditur_, saith Gregory, he is heard through saying nothing. There is a silent speech (Ps 4:4), "Commune with your own heart," saith David, "and be still." Speech is not the heart's action, no more than meditation is the mouth's. But sometimes the heart and mouth exchange offices; _lingua mea meditabitur_, saith David. Ps 35:28. There is _lingua meditans_, a musing tongue; here is _cor loquens_, a speaking heart. And to say the truth, the philosopher saith well, it is the heart doth all things, _mens videt, mens audit, mens loquitur_. It is the heart that speaks, the tongue is but the instrument to give the sound. It is but the heart's echo to repeat the words after it. Except when the tongue doth run before the wit, the heart doth dictate to the mouth; it suggests what it shall say. The heart is the soul's herald: look what she will have proclaimed, the heart reads it, and the mouth cries it. The tongue saith nought but what the heart saith first. Nay, in very deed, the truest and kindest speech is the heart's. The tongue and lips are Jesuits, they lease, and lie, and use equivocations: flattery, or fear, or other by-respect, other wry respect adulterate their words. But the heart speaks as it means, worth twenty mouths, if it could speak audibly.--^Richard Clerke. D.D., 1634 (one of the translators of our English Bible).

Verses 1,4.--The Scripture give this as a cause of the notorious courses of wicked men, that "God is not in all their thoughts." Ps 10:4. They forget there is a God of vengeance and a day of reckoning. "_The fool_" would needs enforce upon his heart, that "_there is no God_" and what follows: "_Corrupt they are, there is none doeth good: they eat up my people as bread_" etc. They make no more bones of devouring men and their estates, than they make conscience of eating a piece of bread. What a wretched condition hath sin brought man unto, that the great God who "fillethe heaven and earth" (Jer 23:24) should yet have no place in the heart which he hath especially made for himself! The sun is not so clear as this truth, that God is, for all things in the world are because God is. If he were not, nothing could be. It is from him that wicked men have that strength they have to commit sin, therefore sin proceeds from atheism, especially these plotting sins; for if God were more thought on, he would take off the soul from sinful contrivings, and fix it upon himself.--^Richard Sibbes.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1 (first clause).--The folly of atheism.

Verse 1.--Atheism of the heart.--_Jamieson's Sermons on the Heart_.

Verse 1 (whole verse).--Describe: I. The creed of the fool. II. The fool who holds the creed: or thus, Atheism. I. Its source: "the heart." II. Its creed: "no God." III. Its fruits: "corrupt," etc.

Verse 1.--I. The great source of sin--alienation from God. II. Its place of dominion--the heart. III. Its effect upon the intellect--makes man a fool. IV. Its manifestations in the life--acts of commission and omission.

Verse 1 (last clause).--The lantern of Diogenes. Hold it up upon all classes, and denounce their sins.

Exposition.

"_The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men_" As from a watchtower, or other elevated place of observation, the Lord is represented as gazing intently upon men. He will not punish blindly, nor like a tyrant command an indiscriminate massacre because a rumour of rebellion has come up to his ears. What condescending interest and impartial justice are here imagined! The case of Sodom, visited before it was overthrown, illustrates the careful manner in which Divine Justice beholds the sin before it avenges it, and searches out the righteous that they perish not with the guilty. Behold then the eyes of Omniscience ransacking the globe, and prying among every people and nation, "_to see if there were any that did understand and seek God_" He who is looking down knows the good, is quick to discern it, would be delighted to find it; but as he views all the unregenerate children of men his search is fruitless, for of all the race of Adam, no unrenewed soul is other than an enemy to God and goodness. The objects of the Lord's search are not wealthy men, great men, or learned men; these, with all they can offer, cannot meet the demands of the great Governor: at the same time, he is not looking for superlative eminence in virtue, he seeks for _any that understand_ themselves, their state, their duty, their destiny, their happiness; he looks for any that _seek_ God, who, if there be a God, are willing and anxious to find

him out. Surely this is not too great a matter to expect; for if men have not yet known God, if they have any right understanding, they will seek him. Alas! even this low degree of good is not to be found even by him who sees all things; but men love the hideous negation of "No God," and with their backs to their Creator, who is the sun of their life, they journey into the dreary region of unbelief and alienation, which is a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death without any order and where the light is as darkness.

"_They are all gone aside_" Without exception, all men have apostatized from the Lord their Maker, from his laws, and from the eternal principles of right. Like stubborn heifers they have sturdily refused to receive the yoke, like errant sheep they have found a gap and left the right field. The original speaks of the race as a whole, as a totality; and humanity as a whole has become depraved in heart and defiled in life. "_They have altogether become filthy_" as a whole they are spoiled and soured like corrupt leaven, or, as some put it, they have become putrid and even stinking. The only reason why we do not more clearly see this foulness is because we are accustomed to it, just as those who work daily among offensive odours at last cease to smell them. The miller does not observe the noise of his own mill, and we are slow to discover our own ruin and depravity. But are there no special cases, are all men sinful? "Yes," says the Psalmist, in a manner not to be mistaken, "they are." He has put it positively, he repeats it negatively, "_There is none that doeth good, no, not one_" The Hebrew phrase is an utter denial concerning any mere man that he of himself doeth good. What can be more sweeping? This is the verdict of the all-seeing Jehovah, who cannot exaggerate or mistake. As if no hope of finding a solitary specimen of a good man among the unrenewed human family might be harboured for an instant. The Holy Spirit _is not_ content with saying all and altogether, but adds the crushing threefold negative, "_none, no, not one_" What say the opponents to the doctrine of natural depravity to this? Rather what do we _feel_ concerning it? Do we not confess that we by nature are corrupt, and do we not bless the sovereign grace which has renewed us in the spirit of our minds, that sin may no more have dominion over us, but that grace may rule and reign?

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 2.--"_To see if there were any that did understand ... seek God_" None seek him aright, and as he ought to be sought, nor can do while they live in sin; for men in seeking God fail in many things: as, First, men seek him not for himself. Secondly, they seek him not alone, but other things with him. Thirdly, they seek other things before him, as worldlings do. Fourthly, they seek him coldly or carelessly. Fifthly, they seek him inconstantly; example of Judas and Demas. Sixthly, they seek him not in his word, as heretics do. Seventhly, they seek him not in all his word, as hypocrites do. Lastly, they seek him not seasonably and timely, as profane, impenitent sinners do; have no care to depend upon God's word, but follow their own lusts and fashions of this world.--^Thomas Wilson, 1653.

Verses 2,3.--What was the issue of God's so looking upon men? "_They are all gone aside_" that is, from him and his ways; "_They are altogether become filthy_" their practices are such as make them stink; "_There is none that doeth good, no, not one_" of so many millions of men as are upon the earth, there is not one doeth good. There were men of excellent parts then in the world, men of soul, but not one of them did know God, or seek after God: Paul therefore hath laid it down for a universal maxim, that the animal, natural, or intellectual man, receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, and so are rejected by him.--^William Greenhill.

Verse 3.--The ungodly are "vile" persons (Na 1:14). "I will make thy grave; for thou art vile." sin makes men base, it blots their name, it taints their blood: "_They are altogether become filthy_" in the Hebrew it is, they are become stinking. Call wicked men ever so bad, you cannot call them out of their name; they are "swine" (Mt 7:6); "vipers" (Mt 3:7); "devils" (Joh 6:70). The wicked are the dross and refuse (Ps 119:119); and heaven is too pure to have any dross mingle with it.--^Thomas Watson.

Verse 3.--"_Altogether become filthy_" Thus the Roman satirist describes his own age:

"Nothing is left, nothing, for future times To add to the full catalogue of crimes; The baffled sons must feel the same desires, And act the same mad follies as their sires, Vice has attained its zenith." ^Juvenal, Sat. 1.

Verse 3.--"_There is none that doeth good, no not one_" Origen maketh a question how it could be said that there was none, neither among the Jews nor Gentiles, that did any good; seeing there were many

among them which did clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and did other good things: he hereunto maketh this answer:-- That like as one that layeth a foundation, and buildeth upon it a wall or two, yet cannot be said to have built a house till he have finished it; so although those might do some good things, yet they attained not unto perfect goodness, which was only to be found in Christ. But this is not the apostle's meaning only to exclude men from the perfection of justice; for even the faithful and believers were short of that perfection which is required; he therefore showeth what men are by nature, all under sin and in the same state of damnation, without grace and faith in Christ: if any perform any good work, either it is of grace, and so not of themselves, or if they did it by the light of nature, they did it not as they ought, and so it was far from a good work indeed.--^Andrew Willet (1562-1621), on Ro 3:10.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 2.--I. Condescending search. II. Favoured subjects. III. Generous intentions.

Verse 2.--What God looks for, and what we should look for. Men usually are quick to see things congruous to their own character.

Verses 2,3.--God's search for a naturally good man; the results; lessons to be learned therefrom.

Verse 3.--Total depravity of the race.

Exposition.

Hatred of God and corruptness of like are the motive forces which produce persecution. Men who having no saving knowledge of divine things, enslave themselves to become workers of iniquity, have no heart to cry to the Lord for deliverance, but seek to amuse themselves with devouring the poor and despised people of God. It is hard bondage to be a "_worker of iniquity_;" a worker at the galleys, or in the mines of Siberia, is not more truly degraded and wretched; the toil is hard and the reward dreadful; those who have no knowledge choose such slavery, but those who are taught of God cry to be rescued from it. The same ignorance which keeps men bondsmen to evil, makes them hate the freeborn sons of God; hence they seek to eat them up "_as they eat bread_,"--daily, ravenously, as though it were an ordinary, usual, every-day matter to oppress the saints of God. As pikes in a pond eat up little fish, as eagles prey on smaller birds, as wolves rend the sheep of the pasture, so sinners naturally and as a matter of course persecute, malign, and mock the followers of the Lord Jesus. While thus preying, they forswear all praying, and in this act consistently, for how could they hope to be heard while their hands are full of blood?

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 4.--"_Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge_?" Men's ignorance is the reason why they fear not what they should fear. Why is it that the ungodly fear not sin? Oh, it's because they know it not. "_Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge_?" Sure enough they have none, for "_they eat up my people as they eat bread_;" such morsels would scald their mouths, they would not dare to be such persecutors and destroyers of the people of God; they would be afraid to touch them if they did but know what they did.--^Richard Alleine.

Verse 4.--"_Who eat up my people as they eat bread_."--That is, _quotidie_, daily, saith Austin; as duly as they eat bread; or, with the same eagerness and voracity. These man-eaters, these _Laobo'roi_, cruel cannibals, make no more conscience to undo a poor man, than to eat a good meal when they are hungry. Like pickerels in a pond, or sharks in the sea, they devour the poorer, as those do the lesser fishes; and that many times with a plausible, invisible consumption; as the usurer, who, like the ostrich, can digest any metal; but especially money.--^John Trapp.

Verse 4.--"_Who eat up my people as they eat bread_." Oh, how few consult and believe the Scriptures setting forth the enmity of wicked men against God's people! The Scripture tells us "_they eat up God's people as bread_," which implies a strange inclination in them to devour the saints, and that they take as great delight therein as a hungry man in eating, and that it is natural to them to molest them. The Scripture compares them, for their hateful qualities, to the lions and bears, to foxes for subtlety, to wild bulls, to greedy swine, to scorpions, to briars and thorns (grievous and vexing things). The Scripture represents them as industrious and unwearied in their bloody enterprises, they cannot sleep without doing mischief. Herodias had rather have the blood of a saint than half a kingdom. Haman would pay a great fine to the king that the scattered Jews (who keep not the king's laws) may be cut off. Wicked men will run the hazard of damning their own souls, rather than not fling a dagger at the apple of God's eye. Though

they know what one word--aha!--cost, yet they will break through all natural, civil, and moral obligations, to ruin God's people. The Holy Ghost calls them "implacable" men, fierce and headstrong; they are like the hot oven for fury, like the sea for boundless rage; yet "who hath believed" this Scripture "report"? Did we believe what enemies all wicked men are unto all saints, we should not lean to our own prudence and discretion to secure us from any danger by these men; we would get an ark to secure us from the deluge of their wrath; if at any time we be cast among them and delivered, we would bless God with the three children, that the hot fiery oven did not consume us; we would not wonder when we hear of any of their barbarous cruelty, but rather wonder at God's restraining them every day; we would be suspicious of receiving hurt when cast among light and frothy companions; we would shun their company as we do lions and scorpions; we would never commit any trust or secret into their hands; we would not be light-hearted whilst in their society; we would not rely on their promises any more than we would on the promise of the devil, their father; we would long for heaven, to be delivered from "the tents of Kedar;" we would not count any of the saints secured from danger, though related to any great wicked man; we would not twist ourselves with them by matching ourselves or children to these sons and daughters of Belial; neither would we make choice of devils to be our servants.--^Lewis Stuckley.

Verse 4.--This is an evil world. It hates the people of God. "Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Joh 15:19. Haman's hatred was against the whole seed of the Jews. When you can find a serpent without a sting, or a leopard without spots, then may you expect to find a wicked world without hatred to the saints. Piety is the target which is aimed at. "They are mine adversaries because I follow the thing that good is." Ps 38:20. The world pretends to hate the godly for something else, but the ground of the quarrel is holiness. The world's hatred is implacable: anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot. You may as soon reconcile heaven and hell as the two seeds. If the world hated Christ, no wonder that it hates us. "The world hated me before it hated you." Joh 15:18. Why should any hate Christ? This blessed Dove had no gall, this rose of Sharon did send forth a most sweet perfume; but this shows the world's baseness, it is a Christ-hating and a _saint-eating_ world.--^Thomas Watson.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 4.--" _Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge_?" If men rightly knew God, his law, the evil of sin, the torment of hell, and other great truths, would they sin as they do? Or if they know these and yet continue in their iniquities, how guilty and foolish they are! Answer the question both positively and negatively, and it supplies material for a searching discourse.

Verse 4.--(first clause).--The crying sin of transgressing against light and knowledge.

Verse 4 (last clause).--Absence of prayer, a sure mark of a graceless state.

Exposition.

Oppressors have it not all their own way, they have their fits of trembling and their appointed seasons of overthrow. _There_ --where they denied God and hectoring against his people; _there_ --where they thought of peace and safety, they were made to quail. " _There were they_ "--these very loud-mouthed, iron-handed, proud-hearted Nimrods and Herods, these heady, high-minded sinners--" _there were they in great fear_." A panic terror seized them: "they feared a fear," as the Hebrew puts it; an undefinable, horrible, mysterious dread crept over them. The most hardened of men have their periods when conscience casts them into a cold sweat of alarm. As cowards are cruel, so all cruel men are at heart cowards. The ghost of past sin is a terrible spectre to haunt any man, and though unbelievers may boast as loudly as they will, a sound is in their ears which makes them ill at ease.

" _For God is in the generation of the righteous_." This makes the company of godly men so irksome to the wicked because they perceive that God is with them. Shut their eyes as they may, they cannot but perceive the image of God in the character of his truly gracious people, nor can they fail to see that he works for their deliverance Like Haman, they instinctively feel a trembling when they see God's Mordecais. Even though the saint may be in a mean position, mourning at the gate where the persecutor rejoices in state, the sinner feels the influence of the believer's true nobility and quails before it, for God is there. Let scoffers beware, for they persecute the Lord Jesus when they molest his people; the union is very close between God and his people, it amounts to a mysterious indwelling, for God is in the generation of the righteous.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 5.--" _ There were they in great fear_" That we may not mistake the meaning of the point, we must understand that this faintheartedness and cowardliness doth not always come upon presumptuous sinners when they behold imminent dangers, for though none of them have true courage and fortitude, yet many of them have a kind of desperate stoutness and resolution when they do, as it were, see death present before their faces; which proceedeth from a kind of deadness that is upon their hearts, and a brawniness that hath overgrown their conscience to their greater condemnation. But when it pleaseth the Lord to waken them out of the dead slumber, and to set the worm of conscience awork within them, then this doctrine holdeth true without any exception, that the boldest sinners prove at length the basest cowards: and they that have been most audacious in adventuring upon the most mischievous evils, do become of all others most timorous when God's revenging hand seizeth upon them for the same.--^John Dod, 1547-1645.

Verse 5.--" _ God is in the generation of the righteous_" that is, he favours that generation or sort of men; God is in all generations, but such he delights in most: the wicked have cause enough to fear those in whom God delights.--^Joseph Caryl.

Verse 5.--The King of Glory cannot come into the heart (as he is said to come into the hearts of his people as such; Ps 24:9,10), but some glory of himself will appear; and as God doth accompany the word with majesty because it is his word, so he doth accompany his own children, and their ways, with majesty, yea, even in their greatest debasements. As when Stephen was brought before the council as a prisoner at the bar for his life, then God manifested his presence to him, for it is said, "his face shone as the face of an angel of God." (Ac 6:15); in a proportionable manner it is ordinarily true what Solomon says of all righteous men, "A man's wisdom makes his face to shine." Ec 8:1. Thus Peter also speaks (1Pe 4:14): "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you, for the Spirit," not only of God, or of grace, but "of glory, resteth upon you." And so in the martyrs; their innocency and carriage, and godly behaviour, what majesty had it with it! What an amiableness in the sight of the people, which daunted, dashed and confounded their most wretched oppressors; so that although the wicked persecutors " _did eat up God's people as bread_" (verse 4), yet it is added that they were in great fear upon this very account, that "God is in the generation of the just." Verse 5. God stands, as it were, astonished at their dealings: " _Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge_" (so in the words afore) " _that eat up my people as bread_" and make no more ado of it than a man doth that heartily eats of his meat? They seem to do thus, they would carry it and bear it out; but for all that they are in great fear whilst they do thus, and God strikes their hearts with terror then when they most insult. Why? For, " _God is in the generation of, or dwelleth in the just_" and God gives often some glimmerings, hints, and warnings to the wicked (such as Pilate had concerning Christ), that his people are righteous. And this you may see in Php 1:28: "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." In that latter passage, I observe that an assurance of salvation, and a spirit of terror, and that of God, is given to either. In the Old Testament it is recorded of David (1Sa 18:12), that although Saul hated him (verse 1Sa 18:9), and sought to destroy him (verses 1Sa 18:10,11), "yet Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul;" which is the reason in hand. God manifested his presence in David, and struck Saul's conscience with his godly and wise carriage, and that made him afraid.--^Thomas Goodwin.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 5.--The foolish fears of those who have no fear of God.

Verse 5.--The Lord's nearness to the righteous, its consequences to the persecutor, and its encouragement to saints.

Exposition.

Notwithstanding their real cowardice, the wicked put on the lion's skin and lord it over the Lord's poor ones. Though fools themselves, they mock at the truly wise as if the folly were on their side; but this is what might be expected, for how should brutish minds appreciate excellence, and how can those who have owl's eyes admire the sun? The special point and butt of their jest seems to be the confidence of the godly in their Lord. What can your God do for you now? Who is that God who can deliver out of our hand? Where is the reward of all your praying and beseeching? Taunting questions of this sort they thrust into the faces of weak but gracious souls, and tempt them to feel ashamed of their refuge. Let us not be laughed out of our confidence by them, let us scorn their scorning and defy their jeers; we shall need to

wait but a little, and then the Lord our refuge will avenge his own elect and ease himself of his adversaries, who once made so light of him and of his people.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 6.--"Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge." In the fifty-third Psalm it is, "Thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them." Of course, the allusion is totally different in each; in this Psalm it is the indignant remonstrance of the Psalmist with "the workers of iniquity" for undervaluing and putting God's poor to shame; the other affirms the final shame and confusion of the ungodly, and the contempt in which the Lord holds them. In either case it sweetly illustrates God's care of his poor, not merely the poor in spirit, but literally the poor and lowly ones, the oppressed and the injured. It is this character of God which is so conspicuously delineated in his word. We may look through all the Shasters and Vedas of the Hindoo, the Koran of the Mahometan, the legislation of the Greek, and the code of the Roman, aye, and the Talmud of the Jew, the bitterest of all; and not in one single line or page shall we find a vestige or trace of that tenderness, compassion, or sympathy for the wrongs, and oppressions, and trials, and sorrows of God's poor, which the Christian's Bible evidences in almost every page.--^Barton Bouchier.

Verse 6.--"Ye have shamed." Every fool that saith in his heart there is no God, hath out of the same quiver a bolt to shoot at goodness. Barren Michal hath too many sons, who, like their mother, jeer at holy David.--^John Trapp.

Verse 6.--"Ye have shamed," saith he, "the counsel of the poor." There is nothing that wicked men do so despise as the making God a refuge--nothing which they scorn in their hearts like it. "They shame it," saith he, "It is a thing to be cast out of all consideration. The wise man trusts in his wisdom, the strong man in his strength, the rich man in his riches; but this trusting in God is the foolishest thing in the world." The reasons of it are--1. They know not God; and it is a foolish thing to trust one knows not whom. 2. They are enemies to God, and God is their enemy; and they account it a foolish thing to trust their enemy. 3. They know not the way of God's assistance and help. And--4. They seek for such help, such assistance, such supplies as God will not give; to be delivered, to serve their lusts; to be preserved, to execute their rage, filthiness, and folly. They have no other design or end of these things; and God will give none of them. And it is a foolish thing in any man to trust God to be preserved in sin. It is true their folly is their wisdom, considering their state and condition. It is a folly to trust in God to live in sin, and despise the counsel of the poor.--^John Owen.

Verse 6.--"Ye have made a mock of the counsel of the poor:" and why? "because the Lord is his trust." This is the very true cause, whatsoever other pretences there be. Whence observe this doctrine; that true godliness is that which breeds the quarrel between God's children and the wicked. Ungodly men may say what they list, as, namely, that they hate and dislike them for that they are proud and saucy in meddling with their betters; for that they are so scornful and disdainful towards their neighbours; for that they are malcontent, and turbulent, and I know not what; but the true reason is yielded by the Lord in this place, to wit, because they make him their stay and their confidence, and will not depend upon lying vanities as the men of the world do.--^John Dod.

Verse 6.--"The Lord is his refuge."--Be persuaded actually to hide yourselves with Jesus Christ. To have a hiding-place and not to use it, is as bad as to want one; fly to Christ; run into the holes of this Rock.--^Ralph Robinson, 1656.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6.--The wisdom of making the Lord our refuge.--^John Owen.

Verse 6.--Describe I. The poor man here intended. II. His counsel. III. His reproach. IV. His refuge.

Verse 6.--Trust in God, a theme for mockery to fools only. Show its wisdom.

Exposition.

Natural enough is this closing prayer, for what would so effectually convince atheists, overthrow persecutors, stay sin, and secure the godly, as the manifest appearance of Israel's great Salvation? The coming of Messiah was the desire of the godly in all ages, and though he has already come with a sin-offering to purge away iniquity, we look for him to come a second time, to come without a sin-offering unto

salvation. O that these weary years would have an end! Why tarries he so long? He knows that sin abounds and that his people are down-trodden; why comes he not to the rescue? His glorious advent will restore his ancient people from literal captivity, and his spiritual seed from spiritual sorrow. Wrestling Jacob and prevailing Israel shall alike rejoice before him when he is revealed as their salvation. O that he were come! What happy, holy, halcyon, heavenly days should we then see! But let us not count him slack, for behold, he comes, he comes quickly! Blessed are all they that wait for him.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 7.--"O that the salvation_" etc. Like as when we be in quiet, we do pray either nothing at all, or very coldly unto God; so in adversity and trouble, our spirit is stirred up and enkindled to prayer, whereof we do find examples everywhere in the Psalms of David: so that affliction is as it were the sauce of prayer, as hunger is unto meat. Truly their prayer is usually unsavoury who are without afflictions, and many of them do not pray truly, but do rather counterfeit a prayer, or pray for custom.--[^]Wolfgang Musculus, 1497-1563.

Verse 7.--"Out of Zion_" Zion the church is no Saviour, neither dare we trust in her ministers or ordinances, and yet salvation comes to men through her. The hungry multitudes are fed by the hands of the disciples, who delight to act as the servitors of the gospel feast. Zion becomes the site of the fountain of healing waters which shall flow east and west till all nations drink thereat. What a reason for maintaining in the utmost purity and energy all the works of the church of the living God!--[^]C. H. S.

Verse 7.--"When the Lord turneth the captivity of his people: then shall Jacob rejoice and Israel shall be glad_"--Notice that by Israel we are to understand those other sheep which the Lord has that are not of this fold, but which he must also bring, that they may hear his voice. For it is Israel, not Judah; Sion, not Jerusalem. "When the Lord turneth the captivity of his people_" "Then_" as it is in the parallel passage, "were we like unto them that dream_" A glorious dream indeed, in which, fancy what we may, the half of the beauty, the half of the splendour, will not be reached by our imagination. "The captivity_" of our souls to the law of concupiscence, of our bodies to the law of death; the captivity of our senses to fear; the captivity, the conclusion of which is so beautifully expressed by one of our greatest poets:--namely, _Giles Fletcher_ (1588--1623), in his "Christ's Triumph over Death."

"No sorrow now hangs clouding on their brow; No bloodless malady impales their face; No age drops on their hairs his silver snow; No nakedness their bodies doth embrace; No poverty themselves and theirs disgrace; No fear of death the joy of life devours; No unchaste sleep their precious time deflowers; No loss, no grief, no change, wait on their winged hours."

[^]John Mason Neale, in loc.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 7.--Longings for the Advent.

Verse 7.--"Out of Zion_" The church, the channel of blessings to men.

Verse 7.--Discourse to promote revival. I. Frequent condition of the church, "captivity." II. Means of revival--the Lord's coming in grace. III. Consequences, "rejoice," "be glad."

Verse 7.--Captivity of soul. What it is. How provided for. How accomplished. With what results.

Fifteenth Psalm

SUBJECT, &c.--This Psalm of David bears no dedicatory title at all indicative of the occasion upon which it was written, but it is exceedingly probable that, together with the twenty-fourth Psalm, to which it bears a striking resemblance, its composition was in some way connected with the removal of the ark to the holy hill of Zion. Who should attend upon the ark was a matter of no small consequence, for because unauthorised persons had intruded into the office, David was unable on the first occasion to complete his purpose of bringing the ark to Zion. On the second attempt he is more careful, not only to allot the work of carrying the ark to the divinely appointed Levites (1Ch 15:2), but also to leave it in charge of the man whose house the Lord had blessed, even Obbedom, who, with his many sons, ministered in the house of the Lord. (1Ch 26:8,12.) Spiritually we have here a description of the man who is a child at home in the Church of God on earth, and who will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever above. He is primarily Jesus, the perfect man, and in him all who through grace are conformed to his image.

DIVISION.--The first verse asks the question; the rest of the verses answer it. We will call the Psalm THE QUESTION AND ANSWER.

EXPOSITION.

THE QUESTION. Jehovah. Thou high and holy One, who shall be permitted to have fellowship with thee? The heavens are not pure in thy sight, and thou chargedst thine angels with folly, who then of mortal mould shall dwell with thee, thou dread consuming fire? A sense of the glory of the Lord and of the holiness which becomes his house, his service, and his attendants, excites the humble mind to ask the solemn question before us. Where angels bow with veiled faces, how shall man be able to worship at all? The unthinking many imagine it to be a very easy matter to approach the Most High, and when professedly engaged in his worship they have no questionings of heart as to their fitness for it; but truly humbled souls often shrink under a sense of utter unworthiness, and would not dare to approach the throne of the God of holiness if it were not for him, our Lord, our Advocate, who can abide in the heavenly temple, because his righteousness endureth for ever. "Who shall abide in thy tabernacle?" Who shall be admitted to be one of the household of God, to sojourn under his roof and enjoy communion with himself? "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" Who shall be a citizen of Zion, and an inhabitant of the heavenly Jerusalem? The question is raised, because it is a question. All men have not this privilege, nay, even among professors there are aliens from the commonwealth, who have no secret intercourse with God. On the grounds of law no mere man can dwell with God, for there is not one upon earth who answers to the just requirements mentioned in the succeeding verses. The questions in the text are asked of the Lord, as if none but the Infinite Mind could answer them so as to satisfy the unquiet conscience. We must know from the Lord of the tabernacle what are the qualifications for his service, and when we have been taught of him, we shall clearly see that only our spotless Lord Jesus, and those who are conformed unto his image, can ever stand with acceptance before the Majesty on high.

Impertinent curiosity frequently desires to know who and how many shall be saved; if those who thus ask the question, "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" would make it a soul-searching enquiry in reference to themselves they would act much more wisely. Members of the visible church, which is God's tabernacle of worship, and hill of eminence, should diligently see to it, that they have the preparation of heart which fits them to be inmates of the house of God. Without the wedding-dress of righteousness in Christ Jesus, we have no right to sit at the banquet of communion. Without uprightness of walk we are not fit for the imperfect church on earth. and certainly we must not hope to enter the perfect church above.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 1.--"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?"--In that the church of Christ upon earth is a "tabernacle," we may note, that neither the church itself nor the members of it, have any fixed or firm seat of habitation in this world: "Arise, depart, for this is not your rest." Mic 2:10. "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Heb 13:14. God's tabernacle, being a movable temple, wandered up and down, sometimes in the desert, sometimes in Shiloh, sometimes among the Philistines, sometimes in Kirjathjearim, and never found any settled place till it was translated into the mountain of God: even so the church of God wandereth as a straggler and a stranger in the wilderness of this world,

being destitute, tormented, and afflicted on every side, persecuted from this city to that, and never enjoying any constant habitation of sound and sure rest until it be translated unto "God's holy hill." The verb g-wr (as the learned in Hebrew note) signifying to dwell as a stranger, or a sojourner, imports that a citizen of heaven is a pilgrim on earth ... In that the church is a tabernacle, we may see that it is not a fort, compassed about with any strong walls, armed with any human forces; and yet such as keep within her are defended from heat of sun, and hurt of storms. Her strength is not here, but from above, for Christ her Head is in all her troubles a present help, a refuge against the tempest, a shadow against the heat. Isa 25:4. The church on earth is indeed a tabernacle, but it is God's tabernacle, wherein he dwelleth as in his house; "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?" for to this end the Lord commanded the tabernacle to be made, that he might dwell among them; and again, whereas he promised by Moses to set his tabernacle among them the blessed apostle construeth it of his dwelling among them. 2Co 6:16. "You are," saith he, "the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them." To the same purpose, God is said elsewhere to dwell in Sion, and to walk in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, that is, in the midst of the seven churches in the midst of his city (Ps 46:5), in the midst of his people. Isa 12:6.--John Boys, D.D., Dean of Canterbury, 1571-1625.

Verse 1.--"Lord, who shall abide," etc. If David, a man endued with an excellent and divine spirit, one in whom singular wisdom, rare knowledge, and deep understanding of hidden secrets appeared, who being taught of God in heavenly things, far surpassed and exceeded in wisdom all his teachers and counsellors, did notwithstanding desire to know the sheep from the goats, the good from the bad, the saints from the hypocrites, the true worshippers of God from dissemblers, the true inhabitants of the holy tabernacle from the intruders of the wicked, lest therein he should be deceived; how great cause have we, in whom neither the like spirit, neither such wisdom, nor equal knowledge, nor comparable understanding, by many degrees appeareth to fear our own weakness, to doubt of our own judgments, to confess our own infirmity, and to suspect the subtle sleights and coloured pretences of men: and for further knowledge in hidden, deep, and secret things, with David to demand and ask this question, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" ... Where David saith, "Who shall abide in thy holy hill?" he giveth us to understand that there is no true and sound rest but in the holy hill of the Lord, which is the church. Then the wicked and ungodly which are not of God's house, of his holy hill, of the church, have no quiet, rest, nor sound peace; but they are in continual perplexity, continual torment, continual disquietness of their minds.--Richard Turnbull, 1606.

Verse 1.--"Abide in thy tabernacle," etc.--The worshippers in the outer court only will get their eternal abode without among the dogs, sorcerers, etc.; but they that shall be inhabitants of heaven, come further in, even unto the tabernacle itself: their souls are fed at his table, they find the smell of his garments as of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and if they miss it at any time, it is the grief of their souls, and they are never at rest till they recover it again.--[^]Thomas Boston.

Verse 1.--"Who shall dwell," etc.

"Now, who is he? Say, if ye can, Who so shall gain the firm abode? Pilate shall say, 'Behold the Man!' And John, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'"

[^]John Barclay, quoted by A. A. Bonar, in loc.

Verse 1.--"Holy Hill."--Heaven is aptly compared to a hill, hell to a hole. Now who shall ascend unto this holy mount? None but those whom this mount comes down unto, that have sweet communion with God in this life present, whose conversation is in heaven, though their commoration be for awhile upon earth, who do here eat, and drink, and sleep, eternal life.--[^]John Trapp.

Verses 1,2.--The disguising and counterfeiting of hypocrites in all ages, occasioned haply this query: for, as Paul speaks, "all are not Israel that are of Israel," a great many living in the church are not of the church, according to that of the doctors upon this place, multi sunt corpore qui non sunt fide, multi nomine qui non sunt nomine. Wherefore David, here perceiving that sundry people were shuffled into God's tabernacle like goats among the sheep, and tares among the corn, being Jews outwardly, but not inwardly, deceiving others often, and sometimes themselves also, with a bare profession of religion, and false opinion of true piety, cometh unto God (as to the searcher and trier of the hearts of men, acquainted with all secrets, and best understanding who are his own), saying unto him, O Lord, forso much as there is so much unsoundness and hypocrisy reigning among those that dwell in thy tabernacle, professing thy

word, and frequenting the places of thy worship beseech thee most humbly, to declare to thy people some tokens and cognizances by which a true subject of thy kingdom may be discerned from the children of this world. Here then, observe, that an external profession of faith, and outward communion with the church of God, is not sufficient unto salvation, unless we lead an incorrupt life correspondent to the same, doing the thing which is right, and speaking the truth in our heart. And, therefore, the silly Papist is exceedingly deceived in relying so much upon the church's outside, to wit upon the succession of Roman bishops, upon the multitudes of Roman Catholics, upon the power and pomp of the Roman synagogue, crying as the Jews in old time, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord," our church is the temple of the Lord. The carnal and careless gospeller is deceived also, placing all his religion in the formal observation of outward service, for a mere verbal Christian is a real atheist, according to that of Paul (Tit 1:16), "In word they profess that they know God, but in their works they deny him;" and so many who seem to sojourn in God's tabernacle for a time, shall never rest upon his "_holy hill_;" and this assertion is expressly confirmed by Christ himself: "Not every one (saith he) that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." Mt 7:21-23. Consider this, all ye which are Christians in lip only, but not in life, making a mask of religion, or rather a very vizard, with eyes, and mouth, and nose, fairly painted and proportioned to all pretences and purposes. O think on this, all ye that forget God, he that dwelleth on high, and beholds the things here below, suffers none _to rest upon the mountain of his holiness_ but such as _walk uprightly, doing that which is just, and speaking that which is true_.--John Boys.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--Qualifications for church membership on earth and in heaven. A subject for self-examination.

Verse 1.--I. _Comparison of the church to the tabernacle_. God's presence manifested, sacrifice offered, and vessels of grace preserved in it; mean externally, glorious within. II. _Comparison of its double position to that of the tabernacle_. Moving in the wilderness, and fixed on the hill. III. Enquire into qualifications for admittance into church and tabernacle. Parallel with the priests, etc.

Verse 1.--The great question. Asked by idle curiosity, despair, godly fear, earnest enquirer, soul troubled by falls of others, holy faith. Give answer to each.

Verse 1.--The citizen of Zion described.--^Thomas Boston's Sermons.

Verse 1.--Anxiety to know the true saints, how far lawful and profitable.

Verse 1.--God the only infallible discerner of true saints.

Exposition.

THE ANSWER. The Lord in answer to the question informs us by his Holy Spirit of the character of the man who alone can dwell in his holy hill. In perfection this holiness is found only in the Man of Sorrows, but in a measure it is wrought in all his people by the Holy Ghost. Faith and the graces of the Spirit are not mentioned, because this is a description of outward character, and where fruits are found the root may not be seen, but it is surely there. Observe the accepted man's _walk, work and word_. "_He that walketh uprightly_" he keeps himself erect as those do who traverse high ropes; if they lean on one side over they must go, or as those who carry precious but fragile ware in baskets on their heads, who lose all if they lose their perpendicular. True believers do not cringe as flatterers, wriggle as serpents, bend double as earth-grubbers, or crook on one side. as those who have sinister aims; they have the strong backbone of the vital principle of grace within, and being themselves upright, they are able to walk uprightly. Walking is of far more importance than talking. He only is right who is upright in walk and downright in honesty. "_And worketh righteousness_." His faith shows itself by good works, and therefore is no dead faith. God's house is a hive for workers, not a nest for drones. Those that rejoice that everything is done for them by another, even the Lord Jesus, and therefore hate legality, are the best doers in the world upon gospel principles. If we are not positively serving the Lord, and doing his holy will to the best of our power, we may seriously debate our interest in divine things, for trees which bear no fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire. "_And speaketh the truth in his heart_." The fool in the last Psalm spoke falsely in his heart; observe both here and elsewhere in the two Psalms, the striking contrast. Saints not only desire

to love and speak truth with their lips, but they seek to be true within; they will not lie even in the closet of their hearts, for God is there to listen; they scorn double meanings, evasions, equivocations, white lies, flatteries, and deceptions. Though truths, like roses, have thorns about them, good men wear them in their bosoms. Our heart must be the sanctuary and refuge of truth, should it be banished from all the world beside, and hunted from among men; at all risk we must entertain the angel of truth, for truth is God's daughter. We must be careful that the heart is really fixed and settled in principle, for tenderness of conscience towards truthfulness, like the bloom on a peach, needs gentle handling, and once lost it were hard to regain it. Jesus was the mirror of sincerity and holiness. Oh, to be more and more fashioned after his similitude!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 2.--"He that walketh uprightly," etc.--If neither the golden reason of excellency can move us, nor the silver reason of profit allure us, then must the iron reason of necessity enforce us to integrity and uprightness of heart. For first, such is the necessity thereof, that without integrity the best graces we seem to have are counterfeit, and, therefore, but glorious sins; the best worship we can perform is but hypocrisy, and therefore abominable in God's sight. For uprightness is the soundness of all grace and virtues, as also of all religion and worship of God, without which they are unsound and nothing worth. And first, as touching graces, if they be not joined with uprightness of heart, they are sins under the masks or vizards of virtue, yea, as it may seem, double sins: for as Augustine saith, Simulata aequitas est duplex iniquitas, quia et iniquitas est, et simulatio: Feigned equity is double iniquity, both because it is iniquity, and because it is feigning.--[^]George Downame, D.D., 1604.

Verse 2.--"He that walketh uprightly."--Here two questions are moved: First. Why David describes a sound member of the church, and inheritor of heaven, by works rather than by faith, seeing the kingdom of heaven is promised unto faith, and the profession thereof also maketh one a member of the visible church? Secondly. Why, among all the fruits of faith, almost innumerable, he makes choice of those duties especially which concern our neighbours? To the first, answer may be, that in this, and in all other places of Holy Scripture, where good works are commanded or commended in any, faith is ever presupposed, according to that apostolical maxim, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" "Without me," saith our blessed Saviour, "ye can do nothing" (Joh 15:5); and without faith in him it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6); fides est operum fomes, as Paulinus wittily: "Faith (as our church speaks), is the nest of good works; albeit our birds be never so fair, though haply we do that which is right, and speak that which is true, yet all these will be lost, except it be brought forth in a true belief." Aristides was so just in his government that he would not tread awry for any respect to friend or despite of foe. Pomponius is said to have been so true, that he never made lie himself, nor suffered a lie in other. Curtius at Rome, Menaecus at Thebes, Codrus at Athens, exposed themselves unto voluntary death, for the good of their neighbours and country: yet, because they wanted the rest of true faith in the world's Saviour where to lay their young, we cannot (if we speak with our prophet here from God's oracle), say that they shall ever rest upon his holy hill. Another answer may be, that faith is an inward and hidden grace, and many deceive themselves and others with a feigned profession thereof, and therefore the Holy Spirit will have every man's faith to be tried and known by their fruits, and howsoever eternal life be promised to faith, and eternal damnation be threatened against infidelity, yet the sentence of salvation and condemnation shall be pronounced according to works, as the clearest evidence of both. It is truly said, out of Bernard, that although our good works are not causa regnandi, yet they be via regni, the causeway wherein, albeit not the cause wherefore, we must ascend God's holy hill. To the second demand, why the duties immediately belonging to God, are not mentioned here, but only such as concern our brother? Answer is made, that this question is propounded of such as, living in the visible church, openly profess the faith, and would seem to be devout, hearing the word of God, and calling upon his name; for of such as are profane atheists, and do not so much as make a semblance of holiness, there is no question to be made, for, without all doubt, there can be no resting place for such in the kingdom of heaven. Now that we may discern aright which of those that profess religion are sound, and which unsound; the marks are not to be taken from an outward hearing of the word, or receiving of the sacraments, and much less from a formal observation of human traditions in God's tabernacle (for all these things hypocrites usually perform), but from the duties of righteousness, giving every man his due, because the touchstone of piety towards God is charity towards our brother. "Herein," saith John, "are the children of God known, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."--[^]John

Boys.

Verse 2.--There is no ascertaining the quality of a tree but by its fruits. When the wheels of a clock move within, the hands on the dial will move without. When the heart of a man is sound in conversion, then the life will be fair in profession. When the conduit is walled in, how shall we judge of the spring but by the waters which run through the pipes?--^William Secker.

Verse 2.--"_And worketh righteousness_" A man must first be righteous before he can work righteousness of life. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." 1Jo 3:7. The tree makes the fruit, not the fruit the tree; and therefore the tree must be good before the fruit can be good. Mt 8:18. A righteous man may make a righteous work, but no work of an unrighteous man can make him righteous. Now, we become righteous only by faith, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Ro 5:1 ... Wherefore let men work as they will, if they be not true believers in Christ, they are not workers of righteousness; and, consequently they will not be dwellers in heaven. Ye must then close with Christ in the first place, and by faith receive the gift of imputed righteousness, or ye will never truly bear this character of a citizen of Zion. A man shall as soon force fruit out of a branch broken off from the tree and withered, as work righteousness without believing in, and uniting with Christ. These are two things by which those that hear the gospel are ruined.--^Thomas Boston.

Verse 2.--"_Worketh righteousness_" Jacob's ladder had stairs, upon which he saw none standing still, but all either ascending, or else descending by it. Ascend you likewise to the top of the ladder, to heaven, and there you shall hear one say, "My Father doth now work, and I work also." Whereupon Basil noteth that King David having first said, "_Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle_" adds then, not he that hath wrought righteousness heretofore, but _he that doth now work righteousness_, even as Christ saith, "My Father doth now work, and I work also."--^Thomas Playfere.

Verse 2.--But here observe David saith, "that _worketh_ righteousness;" not that talks about, thinks about, or hears of righteousness; because, "not the hearers of the law, but the doers of the law, shall be justified." What then do we owe unto others? That which Christ saith (Mt 8), "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them," even unto your enemies: that is, to injure no one, to succour those that suffer injury, and to do good unto all men. But these things, I say, are spoken especially unto those who have respect of persons; as if he had said, It is not because thou art a priest, nor because thou art of a religious order, nor because thou prayest much, nor because thou dost miracles, nor because thou teachest excellently, nor because thou art dignified with the title of father, nor because thou art the doer of any work (except righteousness), that thou shalt rest in the holy hill of the Lord; for if thou be destitute of the work of righteousness, neither all thy good works, nor thy indulgences, nor thy votes and suffrages, nor thy intercessions, shall avail thee anything. Therefore, the truth is firm; that it is the walker without spot, and the doer of righteousness, that shall rest in the tabernacle of the Lord. Yet how many are there, who build, increase and adorn churches, monasteries, altars, vessels, garments, etc., who, all the while never so much as think of the works of righteousness; nay, who tread righteousness under foot that they may work these their own works, and because of them hope to gain the pardon of their unrighteousness, while thousands are deceived by these means! Hence, in the last day, Christ will say, "I was an hungered, I was thirsty, I was naked, I was in prison, I was a stranger." He will not say one word about those works which are done and admired at this day. And on the other hand, it is of no account against thee that thou art a layman, or poor, or sick or contemptible, or how vile soever thou art, if thou workest righteousness, thou shalt be saved. The only work that we must hope will be considered and accounted of, is the work of righteousness: all other works that either urge or allure us on under a show of godliness, are a thing of nought.--^Martin Luther.

Verse 2.--"_And speaketh the truth in his heart_" Anatomists have observed that the tongue in man is tied with a double string to the heart. And so in _truth spoken_ there is necessary a double agreement of our words. 1. With our heart. That is, to the speaking of truth, it is necessary our words agree with our mind and thoughts about the thing. We must speak as we think, and our tongues must be faithful interpreters of our mind; otherwise we lie, not speaking as we think. So what is truth in itself may be spoken by a man, and yet he be a liar; namely, if he does not think as he speaks. 2. With the thing as it is in itself. Though we think a thing to be so, which is not so, we lie, when we affirm it; because it is not as we say, though we really think it is so. For our mistaken notions of things can never stamp lies to pass current for truths. 2Th 2:11.--^Thomas Boston.

Verse 2.--I this day heard a sermon from Ps 15:2, "_And speaketh the truth in his heart_" ... O my soul, receive the admonition that has been given thee! Study truth in the inward parts; let integrity and truth always accompany thee, and preserve thee: speak the truth in thy heart. I am thankful for any conviction and sense I have of the evil of lying; Lord, increase my abhorrence of it: as a further assistance and help against this mean, sordid, pernicious vice, I would endeavour, and resolve, in pursuit of the directions laid before us in the sermon, to mortify those passions and corruptions from whence this sin of lying more ordinarily flows, and which are the chief occasion of it, as "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" (Mt 15:19); so, from the same fountain proceed evil words. And I would, with the greatest zeal, set myself against such corruptions as upon observation I find more commonly betray me into this iniquity: pride often indites our speech, and coins many a lie; so envy, covetousness, malice, etc. I would endeavour to cleanse myself from all this filthiness: there never will be a mortified tongue while there is an unmortified heart. If I love the world inordinately, it is a thousand to one I shall be often stretching a point to promote a worldly interest; and if I hate my brother, it is the same odds I shall reproach him. Lord, help me to purge the fountain, and then the streams will be pure. When the spring of a clock, and all the movements are right, the hand will go right; and so it is here. The tongue follows the inward inclination. I would resolve to do nothing that may need a lie. If Gehazi's covetousness had not shamed him, he had not wanted a lie to excuse him, "He that walks uprightly, walks surely" and safely in this, as well as other respects. Pr 10:9. May I do nothing that is dishonourable and mean, nothing that cannot bear the light, and then I shall have little temptation to lying. I would endeavour for a lively sense of the eye of God upon me, acting and speaking in his presence. Lord, I desire to set thee always before me; thou understandest my thoughts as perfectly as others do my words. I would consider before I speak, and not speak much or rashly. Pr 29:20. I would often think of the severity of a future judgment, when every secret shall be made manifest, and the hypocrite and liar exposed before angels and men. Lastly, I would frequently beg divine assistance herein. Ps 119:29; Pr 30:8. O my God, help me in my future conduct, remove from me the way of lying; may the law of kindness and truth be in my tongue; may I take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I bewail my past miscarriages in this respect, and flee to thy mercy through the blood of Christ; bless to me the instructions that have been this day given me; let no iniquity prevail against me; "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, and cleanse me from secret faults." I commit my thoughts, desires, and tongue, to thy conduct and government; may I think and act in thy fear, and always speak the truth in my heart.--^Benjamin Bennet's "Christian Oratory," 1728.

Verses 2,5.--As the eagle casteth off her beak, and so reneweth her youth, and the snake strippeth off her old skin, and so maketh herself smooth: even so he that will enter into the joys of God, and rest upon his holy mountain, must, as the Scripture speaks, put off the old man and put on the new, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness, repenting truly, speedily, steadily.--^Robert Cawdray.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 2.--"_He that walketh uprightly_" I. What he must be. He must be upright in heart. A man himself bent double cannot walk uprightly. II. How he must act. Neither from impulse, ambition, gain, fear, or flattery. He must not be warped in any direction, but stand perpendicularly. III. What he must expect. Snares, etc. to trip him. IV. Where he must walk. Path of duty, the only one in which he can walk uprightly. V. Where he must look. Up, right-up, and then he will be upright.

Verse 2.--"_Speaketh the truth in his heart_" Subject:--Heart falsehood and heart truth.

Verse 2. (first clause).--The citizen of Zion an upright walker.

Verse 2 (middle clause).--The citizen of Zion, a worker of righteousness.

Verse 2 (last clause).--The citizen of Zion, a speaker of truth.--^Four Sermons in Thomas Boston's Works.

Exposition.

After the positive comes the negative. "_He that backbiteth not with his tongue_" There is a sinful way of backbiting with the heart when we think too hardly of a neighbour, but it is the tongue which does the mischief. Some men's tongues bite more than their teeth. The tongue is not steel, but it cuts, and its wounds are very hard to heal; its worst wounds are not with its edge to our face, but with its back when our head is turned. Under the law, a night hawk was an unclean bird, and its human image is abominable everywhere. All slanderers are the devil's bellows to blow up contention, but those are the worst which blow at the back of the fire. "_Nor doeth evil to his neighbour_" He who bridles his tongue will not give a

license to his hand. Loving our neighbour as ourselves will make us jealous of his good name, careful not to injure his estate, or by ill example to corrupt his character. "_Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour_." He is a fool if not a knave who picks up stolen goods and harbours them; in slander as well as robbery, the receiver is as bad as the thief. If there were no gratified hearers of ill reports, there would be an end of the trade of spreading them. Trapp says, that "the tale-bearer carrieth the devil in his tongue, and the tale-hearer carries the devil in his ear." The original may be translated, "endureth;" implying that it is a sin to endure or tolerate tale-bearers. "Show that man out!" we should say of a drunkard, yet it is very questionable if his unmannerly behaviour will do us so much mischief as the tale-bearer's insinuating story. "Call for a policeman!" we say if we see a thief at his business; ought we to feel no indignation when we hear a gossip at her work? Mad dog! Mad dog!! is a terrible hue and cry, but there are few curs whose bite is so dangerous as a busybody's tongue. Fire! fire!! is an alarming note, but the tale-bearer's tongue is set on fire of hell, and those who indulge it had better mend their manners, or they may find that there is fire in hell for unbridled tongues. Our Lord spake evil of no man, but breathed a prayer for his foes; we must be like him, or we shall never be with him.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 3.--"_He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour_." Lamentation for the gross neglect of this duty, or the frequent commission of this sin. What tears are sufficient to bewail it? How thick do censures and reproaches fly in all places, at all tables, in all conventions! And this were the more tolerable, if it were only the fault of ungodly men, of strangers and enemies to religion; for so saith the proverb, "Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked." When a man's heart is full of hell, it is not unreasonable to expect that his tongue should be set on fire of hell; and it is no wonder to hear such persons reproach good men, yea, even for their goodness. But alas! the disease doth not rest here, this plague is not only among the Egyptians but Israelites too. It is very doleful to consider how professors sharpen their tongues like swords against professors; and one good man censures and reproaches another, and one minister traduceth another; and who can say, "I am clean from this sin"? O that I could move your pity in this case! For the Lord's sake pity yourselves, and do not pollute and wound your consciences with this crime. Pity your brethren; let it suffice that godly ministers and Christians are loaded with reproaches by wicked men--there is no need that you should combine with them in this diabolical work. You should support and strengthen their hands against the reproaches of the ungodly world, and not add affliction to the affected. O pity the world, and pity the church which Christ hath purchased with his own blood, which methinks bespeaks you in the words, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." Job 19:21. Pity the mad and miserable world, and help it against this sin; stop the bloody issue; restrain this wicked practice amongst men as much as possibly you can, and lament it before God, and for what you cannot do yourselves, give God no rest until he shall please to work a cure.--[^]Matthew Poole, 1621--1679.

Verse 3.--"_He that backbiteth not_," etc. Detraction or slander is not lightly to be passed over, because we do so easily fail in this point. For the good name of a man, as saith Solomon, is a precious thing to every one, and to be preferred before much treasure, insomuch that it is no less grievous to hurt a man with the tongue than with a sword: nay, oftentimes the stroke of a tongue is grievouser than the wound of a spear, as it is in the French proverb. And therefore the tongue must be bridled, that we hurt not in any wise the good name of our neighbour; but preserve it unto him safe and sound as much as in us shall lie. That which he addeth touching evil or injury not to be done to our neighbour, is like unto that which we have seen already concerning the working or exercising of righteousness. He would have us therefore so to exercise all upright dealing, that we might be far from doing any damage or wrong to our neighbours. And by the name of neighbour, is meant every man and woman, as it is plain and evident. For we are all created of God, and placed in this world that we might live uprightly and sincerely together. And therefore he breaketh the law of human society (for we are all tied and bound by this law of nature) that doth hurt or injury to another. The third member of this verse is, "_nor that reproacheth another_," or, that maintaineth not a false report given one against another; which latter particle seemeth to be the better, since he had spoken before expressly, touching the good name of another, not to be hurt or wronged with our tongue. To the which fault this is next in degree, wherewith we are too much encumbered, and which we scarce acknowledge to be a fault, when we further and maintain the slanders devised and given out by another against a man, either by hearing them or by telling them forth to others, as we heard them. For why? It seemeth for the most part to be enough for us if we can say, that we feign not this or that, nor make it of

our own heads, but only tell it forth as we heard it of others, without adding anything of our own brain. But as oft as we do this we fail in our duty doing, in not providing for our neighbour's credit, as were requisite for the things, which being uttered by others ought to be passed over in silence and to lie dead, we gather up, and by telling them forth, disperse them abroad, which whether it be a sin or no, when as we ought by all means possible to wish and do well unto our neighbour, all men do see. And therefore thou that travellest towards eternal life, must not only not devise false reports and slanders against other men, but also not so much as have them in thy mouth being devised by others, neither by any means assist or maintain them in slandering; but by all honest and lawful means, provide for the credit and estimation of thy neighbour, so much as in thee lieth.--^Peter Baro, D.D., 1560.

Verse 3.--" _He that backbiteth not with his tongue_." The Hebrew word _rfgal_ <07270> signifieth to play the spy, and by a metaphor to _backbite_ or _slander_, for _backbiters_ and whisperers, after the manner of spies, go up and down dissembling their malice, that they may espy the faults and defects of others, whereof they may make a malicious relation to such as will give ear to their slanders. So that _backbiting_ is a malicious defamation of a man behind his back ... And that the citizen of heaven doth and ought to abhor from _backbiting_, the horrible wickedness of this sin doth evince. For first, Le 19:16, where it is straightly forbidden, the "_tale-bearer_" is compared to a pedlar: "Thou shalt not walk about with tales and slanders, as it were a pedlar among thy people." So much _rfkyl_ <07400> signifieth. For as the pedlar having bought his wares of some one or more goeth about from house to house that he may sell the same to others; so _backbiters_ and _tale-bearers_, gathering together tales and rumours, as it were wares, go from one to another, that such wares as either themselves have invented, or have gathered by report, they may utter in the absence of their neighbour to his infamy and disgrace. Likewise Ps 1:20, it is condemned as a notable crime, which God will not suffer to go unpunished; Eze 22:9, it is reckoned among the abominations of Jerusalem, for which destruction is denounced against it; and Ro 1:29,30, among the crimes of the heathen, given over unto a reprobate sense, this is placed: they were "_whisperers and backbiters_."--George Downname.

Verse 3.--" _He that backbiteth not_." He that is guilty of backbiting, that speaks evil of another behind his back, if that which he speaks be false, is guilty of lying, which is prejudicial to salvation. If that which he speaks be true, yet he is void of charity in seeking to defame another. For as Solomon observes, "Love covereth all sins." Pr 10:12. Where there is love and charity, there will be a covering and concealing of men's sins as much as may be. Now, where charity is wanting, their salvation is not to be expected. 1Co 13:1, etc.; 1Jo 3:14,15.--^Christopher Cartwright, 1602-1658.

Verse 3.--" _Backbiteth not_." This crime is a conjugation of evils, and is productive of infinite mischiefs; it undermines peace, and saps the foundation of friendship; it destroys families, and rends in pieces the very heart and vitals of charity; it makes an evil man party, and witness, and judge, and executioner of the innocent.--^Bishop Taylor.

Verse 3.--" _Backbiteth_." The scorpion hurteth none but such as he toucheth with the tip of his tail; and the crocodile and basilisk slay none but such as either the force of their sight, or strength of their breath reacheth. The viper woundeth none but such as it biteth; the venomous herbs or roots kill none but such as taste, or handle, or smell them, and so come near unto them; but the poison of slanderous tongues is much more rank and deadly; for that hurteth and slayeth, woundeth and killeth, not only near, but afar off; not only at hand, but by distance of place removed; not only at home, but abroad, not only in our own nation but in foreign countries; and spareth neither quick nor dead.--^Richard Turnbull.

Verse 3.--" _Backbiteth_." The word here used comes from a root signifying _foot_, and denotes a person who goes about from house to house, speaking things he should not (1Ti 5:13); and a word from this root signifies _spies_; and the phrase here may point at persons who creep into houses, pry into the secrets of families, divulge them, and oftentimes represent them in a false light. Such are ranked among the worst of men, and are very unfit to be in the society of saints, or in a church of Christ. See Ro 1:30.--^John Gill.

Verse 3.--" _Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour_." The saints of God must not be too light of hearing, much less of believing all tales, rumours, and reports of their brethren; and charity requireth that we do not only stop and stay them, but that we examine them before we believe them. Saul, the king, too light of belief in this point, believed the slanderous and false reports of David's enemies, who put into Saul's head that David imagined evil against him. Yea, David himself showed his great infirmity in that, that without due examination and proof of the matter, he believed the false report of Ziba against

Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan; of whom to David the king, persecuted by Absalom his son, Ziba reported falsely, that he should say, "This day shall the house of Israel restore unto me the kingdom of my father." The example of whose infirmity in Scripture reproveth, must not we follow; but let us rather embrace the truth of that heavenly doctrine which, through God's Spirit, here he preacheth, that we believe not false reports against our neighbours.--[^]Richard Turnbull.

Verse 3.--Despise not thy neighbour, but think thyself as bad a sinner, and that the like defects may befall thee. If thou canst not excuse his doing, excuse his intent which may be good; or if the deed be evil, think it was done of ignorance; if thou canst no way excuse him, think some great temptation befell him, and that thou shouldst be worse if the like temptation befell thee; and give God thanks that the like as yet hath not befallen thee. Despise not a man being a sinner, for though he be evil to-day, he may turn to-morrow.--[^]Williams Perkins, 1558-1602.

Verses 3,4,5.--They that cry down moral honesty, cry down that which is a great part of religion, my duty towards God, and my duty towards man. What care I to see a man run after a sermon, if he cozens and cheats as soon as he comes home? On the other side, morality must not be without religion, for it so, it may change as I see convenience. Religion must govern it. He that has not religion to govern his morality, is not a dram better than my mastiff-dog; so long as you stroke him, and please him, and do not pinch him, he will play with you as finely as may be, he is a very good moral mastiff; but if you hurt him, he will fly in your face, and tear out your throat.--[^]John Seldon, 1584-1654.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 3.--The evils of detraction. It affects three persons here mentioned: the backbiter, the suffering neighbour, and the taker-up of the reproach.

Verse 3.--"_Nor taketh up a reproach_" The sin of being too ready to believe ill reports. Common, cruel, foolish, injurious, wicked.

Exposition.

"_In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord_" We must be as honest in paying respect as in paying our bills. Honour to whom honour is due. To all good men we owe a debt of honour, and we have no right to hand over what is their due to vile persons who happen to be in high places. When bad men are in office, it is our duty to respect the office, but we cannot so violate our consciences as to do otherwise than contemn the men; and on the other hand, when true saints are in poverty and distress, we must sympathize with their afflictions and honour the men none the less. We may honour the roughest cabinet for the sake of the jewels, but we must not prize false gems because of their setting. A sinner in a gold chain and silken robes is no more to be compared with a saint in rags than a rushlight in a silver candlestick with the sun behind a cloud. The proverb says, that "ugly women, finely dressed, are the uglier for it," and so mean men in high estate are the more mean because of it. "_He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not_" Scriptural saints under the New Testament rule "swear not at all," but their word is as good as an oath: those men of God who think it right to swear, are careful and prayerful lest they should even seem to overshoot the mark. When engagements have been entered into which turn out to be unprofitable, "the saints are men of honour still." Our blessed Surety swore to his own hurt, but how gloriously he stood to his suretyship! what a comfort to us that he changeth not, and what an example to us to be scrupulously and precisely exact in fulfilling our covenants with others! The most far-seeing trader may enter into engagements which turn out to be serious losses, but whatever else he loses, if he keeps his honour, his losses will be bearable; if that be lost all is lost.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 4.--"_In whose eyes a vile person is contemned_" etc. When wicked Jehoram, king of Israel, came to Eliseus, the prophet, to ask counsel of the Lord, and to entreat for waters, having in company Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, being virtuous; the prophet showeth his contempt to the one being wicked, and his reverence to the other, being godly, faithful and virtuous, said, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee." 2Ki 3:14. Thus was the wicked vile in his sight; thus did he not flatter the ungodly. In like manner godly Mordecai, the Jew, having Haman the ambitious and proud Agagite in contempt, would in no wise bow the knee unto him in sign of honour, as the rest of the people did; for which cause he was extremely hated, menaced and molested of proud and wicked Haman. To wink at

their wickedness, to uphold them in their iniquity, to fawn upon them and flatter them, to praise them when they deserve just reproof, is, as it were, an honouring of them; to which, as to a most grievous sin, the prophet denounceth a most bitter curse: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Isa 5:20.--
^Richard Turnbull.

Verse 4.--" _In whose eyes a vile person is contemned_." To contemn the wicked and honour the godly, are opposite the one to the other. But the former may seem not to be sufficiently beseeming to a godly man. For why should he contemn or despise others, who is commanded by all means to care for the credit of others, as we heard even now? Nay, a godly man, letting others go, ought to search into himself, and to accuse himself, but not to judge of others. But this saying of the prophet is to be understood rather of the faults than of the person. As every man therefore is to be loved, so are the faults of every man to be hated of the godly. For so is God himself, whom we desire to be like unto, that we might dwell with him, affected and disposed. For why? he hateth no man, nay, he hateth nothing at all in this whole universal world, but only sin. For he is the author and preserver of all things that be; and therefore doth good and wisheth well to all; only of sin he is not the author, but the free and unconstrained will of man and Satan. Notwithstanding God doth so greatly hate sin, that by reason thereof he doth sometimes neglect and forsake men, yea, and have them in contempt. So then a godly man hateth no man, nor contemneth any; but yet notwithstanding he disliketh sin in sinful men, and that he sticketh not to let them perceive either by reproving them, or shunning their company, or by doing of some other thing, whereby they may know they are misliked of good men for their enormities, and see themselves to be contemned of others for their wicked and ungodly life. A good man therefore must not flatter the ungodly in their ungracious attempts, but must freely declare that he disalloweth their course and conversation.--^Peter Baro.

Verse 4.--" _In whose eyes a vile person is contemned_." Augustine, as Posidonius writeth, showing what hatred he had to tale-bearers and false reporters of others, had two verses written over his table; by translation these:--

"He that doth love with bitter speech the absent to defame, Must surely know that at this board no place is for the same."

^Richard Turnbull.

Verse 4.--" _In whose eyes a vile person is contemned_." The burgess of the New Jerusalem, _reprobos reprobat, et probos probat_ ; he cannot flatter any man, nor fancy such as in whom he findeth not _aliquid Christi_ , something of the image of God. A golden Colosse stuffed with rubbish, he cannot stoop to, " _But he honoureth them that fear the Lord_," as the only earthly angels, though never so mean and despicable in the world's eye. Mr. Fox, being asked whether he remembered not such a poor servant of God who had received succour from him in time of trouble? answered "I remember him well; I tell you, I forget the lords and ladies, to remember such."--^John Trapp.

Verse 4.--" _He honoureth them that fear the Lord_." Though the godly some way or other be injurious unto us, we ought nevertheless to honour and not to despise them. So Joseph did Mary, though he supposed her to have dealt injuriously with him; and she had done so, indeed, if it had been with her as he imagined. Calvin's resolution concerning Luther was very admirable in this respect. They differed much about the presence of Christ in the sacrament; and Luther being of a vehement spirit, wrote bitterly against those that did hold otherwise in that point than himself did. This enforced some, who were more nearly concerned in the business, to prepare to answer Luther; which Calvin understanding, and fearing lest they, being provoked by Luther's tartness, should deal with him in the like kind, he wrote unto Bullinger, a prime man among them, persuading and exhorting him to carry the business so as to show all due respect unto Luther, considering what worth and excellency there was in him, however he had demeaned himself in that particular. And he adds, that he often used to say, that although Luther should call him devil, yet he would do him that honour to acknowledge him a choice servant of God.--
^Christopher Cartwright.

Verse 4.--" _He honoureth them that fear the Lord_." I have read of one that said, If he should meet a preacher and an angel together, he would first salute the preacher and then the angel.--^Charles Bradbury's "Cabinet of Jewels," 1785.

Verse 4.--" _He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not_."

"His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles; His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate; His tears pure messengers, sent from his heart; His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth."

^William Shakespere.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 4.--The duty of practically honouring those who fear the Lord. Commendation, deference, assistance, imitation, etc.

Verse 4.--The sin of estimating persons other than by their practical characters.

Verse 4 (last clause).--The Lord Jesus as our unchanging Surety, his oath and his hurt.

Exposition.

"_He that putteth not out his money to usury_." Usury was and is hateful both to God and man. That a lender should share with the borrower in gains made by his money is most fitting and proper; but that the man of property should eat up the poor wretch who unfortunately obtained a loan of him is abominable. Those who grind poor tradesmen, needy widows, and such like, by charging them interest at intolerable rates, will find that their gold and their silver are cankered. The man who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord must shake off this sin as Paul shook the viper into the fire. "_Nor taketh reward against the innocent_." Bribery is a sin both in the giver and the receiver. It was frequently practised in Eastern courts of justice; that form of it is now under our excellent judges almost an unheard-of thing; yet the sin survives in various forms, which the reader needs not that we should mention; and under every shape it is loathsome to the true man of God. He remembers that Jesus instead of taking reward against the innocent died for the guilty.

"_He that doeth these things shall never be moved_." No storm shall tear him from his foundations, drag him from his anchorage, or uproot him from his place. Like the Lord Jesus, whose dominion is everlasting, the true Christian shall never lose his crown. He shall not only be on Zion, but like Zion, fixed and firm. He shall dwell in the tabernacle of the Most High, and neither death nor judgment shall remove him from his place of privilege and blessedness.

Let us betake ourselves to prayer and self-examination, for this Psalm is as fire for the gold, and as a furnace for silver. Can we endure its testing power?

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 5.--The Puritanic divines are almost all of them against the taking of any interest upon money, and go the length of saying that one penny per cent, per annum will shut a man out of heaven if persisted in. It appeared to me to be useless to quote opinions in which I cannot agree, especially as this would occupy space better employed. The demanding of excessive and grinding interest is a sin to be detested; the taking of the usual and current interest in a commercial country is not contrary to the law of love. The Jews were not engaged in commerce, and to lend money even at the lowest interest to their fellow farmers in times of poverty would have been usurious; but they might lend to strangers, who would usually be occupied in commerce, because in the commercial world, money is a fruitful thing, and the lender has a right to a part of its products; a loan to enable a non-trader to live over a season of want is quite another matter.--^C. H. S.

Verse 5.--"_He that putteth not out his money to usury_." By usury is generally understood the gain of anything above the principal, or that which was lent, exacted only in consideration of the loan, whether it be in money, corn, wares, or the like. It is most commonly taken for an unlawful profit which a person makes of his money or goods. The Hebrew word for usury signifies biting. The law of God prohibits rigorous imposing conditions of gain for the loan of money or goods, and exacting them without respect to the condition of the borrower, whether he gain or lose; whether poverty occasioned his borrowing, or a visible prospect of gain by employing the borrowed goods. It is said in Ex 22:25,26, "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury," etc. And in Lev 25:35,36,37, "If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner, that he may live with thee: take thou no usury of him," etc. This law forbids the taking usury from a brother that was poor, an Israelite reduced to poverty, or from a proselyte; but in De 23:20, God seems to tolerate usury towards

strangers; "Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury." By strangers, in this passage, some understand the Gentiles in general, or all such as were not Jews, excepting proselytes. Others think that by strangers are meant the Canaanites, and the other people that were devoted to slavery and subjection; of these the Hebrews were permitted to exact usury, but not of such strangers with whom they had no quarrel, and against whom the Lord had not denounced his judgments. The Hebrews were plainly commanded in Ex 22:25, etc., not to receive usury for money from any that borrowed from necessity, as in that case in Neh 5:5,7. And such provision the law made for the preserving of estates to their families by the year of jubilee; for a people that had little concern in trade, could not be supposed to borrow money but out of necessity: but they were allowed to lend upon usury to strangers, whom yet they must not oppress. This law, therefore, in the strictness of it, seems to have been peculiar to the Jewish state; but in the equity of it, it obligeth us to show mercy to those we have advantage against, and to be content to share with those we lend to in loss, as well as profit, if Providence cross them. And upon this condition, a valuable commentator says, "It seems as lawful for me to receive interest for money, which another takes pains with, improves, but runs the hazard of in trade, as it is to receive rent for my land, which another takes pains with, improves, but runs the hazard of in husbandry."--^Alexander Cruden, 1701-1770.

Verse 5.--" He that putteth not out his money to usury." " If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee." Ex 22:25. Rather, according to the letter of the original, " If thou lend money to my people, even to a poor man with thee." The Israelites were a people but little engaged in commerce, and therefore could not in general be supposed to borrow money but from sheer necessity; and of that necessity the lender was not to take advantage by usurious exactions. The law is not to be understood as a prohibition of interest at any rate whatever, but of excessive interest or usury. The clause, "Thou shalt not be to him as an usurer," is equivalent to saying, "Thou shalt not domineer and lord it over him rigorously and cruelly." That this class of men were peculiarly prone to be extortionate and oppressive in their dealings with debtors would seem to be implied by the etymology of the original term for usury (neshek <05393>), which comes from a root signifying to bite nfshak <05391>; and in Ne 5:2-5, we have a remarkable case of the bitter and grinding effects resulting from the exercise of the creditor's rights over the debtor. A large portion of the people had not only mortgaged their lands, vineyards and houses, but had actually sold their sons and daughters into bondage, to satisfy the claims of their grasping creditors. In this emergency Nehemiah espoused the cause of the poor, and compelled the rich, against whom he called the people together, to remit the whole of their dues; and, moreover, exacted from them an oath that they would never afterwards oppress their poor brethren for the payment of those debts. This was not because every part of those proceedings had been contrary to the letter of the Mosaic law, but because it was a flagrant breach of equity under the circumstances. It was taking a cruel and barbarous advantage of the necessities of their brethren, at which God was highly indignant, and which his servants properly rebuked. From this law the Hebrew canonists have gathered a general rule, that "Whoso exacteth of a poor man, and knoweth that he hath not ought to pay with, he transgresseth against this prohibition, Thou shalt not be to him as an exacting creditor." (Maimonides, in Ainsworth.) We nowhere learn from the institutes delivered by Moses that the simple taking of interest, especially from the neighbouring nations (De 23:19,20), was forbidden to the Israelites; but the divine law would give no countenance to the griping and extortionate practices to which miserly money-lenders are always prone. The deserving and industrious poor might sometimes be reduced to such straits, that pecuniary accommodations might be very desirable to them; and towards such God would inculcate a mild, kind, and forbearing spirit, and the precept is enforced by the relation which they sustained to him: q.d., "Remember that you are lending to my people, my poor; and therefore take no advantage of their necessities. Trust me against the fear of loss, and treat them kindly and generously."--^George Bush, in "Notes on the Book of Exodus," 1856.

Verse 5.--" He that putteth not out his money to usury." With respect to the first clause, as David seems to condemn all kinds of usury in general, and without exception, the very name has been everywhere held in detestation. But crafty men have invented specious names under which to conceal the vice; and thinking by this artifice to escape, they have plundered with greater excess than if they had lent on usury avowedly and openly. God, however, will not be dealt with and imposed upon by sophistry and false pretences. He looks upon the thing as it really is. There is no worse species of usury than an unjust way of making bargains, where equity is disregarded on both sides. Let us, then, remember that all bargains, in which the one party unrighteously strives to make gain by the loss of the other party, whatever name

may be given to them, are here condemned. It may be asked, whether all kinds of usury are to be put into this denunciation, and regarded as alike unlawful? If we condemn all without distinction, there is a danger lest many, seeing themselves brought into such a strait as to find that sin must be incurred, in whatever way they can turn themselves, may be rendered bolder by despair, and may rush headlong into all kinds of usury without choice or discrimination. On the other hand, whenever we concede that something may be lawfully done in this way, many will give themselves loose reins, thinking that liberty to exercise usury, without control or moderation, has been granted them. In the first place, therefore, I would, above all things, counsel my readers to beware of ingeniously contriving deceitful pretexts by which to take advantage of their fellow men, and let them not imagine that anything can be lawful to them which is grievous and hurtful to others. ... It is not without cause that God has in Le 25:35,36, forbidden usury, adding this reason: "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase." We see that the end for which the law was framed was that man should not cruelly oppress the poor, who ought rather to receive sympathy and compassion. This was, indeed, a part of the judicial law which God appointed for the Jews in particular; but it is a common principle of justice, which extends to all nations, and to all ages, that we should keep ourselves from plundering and devouring the poor who are in distress and want. Whence it follows, that the gain which he who lends his money upon interest acquires, without doing injury to any one, is not to be included under the head of unlawful usury. The Hebrew word *neshek*, which David employs, being derived from another word which signifies *to bite*, sufficiently shows that usuries are condemned in so far as they involve in them, or lead to, a license of robbing or plundering our fellow men. Ezekiel, indeed (chapters Eze 18:17; 22:12), seems to condemn the taking of any interest whatever upon money lent; but he, doubtless, has an eye to the unjust and crafty arts of gaining by which the rich devoured the poor people. In short, provided we had engraven on our hearts the rule of equity which Christ prescribes in Mt 7:12, "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," it would not be necessary to enter into lengthened disputes concerning usury.--[^]John Calvin, in loc.

Verse 5 (first clause).--The Mosaic law forbids the lending of money for interest to an Israelite. Ex 22:25; Le 25:37; De 23:19; Pr 28:8; Eze 18:8. In several of the passages referred to, it is expressly supposed that money is lent only to the poor, a supposition which has its ground in the simple relations of the Mosaic times, in which lending, for the purpose of speculation and gain, had no existence. Such lending ought only to be a work of brotherly love; and it is a great violation of that if any one, instead of helping his neighbour, takes advantage of his need to bring him into still greater straits. The Mosaic regulation in question has, accordingly, its import also for New Testament times. With the interest-lending of capitalists, who borrow for speculation, it has nothing to do. This belongs to a quite different matter, as is implied even by the name *neshek*, *a mordendo*, according to which only such usury can be meant as plagues and impoverishes a neighbour. By unseasonable comparison with our modes of speech, many would expound, "His money he puts not to interest."--[^]E. W. Hengstenberg.

Verse 5 (first clause).--The worm called in Latin *teredo*, whereof Pliny hath reported something in his story, breeding in wood, to the touch is soft, yet it hath such teeth as endeavoureth and consumeth the hard timber. So the usurer is a soft beast at first to handle, but in continuance of time the hardness of his teeth will eat thee up, both flesh and bone, if thou beware not. He pleadeth love, but not for thy sake, but for his own; for as the ivy colleth and claspeth the oak as a lover, but thereby it groweth up and overtoppeth the oak, and sucketh out the juice and sap thereof, that it cannot thrive nor prosper; so the usurer colleth, embraceth, and claspeth in arms the borrower, that thereby himself may grow richer, and suck all wealth, goods, and riches from him, that he never thriveth or prospereth after. The pleasure the usurer showeth is like the playing of the cat with the silly mouse: the cat playeth with the mouse, but the play of the cat is the death of the mouse. The usurer pleasureth the borrower; but the pleasure of the usurer is the undoing of the borrower. The fox through craft slideth and tumbleth, and maketh much pastime till he come to the prey, then he devoureth: the usurer maketh many fair speeches, giveth out many fair promises, pretendeth very great kindness, until he have got thee within his compass, then he crusheth and cruciateth thee. The usurer preyeth upon the poor, he waxeth rich of the penury of his brother, he clotheth himself with the coat of the naked, he gathereth riches of the indigency and want of his neighbour; he feedeth himself of the bread of the hungry, and devoureth his poor brother, as the great beasts do the smaller; than which, saith Ambrose, there is no greater inhumanity and cruelty, no greater wretchedness and iniquity, as Chrysostom in many places, and Basil upon this Psalm, have well

observed.--^Richard Turnbull.

Verse 5.--The rich make the poor to fill them; for usurers feed upon the poor, even as great fishes devour the small. Therefore, he which said, Let there not be a beggar in Israel (De 15:4), said too, Let there not be an usurer in Israel. For if there be usurers in Israel there will be beggars in Israel; for usurers make beggars, even as lawyers make quarrellers. ... It is a miserable occupation to live by sin, and a great comfort to a man when he looketh upon his gold and silver, and his heart telleth him, All this is well gotten; and when he lieth upon his death-bed, and must leave all to his children, he can say unto them, I leave you mine own; but the usurer cannot say, I leave you mine own, but I leave you other men's; therefore the usurer can never die in peace, because if he die before he maketh restitution, he dieth in his sin.--^Henry Smith.

Verse 5.--Biting usurers were so abhorred in the primitive church, that as they condemned the usurer himself, so they made the scribes, who wrote the bonds, and also the witnesses, incapable of any benefit; and that no testament or latter will, written by such should be valid. The house of the usurer was called domus Satanae, the house of the devil; and they ordained that no man should eat or drink with such usurers, nor fetch fire from them; and after they were dead that they should not be buried in Christian burial. The conclusion of this is (Eze 18:13), this sin is matched with theft; and verse Eze 18:11, with adultery; and verse Eze 18:12, with violence; it is the daughter of oppression and sister to idolatry, and he that doth these things shall not dwell in God's holy hill. Albeit, these worldings think themselves more honest than thieves and adulterers, yet the Lord maketh their case all alike.--^John Weemse, 1636.

Verse 5.--"Taketh reward against the innocent."--I am sure this is scala inferni, the right way to hell, to be covetous, to take bribes, and pervert justice. If a judge should ask me the way to hell, I should show him this way: First, let him be a covetous man; let his heart be poisoned with covetousness. Then let him go a little further and take bribes; and, lastly, pervert judgments. Lo, here is the mother, and the daughter, and the daughter's daughter. Avarice is the mother; she brings forth bribe-taking, and bribe-taking perverting of judgment. There lacks a fourth thing to make up the mess, which, so help me God, if I were judge, should be hangum tuum, a Tyburn tippet to take with him; an it were the judge of the King's Bench, my Lord Judge of England, yea, an it were my Lord Chancellor himself, to Tyburn with him.--^Hugh Latimer.

Verse 5.--"Taketh reward against the innocent." I come to corrupt lawyers and advocates, who so often take rewards against the innocent, as they do take upon them the defence of such causes as they in their own conscience are persuaded to be evil and unjust. Which being so common a fault among lawyers, as that very few which plead causes, either in civil or ecclesiastical courts, do seem to make any conscience thereof, to whom all is fish that cometh to their nets; therefore all lawyers are to be exhorted to apply this note unto themselves.--^George Downame.

Verse 5.--"He that doeth." 'Tis not said he that professes this or that, or he that believes thus and thus, or he that is of such or such an opinion or way of worship, or he that sets up new lights, and pretends the Spirit for his immediate guide; 'tis not he that hears much or talks much of religion; no, nor he that preaches and prays much, nor he that thinks much of these things, and means well; but 'tis he that "doeth these things"--that is actually employed about them--that is the religious and truly godly man. 'Tis not, I say, a formal professor, a confidant solifidian, a wild opinionist, a high flown perfectist; it is not a constant hearer, or a mighty talker, or a laborious teacher, or a gifted brother, or a simple well-wisher must pass; but 'tis the honest and sincere doer of these things, that will abide the test and stand the trial; when all other flashy pretences shall, in those searching flames, be burnt and consumed like "hay and stubble," as the apostle expresses it. To wear Christ's livery and to do him no service is but to mock a gracious Master; to own him in our profession and deny him in our practice, is, with Judas, to betray him with a kiss of homage; with the rude soldiers to bow the knee before him, and, in the meantime, to beat his sacred head with his reeden sceptre, and with Pilate to crown him with thorns, to crucify the Lord and write over his head, "King of the Jews:" in a word, to grieve him with our honours, and wound him with our acknowledgments. A Christian profession without a life answerable, will be so far from saving any one, that 'twill highly aggravate his condemnation; when a dissembled friendship at the great day of discoveries shall be looked upon as the worst of enmities. A mere outside formality of worship, is at best but Prometheus' sacrifice, a skeleton of bones and a religious cheat. ... The harmless humour of meaning well is not enough to approve a man's spiritual state, to

acquitt obligations, or to ascertain his expectations. For he that bids us "eschew evil" does immediately subjoin that we must "follow" and "hold fast that which is good." It will be no good account not to have done evil, unless we make it appear that we have been doing good too; since the non-commission of great sins will not excuse our omission of great duties. In the busy commonwealth of bees, the drone without a sting, as she has no weapon for mischief, so, wanting a tool for employ, is deservedly cashiered the hive.--^Condensed from Adam Littleton, D.D., 1627-1694.

Verse 5.--" _He that doeth these things, shall never be moved_." Mark how the prophet saith not, he that readeth these things, or he that heareth these things, but he that doth them, shall never be removed. For were it enough to read or hear these precepts, then should an infinite number of vain and wicked persons enter into, and continue in the church, which notwithstanding have no place therein; for there are very few, or none at all, which have not read, or at least have not heard these things, yet they will not do them. Neither doth he say, he that talketh of these things, but he that doth them; for many now in these days can talk gloriously of uprightness, justice, truth, in whom notwithstanding, there is neither upright dealings, nor sound righteousness, nor unfeigned truth to be found. Many can say that slander is sin, injury is iniquity, to receive false reports is uncharitable, that it becometh not the saints to flatter the wicked, that to break promise and falsify their oaths is unseemly, to give upon usury is oppression, to receive bribes against the innocent is extreme cruelty; yet themselves backbite and hurt their neighbour, they themselves believe every tale that is brought them, they flatter and fawn upon the wicked for advantage, they swear and forswear for commodity, they oppress through usury, and receive gifts of bribery against the innocent; and so in word they speak of these things, but do them not indeed. ... Neither doth David say he that preacheth these, "shall never be removed," for then not only many other wicked persons, which can speak of, yea many ungodly men which can also preach of virtue, should have the place in the Lord's tabernacle, and rest upon his holy hill; but also among others, even Balaam the covetous prophet, should have a sure place in God's tabernacle; for he could say, 'If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more' (Nu 22:18); yet he took rewards; yet he was carried away with covetousness, as much as in him lay, to work the destruction of Israel, the innocent people of the Lord.--^Richard Turnbull.

Verse 5.--" Shall never be moved." Moved he may be for a time, but not removed for ever. His soul is bound up in the bundle of life, near unto the throne of glory; when the souls of the wicked are restless as a stone in the midst of a sling, saith the Targum in 1Sa 25.--^John Trapp.

Verse 5 (last clause).--The holy soul is the love of God, the joy of angels; her eyes dare look upon the glorious Judge whom she knows to be her Saviour. Her heart is courageous; she dares stand the thunder; and when guilty minds creep into corners, she is confident in him that he will defend her. She challengeth the whole world to accuse her of injustice, and fears not the subornation of false witnesses, because she knows the testimony of her own conscience. Her language is free and bold, without the guiltiness of broken stops. Her forehead is clear and smooth, as the brow of heaven. Her knees are ever bent to the throne of grace; her feet travelling towards Jerusalem; her hands weaving the web of righteousness. Good men bless her; good angels guard her; the Son of God doth kiss her; and when all the world shall be turned to a burning pile, she shall be brought safe to the mountain of joy, and set in a throne of blessedness for ever.--^Thomas Adams.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 5.--The evidences and privileges of godly men.

Verse 5 (last clause).--The fixedness and safety of the godly.

Sixteenth Psalm

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

SUBJECT.--We are not left to human interpreters for the key to this golden mystery, for, speaking by the Holy Ghost, Peter tells us, "David speaketh concerning HIM." (Ac 2:25). Further on in his memorable sermon he said, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." (Ac 2:29-31.) Nor is this our only guide, for the apostle Paul, led by the same infallible inspiration, quotes from this Psalm, and testifies that David wrote of the man through whom is preached unto us the forgiveness of sins. (Ac 13:35-8.) It has been the usual plan of commentators to apply the Psalm both to David, to the saints, and to the Lord Jesus, but we will venture to believe that in it "Christ is all;" since in the ninth and tenth verses (9,10), like the apostles on the mount, we can see "no man but Jesus only."

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

EXPOSITION.

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

12:27.) If Jesus looked out of himself for protection, how much more must we, his erring followers, do so!

"_O God_." The word for God here used in ^l_ <0410>, by which name the Lord Jesus, when under a sense of great weakness, as for instance when upon the cross, was wont to address the Mighty God, the Omnipotent Helper of his people. We, too, may turn to ^El_, the Omnipotent One, in all hours of peril, with the confidence that he who heard the strong cryings and tears of our faithful High Priest, is both able and willing to bless us in him. It is well to study the name and character of God, so that in our straits we may know how and by what title to address our Father who is in heaven.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

TITLE.--Such are the riches of this Psalm, that some have been led to think the obscure title, "^Michtam_," has been prefixed to it on account of its ^golden stores_. For ^kethem_ <03800> is used of the "gold of Ophir" (e.g., Ps 45:9), and ^mikt^fm_ <04387> might be a derivative from that root. But as there is a group of five other Psalms (namely, Ps 56; 57; 58; 59; 60), that bear this title, whose subject-matter is various, but which all end in a tone of triumph, it has been suggested that the Septuagint may be nearly right in their ^st^lographi^a_, as if "A Psalm to be hung up or inscribed on a pillar to commemorate victory." It is, however, more likely still that the term "Michtam" (like "Maschil"), is a musical term, whose real meaning and use we have lost, and may recover only when the ransomed house of Israel return home with songs. Meanwhile, the subject-matter of this Psalm itself is very clearly this--the righteous one's satisfaction with his lot.--^Andrew A. Bonar.

Whole Psalm.--Allow that in verse 10 it is clear that our Lord is in this Psalm, yet the application of every verse to Jesus ^in Gethsemane_ appears to be far-fetched, and inaccurate. How verse 9 could suit the agony and bloody sweat, it is hard to conceive, and equally so is it with regard to verse 6. The "cup" of verse 5 is so direct a contrast to that cup concerning which Jesus prayed in anguish of spirit, that it cannot be a reference to it. Yet we think it right to add, that Mr. James Frame has written a very valuable work on this Psalm, entitled, "Christ in Gethsemane," and he has supported his theory by the opinion of many of the ancients. He says, "All the distinguished interpreters of ancient days, such as Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine, explain the Psalm as referring to the Messiah, in his passion and his victory over death and the grave, including his subsequent exaltation to the right hand of God;" and in a foot note he gives the

following quotations: _Jerome_--"The Psalm pertains to Christ, who speaks in it...It is the voice of our King, which he utters in the human nature that he had assumed, but without detracting from his divine nature. ... The Psalm pertains to his passion." _Augustine_--"Our King speaks in this Psalm in the person of the human nature that he assumed, at the time of his passion, the royal title inscribed will show itself conspicuous."--^C. H. S.

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

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

Verse 1.--"_For in thee do I put my trust_" Here the prophet setteth down the cause why he prayeth to God: whereby he declareth, that none can truly call upon God unless they believe. Ro 10:14. "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" In regard whereof, as he prayeth to God to be his Saviour, so he is fully assured that God will be his Saviour. If, then, without faith we cannot truly call upon God, the men of this world rather prate like parrots than pray like Christians, at what time they utter these words; for that they trust not in God they declare both by neglecting the lawful means, and also in using unlawful means. Some we see trust in friends; some shoulder out, as they think, the cross with their goods; some fence themselves with authority; others bathe and baste themselves in pleasure to put the evil day far from them; others make flesh their arm; and others make the wedge of gold their confidence; and these men when they seek for help at the Lord, mean in their hearts to find it in their friends, good authority and pleasure, howsoever for fear, they dare not say this outwardly. Again, here we are to observe under what shelter we may harbour ourselves in the showers of adversity, even under the protection of the Almighty. And why? "Whoso dwelleth in the secret of the Most High, shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty." And here in effect is showed, that whosoever putteth his trust in God shall be preserved; otherwise the prophet's reason here had not been good. Besides, we see he pleadeth not by merit, but sueth by faith, teaching us that if we come with like faith, we may obtain the like deliverance.--^Richard Greenham.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Verse 1.--_The seeking of the gold_. The believer conscious of danger, trusting in God only for deliverance.

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

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

Verse 6.--_The prizing or valuing of the gold_. The believer congratulating himself on the pleasantness of his dwelling and the goodness of his heritage.

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

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

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

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

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

Exposition.

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

"_My goodness extendeth not to thee_." The work of our Lord Jesus was not needful on account of any necessity in the Divine Being. Jehovah would have been inconceivably glorious had the human race perished, and had no atonement been offered. Although the life-work and death-agony of the Son did reflect unparalleled lustre upon every attribute of God, yet the Most Blessed and Infinitely Happy God stood in no need of the obedience and death of his Son; it was for our sakes that the work of redemption was undertaken, and not because of any lack or want on the part of the Most High. How modestly does the Saviour here estimate his own goodness! What overwhelming reasons have we for imitating his humility! "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" (Job 35:7.)

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

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

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

The same loving heart which opens towards the chosen people is fast closed against those who continue in their rebellion against God. Jesus hates all wickedness, and especially the high crime of idolatry. The text while it shows our Lord's abhorrence of sin, shows also the sinner's greediness after it. Professed believers are often slow towards the true Lord, but sinners "_hasten after another god_" They run like madmen where we creep like snails. Let their zeal rebuke our tardiness. Yet theirs is a case in which the more they haste the worse they speed, for _their sorrows are multiplied_ by their diligence in multiplying their sins. Matthew Henry pithily says, "They that multiply gods multiply griefs to themselves; for whosoever thinks one god too little, will find two too many, and yet hundreds not enough." The cruelties and hardships which men endure for their false gods is wonderful to contemplate; our missionary reports are a noteworthy comment on this passage; but perhaps our own experience is an equally vivid

Exposition; for when we have given our heart to idols, sooner or later we have had to smart for it. Near the roots of our self-love all our sorrows lie, and when that idol is overthrown, the sting is gone from grief. Moses broke the golden calf and ground it to powder, and cast it into the water of which he made Israel to drink, and so shall our cherished idols become bitter portions for us, unless we at once forsake them. Our Lord had no selfishness; he served but one Lord, and served him only. As for those who turn aside from Jehovah, he was separate from them, bearing their reproach without the camp. Sin and the Saviour had no communion. He came to destroy, not to patronize or be allied with the works of the devil. Hence he refused the testimony of unclean spirits as to his divinity, for in nothing would he have fellowship with darkness. We should be careful above measure not to connect ourselves in the remotest degree with falsehood in religion; even the most solemn of Popish rites we must abhor. "_Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer_" The old proverb says, "It is not safe to eat at the devil's mess, though the spoon be never so long." The mere mentioning of ill names it were well to avoid,--"_nor take up their names into my lips_" If we allow poison upon the lip, it may ere long penetrate to the inwards, and it is well to keep out of the mouth that which we would shut out from the heart. If the Church would enjoy union with Christ, she must break all the bonds of impiety, and keep herself pure from all the pollutions of carnal will-worship, which now pollute the service of God. Some professors are guilty of great sin in remaining in the communion of Popish churches, where God is as much dishonoured as in Rome herself, only in a more crafty manner.

"_The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup_" With what confidence and bounding joy does Jesus turn to Jehovah, whom his soul possessed and delighted in! Content beyond measure with his portion in the Lord his God, he had not a single desire with which to hunt after other gods; his cup was full, and his heart was full too; even in his sorest sorrows he still laid hold with both his hands upon his Father, crying, "My God, my God;" he had not so much as a thought of falling down to worship the prince of this world, although tempted with an "all these will I give thee." We, too, can make our boast in the Lord; he is the meat and the drink of our souls. He is our portion, supplying all our necessities, and our cup yielding royal luxuries; our cup in this life, and our inheritance in the life to come. As children of the Father who is in heaven, we inherit, by virtue of our joint heirship with Jesus, all the riches of the covenant of grace; and the portion which falls to us sets upon our table the bread of heaven and the new wine of the kingdom. Who would not be satisfied with such dainty diet? Our shallow cup of sorrow we may well drain with resignation, since the deep cup of love stands side by side with it, and will never be empty. "_Thou maintainest my lot_" Some tenants have a covenant in their leases that they themselves shall maintain and uphold, but in our case Jehovah himself maintains our lot. Our Lord Jesus delighted in this truth, that the Father was on his side, and would maintain his right against all the wrongs of men. He knew that his elect would be reserved for him, and that almighty power would preserve them as his lot and reward for ever. Let us also be glad, because the Judge of all the earth will vindicate our righteous cause.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 2.--"_O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord_" I wish I could have heard what you said to yourself when these words were first mentioned. I believe I could guess the language of some of you. When you heard me repeat these words, "_O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord_" you thought, "I have never said anything to the Lord, unless when I cried out, Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Has not something like this passed in your minds? I will try again. When I first mentioned the text, "Let me consider," you secretly said, "I believe that I did once say to the Lord, Thou art my Lord; but it was so long ago, that I had almost forgotten it; but I suppose that it must have been at such a time when I was in trouble. I had met with disappointments in the world; and then,

perhaps, I cried, Thou art my portion, O Lord. Or, perhaps, when I was under serious impressions, in the hurry of my spirits, I might look up to God and say, Thou art my Lord. But, whatever I could or did formerly say, I am certain that I cannot say it at present." Have none of you thought in this manner? I will hazard one conjecture more; and I doubt not but in this case I shall guess rightly. When I repeated these words, "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord;" "So have I," thought one; "So have I," thought another; I have said it often, but I said it with peculiar solemnity and pleasure, when, in an act of humble devotion, I lately threw my ransomed, rescued, grateful soul at his feet, and cried, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds." The very recollection of it is pleasant; and I shall now have an opportunity of renewing my vows, and hope to recover something of the divine serenity and joy which I at that time experienced."--[^]Samuel Lavington's Sermons, 1810.

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

Verse 2.--"My goodness extendeth not to thee." I think the words should be understood of what the Messiah was doing for men. My goodness, not "my bounty" is not to thee. What I am doing call add nothing to thy divinity; thou art not providing this astonishing sacrifice because thou canst derive any excellence from it; but this bounty extends to the saints--to all the spirits of just men made perfect, whose bodies are still in the earth; and to the excellent, the noble or super-eminent ones, those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. The saints and illustrious ones not only taste of my goodness, but enjoy my salvation. Perhaps angels themselves may be intended; they are not uninterested in the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. They desire to look into these things; and the victories of the cross in the conversion of sinners cause joy among the angels of God.--Adam Clarke.

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

Verse 2.--"My goodness extendeth not to thee." Oh, how great is God's goodness to you! He calls upon others for the same things, and conscience stands as Pharaoh's taskmasters, requiring the tale of bricks but not allowing straw; it impels and presseth, but gives no enlargement of heart, and buffets and wounds them for neglect: as the hard creditor that, taking the poor debtor by the throat, saith, "Pay me that thou owest me," but yields him no power to do it; thus God might deal with you also, for he oweth not assistance to us; but we owe obedience to him. Remember, we had power, and it is just to demand what we cannot do, because the weakness that is in us is of ourselves: we have impoverished ourselves. Therefore, when in much mercy he puts forth his hand into the work with thee, be very thankful. If the work be not done, he is no loser; if done, and well done, he is no gainer. Job 22:2; 35:6-8. But the gain is all to thee; all the good that comes by it is to thyself.--[^]Joseph Symonds, 1639.

Verse 2 (last clause).--It is a greater glory to us that we are allowed to serve God, than it is to him that we

offer him that service. He is not rendered happy by us; but we are made happy by him. He can do without such earthly servants; but we cannot do without such a heavenly Master.--^William Secker.

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

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

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

Verse 3.--"_But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight_"--My brethren, look upon saintship as the greatest excellency to love it. So did Christ. His eye was "upon the excellent ones in the earth;" that is, upon the saints, who were excellent to him; yea, also even when not saints, because God loved them. Isa 43:4. It is strange to hear how men by their speeches will undervalue a saint as such, if without some other outward excellency. For whilst they acknowledge a man a saint, yet in other respects, they will contemn him; "He is a holy man," they will say, "but he is weak," etc. But is he a saint? And can there be any such other imperfection or weakness found as shall lay him low in thy thoughts in comparison of other carnal men more excellent? Hath not Christ loved him, bought him, redeemed him?--^Thomas Goodwin.

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

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

Verse 3.--By David's language, there were many singular saints in his day: "_To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight_" Was it so then, and should it not be so now? We know the New Testament outshines the Old as much as the sun outshines the moon. If we then live in a more glorious dispensation, should we not maintain a more glorious conversation? ... "_The excellent_" Were the sun to give no more delight than a star, you could not believe he was the regent of the day; were he to transmit no more heat than a glow-worm, you would question his being the source of

elementary heat. Were God to do no more than a creature, where would his Godhead be? Were a man to do no more than a brute, where would his manhood be? Were not a saint to excel a sinner, where would his sanctity be?--^William Secker.

Verse 3.--Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves, who making a stately feast, appointed his nobles, at that time Pagans, to sit in the hall below, and commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence-chamber, to sit with him at his table, to eat and drink of his kingly cheer, at which many wondering, he said, he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament to his table, and more worthy of his company than the greatest peers unconverted to the Christian faith; for when these might be thrust down to hell, those might be his comforts and fellow princes in heaven. Although you see the stars sometimes by their reflections in a puddle, in the bottom of a well, or in a stinking ditch, yet the stars have their situation in heaven. So, although you see a godly man in a poor, miserable, low, despised condition, for the things of this world, yet he is fixed in heaven, in the region of heaven: "Who hath raised us up," saith the apostle, "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."--^Charles Bradbury's "Cabinet of Jewels," 1785.

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

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

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

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

Verse 5.--"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." If the Lord be thy portion, then thou mayst conclude omnipotency is my portion, immensity, all-sufficiency, etc. Say not, If so, then I should be omnipotent, etc. there is a vast difference betwixt identity and interest, betwixt conveying of a title and transmutation of nature. A friend gives thee an invaluable treasure, and all the securities of it that thou canst desire; wilt thou deny it is thine because thou art not changed into its nature? The attributes are thine, as thy inheritance, as thy lands are thine; not because thou art changed into their nature, but because the title is conveyed to thee, it is given thee, and improved for thy benefit. If another manage it, who can do it with greater advantage to thee than thou to thyself, it is no infringement of thy title ... The Lord is our portion, and this is incomparably more than if we had heaven and earth; for all the earth is but

as a point compared with the vastness of the heavens, and the heavens themselves are but a point compared with God. What a large possession have we then! There is no confiscation of it, no banishment from it. Our portion fills heaven and earth, and is infinitely above heaven and below earth, and beyond both. Poor men boast and pride themselves of a kingdom, but we have more than all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof. Christ has given us more than the devil could offer him.--^David Clarkson.

Verse 5.--"_Portion of mine inheritance and of my cup_" may contain an allusion to the daily supply of food, and also to the inheritance of Levi. De 18:1,2.--^"Critical and Explanatory Pocket Bible." By A. R. Fausset and B. M. Smith, 1867.

Verses 5,6.--"_The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage_" "Blessed are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord." No greater mercy can be bestowed upon any people, family, or person, than this, for God to dwell among them. If we value this mercy according to the excellency and worth of that which is bestowed, it is the greatest; if we value it according to the good will of him that gives it, it will appear likewise to be the greatest favour. The greatness of the good will of God in giving himself to be our acquaintance, is evident in the nature of the gift. A man may give his estate to them to whom his love is not very large, but he never gives himself but upon strong affection. God gives abundantly to all the works of his hands; he causeth the sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and the rain to descend upon the just and the unjust; but it cannot be conceived that he should give himself to be a portion, a friend, father, husband, but in abundance of love. Whosoever therefore shall refuse acquaintance with God, slighteth the greatest favour that ever God did bestow upon man. Now, consider what a high charge this is; to abuse such a kindness from God is an act of the greatest vileness. David was never so provoked as when the king of Ammon abused his kindness, in his ambassadors, after his father's death. And God is highly provoked when his greatest mercies, bestowed in the greatest love, are rejected and cast away. What could God give more and better than himself? ... Ask David what he thinks of God; he was well acquainted with him, he dwelt in his house, and by his good will would never be out of his more immediate presence and company: enquire, I pray, what he found amiss in him. That you may know his mind the better, he hath left it upon record in more than one or two places, what a friend he hath had of God. "_The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage_" Why, what is that you boast of so much, O David? Have not others had kingdoms as well as you? No, that's not the thing; a crown is one of the least jewels in my cabinet: "_The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup_"--^James Janeway.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 2.--"_Thou art my Lord_" The soul's appropriation, allegiance, assurance and avowal.

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

Verses 2,3.--Evidence of true faith. I. Allegiance to divine authority. II. Rejection of self-righteousness. III. Doing good to the saints. IV. Appreciation of saintly excellence. V. delight in their society.

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

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

Verse 3.--Collection sermon for poor believers. I. Saints. II. Saints on the earth. III. These are excellent. IV. We must delight in them. V. We must extend our goodness to them.--^Matthew Henry.

Verse 4.--Sorrows of idolatry illustrated in heathens and ourselves.

Second clause.--The duty of complete separation from sinners in life and lip.

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

Last clause.--What our "lot" is. What danger it is in. Who defends it.

Exposition.

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

"_I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel_" Praise as well as prayer was presented to the Father by our Lord Jesus, and we are not truly his followers unless our resolve be, "I will bless the Lord." Jesus is called Wonderful, Counsellor, but as man he spake not of himself, but as his Father had taught him. Read in confirmation of this, Joh 7:16; 8:28; 12:49,50; and the prophecy concerning him in Isa 11:2,3. It was our Redeemer's wont to repair to his Father for direction, and having received it, he blessed him for giving him counsel. It would be well for us if we would follow his example of lowliness, cease from trusting in our own understanding, and seek to be guided by the Spirit of God. "_My reins also instruct me in the night seasons_" By the reins understand the inner man, the affections and feelings. The communion of the soul with God brings to it an inner spiritual wisdom which in still seasons is revealed to itself. Our Redeemer spent many nights alone upon the mountain, and we may readily conceive that together with his fellowship with heaven, he carried on a profitable commerce with himself; reviewing his experience, forecasting his work, and considering his position. Great generals fight their battles in their own mind long before the trumpet sounds, and so did our Lord win our battle on his knees before he gained it on the cross. It is a gracious habit after taking counsel from above to take counsel within. Wise men see more with their eyes shut by night than fools can see by day with their eyes open. He who learns from God and so gets the seed, will soon find wisdom within himself growing in the garden of his soul; "Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left." The night season which the sinner chooses for his sins is the hallowed hour of quiet when believers hear the soft still voices of heaven, and of the heavenly life within themselves.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

^Timothy Cruso.

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

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

Verse 7.--" _My reins_." Common experience shows that the workings of the mind, particularly the passions of joy, grief, and fear, have a very remarkable effect on the reins or kidneys, and from their retired situation in the body, and their being hid in fat, they are often used in Scripture to denote the most secret working of the soul and affections.--^{John Parkhurst.}

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6.--" _Pleasant places_." Bethlehem, Calvary, Olivet, Tabor, Zion, Paradise, etc. II. _Pleasant purposes_ , which made these lines fall to me. III. _Pleasant praises_ . By service, sacrifice, and song.

Verse 6 (second clause).--I. A heritage. II. A goodly heritage. III. I have it. IV. Yea, or the Spirit's witness.

Verse 6.--" _A goodly heritage_ ." That which makes our portion good is--I. The favour of God with it. II. That it is from a Father's hand. III. That it comes through the covenant of grace. IV. That it is the purchase of Christ's blood. V. That it is an answer to prayer, and a blessing from above upon honest endeavours.

Verse 6.--We may put this acknowledgment into the mouth of--I. _An indulged child of providence_ . II. _An inhabitant of this favoured country_ . III. _A Christian with regard to his spiritual condition_ .--^{William Jay.}

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

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

Exposition.

The fear of death at one time cast its dark shadow over the soul of the Redeemer, and we read that "he was heard in that he feared." There appeared unto him an angel, strengthening him; perhaps the heavenly messenger reassured him of his glorious resurrection as his people's surety, and of the eternal joy into which he should admit the flock redeemed by blood. Then hope shone full upon our Lord's soul, and, as recorded in these verses, he surveyed the future with holy confidence because he had a

continued eye to Jehovah, and enjoyed his perpetual presence. He felt that thus sustained, he could never be driven from his life's grand design; nor was he, for he stayed not his hand till he could say, "It is finished." What an infinite mercy was this for us! In this immoveableness, caused by simple faith in the divine help, Jesus is to be viewed as our exemplar; to recognize the presence of the Lord is the duty of every believer; "_I have set the Lord always before me_" and to trust the Lord as our champion and guard is the privilege of every saint; "_because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved_" The apostle translates this passage, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face;" Ac 2:25; the eye of Jesus' faith could discern beforehand the continuance of divine support to his suffering Son, in such a degree that he should never be moved from the accomplishment of his purpose of redeeming his people. By the power of God at his right hand he foresaw that he should smite through all who rose up against him, and on that power he placed the firmest reliance. He clearly foresaw that he must die, for he speaks of his flesh resting, and of his soul in the abode of separate spirits; death was full before his face, or he would not have mentioned corruption; but such was his devout reliance upon his God, that he sang over the tomb, and rejoiced in vision of the sepulchre. He knew that the visit of his soul to Sheol, or the invisible world of disembodied spirits, would be a very short one, and that his body in a very brief space would leave the grave, uninjured by its sojourn there; all this made him say, "_my heart is glad_" and moved his tongue, the _glory_ of his frame, to _rejoice_ in God, the strength of his salvation. Oh for such holy faith in the prospect of trial and of death! It is the work of faith, not merely to create a peace which passeth all understanding, but to fill the heart full of gladness until the tongue, which, as the organ of an intelligent creature, is our glory, bursts forth in notes of harmonious praise. Faith gives us living joy, and bestows dying rest. "_My flesh also shall rest in hope_"

Our Lord Jesus was not disappointed in his hope. He declared his Father's faithfulness in the words, "_thou wilt not leave my soul in hell_" and that faithfulness was proven on the resurrection morning. Among the departed and disembodied Jesus was not left; he had believed in the resurrection, and he received it on the third day, when his body rose in glorious life, according as he had said in joyous confidence, "_neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption_" Into the outer prison of the grave his body might go, but into the inner prison of corruption he could not enter. He who in soul and body was pre-eminently God's "Holy One," was loosed from the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. This is noble encouragement to all the saints; die they must, but rise they shall, and though in their case they shall see corruption, yet they shall rise to everlasting life. Christ's resurrection is the cause, the earnest, the guarantee, and the emblem of the rising of all his people. Let them, therefore, go to their graves as to their beds, resting their flesh among the clods as they now do upon their couches.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 8.--"_I have set the Lord always before me_" Hebrew, I have _equally set_, or proposed. The apostle translateth it, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face." Ac 2:25. I set the eye of my faith full upon him, and suffer it not to take to other things; I look him in the face, _oculo irretorto_, as the eagle looketh upon the sun; and _oculo adamantino_, with an eye of adamant, which turns only to one point: so here I have equally set the Lord before me, without irregular affections and passions. And this was one of those lessons that his _reins_ had taught_ him, that the Holy Spirit had dictated unto him.--^John Trapp.

Verse 8.--" I have set the Lord ALWAYS before me_." Like as the gnomon doth ever behold the north star, whether it be closed and shut up in a coffer of gold, silver, or wood, never losing its nature; so a faithful Christian man, whether he abound in wealth or be pinched with poverty, whether he be of high or low degree in this world, ought continually to have his faith and hope surely built and grounded upon Christ, and to have his heart and mind fast fixed and settled in him, and to follow him through thick and thin, through fire and water, through wars and peace, through hunger and cold, through friends and foes, through a thousand perils and dangers, through the surges and waves of envy, malice, hatred, evil speeches, railing sentences, contempt of the world, flesh, and devil, and even in death itself, be it never so bitter, cruel, and tyrannical, yet never to lose sight and view of Christ, never to give over faith, hope, and trust in him.--^Robert Cawdray.

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

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

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

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

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

^Robert Cawdray.

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

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

Verse 9.--" _Therefore my heart is glad_," etc. That is, I am all over in very good plight, as well as heart can wish, or require; I do over-abound exceedingly with joy; "God forgive me mine unthankfulness and unworthiness of so great glory" (as that martyr said): "In all the days of my life I was never so merry as now I am in this dark dungeon," etc. Wicked men rejoice in appearance, and not in heart (2Co 5:12); their joy is but skin deep, their mirth frothy and flashy, such as wetteth the mouth, but warmeth not the heart. But David is _totus totus, quantus quantus exultabundus_ ; his _heart, glory, flesh_ , (answerable, as some think to that of the apostle, 1Th 5:23; _spirit, soul, and body_) were all overjoyed.--^John Trapp.

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

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

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

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

"Foure clerkes of Oxford, doctors two, and two That would be doctors."

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

"They which tell That Christ hath nere descended into hell, But to the grave."

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

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

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

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

Verse 10.--The great promise to Christ is, that though he took a corruptible body upon him, yet he should "_not see corruption_," that is, _partake of corruption_, corruption should have no communion with, much less power over him.--^Joseph Caryl.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 8.--Set the Lord always before you as--I. Your _protector_. II. Your _leader_. III. Your _example_. IV. Your _observer_.--^William Jay.

Verses 8,9.--A sense of the divine presence our best support. It yields. I. Good confidence concerning things without. "_I shall not be moved_." II. Good cheer within. "_My heart is glad_." III. Good music for the living tongue. "_My glory rejoiceth_." IV. Good hope for the dying body. "_My flesh also_," etc.

Verse 9 (last clause).--I. The saint's Sabbath (_rest_). II. His sarcophagus (_in hope_). III. His salvation (for which he _hopes_).

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

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

Verses 10,11.--Because he lives we shall live also. The believer, therefore, can also say, "Thou wilt show _me_ the path of life." This life means the blessedness reserved in heaven for the people of God after the resurrection. It has three characters. The first regards its _source_--it flows from "_his presence_." The second regards its plenitude--it is "_fulness_" of joy. The third regards its _permanency_-- the pleasures are "_for evermore_."--^William Jay.

Exposition.

"_Thou wilt shew me the path of life_." To Jesus first this way was shown, for he is the first-begotten from the dead, the first-born of every creature. He himself opened up the way through his own flesh, and then trod it as the forerunner of his own redeemed. The thought of being made the path of life to his people, gladdened the soul of Jesus. "_In thy presence is fulness of joy_." Christ being raised from the dead

ascended into glory, to dwell in constant nearness to God, where joy is at its full for ever: the foresight of this urged him onward in his glorious but grievous toil. To bring his chosen to eternal happiness was the high ambition which inspired him, and made him wade through a sea of blood. O God, when the worldling's mirth has all expired, for ever with Jesus may we dwell "_at thy right hand_," where "_there are pleasures for evermore_;" and meanwhile, may we have an earnest by tasting thy love below. Trapp's note on the heavenly verse which closes the Psalm is a sweet morsel, which may serve for a contemplation, and yield a foretaste of our inheritance. He writes, "Here is as much said as can be, but words are too weak to utter it. For _quality_ there is in heaven joy and pleasures; for _quantity_, a fulness, a torrent whereat they drink without let or loathing; for _constancy_, it is at God's right hand, who is stronger than all, neither can any take us out of his hand; it is a constant happiness without intermission: and for _perpetuity_ it is for evermore. Heaven's joys are without measure, mixture, or end."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 11.--In this verse are four things observable:--1. _A Guide_, THOU. 2. _A Traveller_, ME. 3. _A Way_, THE PATH. 4. _The End_, LIFE, described after. For that which follows is but the description of this life.

This verse is a proper subject for a _meditation_. For, all three are solitary. _The guide_ is but one; the _traveller_, one; the _way_, one; and the _life_, the only one. To meditate well on this is to bring all together; and at last make them all but _one_. Which that we may do, let us first seek our _Guide_.

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

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

"_Me_." David still keeps the singular number. As there is but _one_ guide, so he speaks in the person but of _one traveller_. There is somewhat, peradventure, in that. It is to show his _confidence_. The Lord's prayer is in the plural, but the creed in the singular. We may pray that God would guide _all_ ; but we can be confident for none but ourselves. "_Thou wilt show_," or thou dost, or hast, as some translate: all is but to show particular confidence. "_Thou wilt show me_;" _me_, not _us_, a number indefinite

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

"The path." But let us now see what he will show us: "the path." We must know, that as men have many paths out of their highway--the world--but they all end in destruction; so God hath many paths out of his highway, the word, but they all end in salvation. Let us oppose ours to his (as indeed they are opposite), and see how they agree. Ours are not worth marking, his marked with an attendite, to begin withal; ours bloody, his unpolluted; ours crooked, his straight; ours lead to hell, his to heaven. Have not we strayed then? We had need to turn and take another path, and that quickly: we may well say, semitas nostras, a via tua. Well, here is the Book, and here are the ways before you; and he will show you. Here is semita mandatorum, in the Psalm Ps 119:35; here is semita pacifica (Pr 3:17); here is semita aequitatis (Pr 4:11); here is semita justitiae (Ps 23:3); here is semita judicii (Pr 17:23); and many others. These are, every one of them, God's ways; but these are somewhat too many and too far off: we must seek the way where all these meet, and that will bring us into "the path;" these are many, but I will show you yet "a more excellent way," saith Paul. 1Co 12:31.

We must begin to enter at via mandatorum; for till then we are in the dark and can distinguish no ways, whether they be good or bad. But there we shall meet with a lantern and a light in it. Thy commandment is a lantern, and the law a light. Pr 6:23. Carry this with thee (as a good man should, lex Dei in corde ejus); and it will bring thee into the way. And see how careful our Guide is; for lest the wind should blow out this light, he hath put it into a lantern to preserve it. For the fear, or sanction, of the "commandments," preserves the memory of the law in our hearts, as a lantern doth a light burning within it. The law is the light, and the commandment the lantern. So that neither flattering Zephyrus, nor blustering Boreas shall be able to blow it out, so long as the fear of the sanction keeps it in. This is lucerna pedibus (Ps 119:105); and will not only show thee where thou shalt tread, but what pace thou shalt keep. When thou hast this light, take Jeremy's counsel; enquire for semita antiqua, before thou goest any further. "Stand (saith he) in the ways and behold and ask for the old way; which is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." This will bring you some whither where you may rest awhile. And whither is that? Trace this path, and you shall find this "old way" to run quite through all the Old Testament till it end in the New, the gospel of peace, and there is rest. And that this is so Paul affirms. For the law, which is the "old way," is but the pedagogue to the gospel. This then is "a more excellent way" than the law, the ceremonies whereof in respect of this were called "beggarly rudiments." When we come there, we shall find the way pleasant and very light, so that we shall plainly see before us that very path, that only path, "the path of life" (semita vitae), in which the gospel ends, as the law ends in the gospel. Now what is semita vitae that we seek for? "All the ways of God are truth," saith David. Ps 119:151. He doth not say they are verae, or veritates, but veritas; all one truth. So, all the ways of God end in one truth. Semita vitae, then, is truth. And so sure a way to life is truth, that John says, he had "no greater joy" than to hear that his sons "walked in truth." 3Jo 1:3. "No greater joy:" for it brings them certainly to a joy, than which there is none greater. Via

veritatis_ is "the gospel of truth." but _semita vitae_ is the truth itself. Of these; Esay prophesied, _et erit ibi semita et via_, etc. "There shall be a path, and a way;" and the way shall be called _holy_, the proper epithet of the gospel: "_the holy gospel_" that is _the way_. But the _path_ is the epitome of this _way_ (called in our text, by way of excellence, "_the path_" in the singular); than which there is no other. "The gospel of your salvation," saith Paul, is "the word of truth;" and "thy word is truth," saith our Saviour to his Father. _Truth_, then, is "_the path of life_" for it is the epitome of the gospel, which is the _way_. This is that truth which Pilate (unhappy man) asked after, but never stayed to be resolved of. He himself is the word; the word is the truth; and the truth is "_the path of life_" trodden by all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and confessors, that ever went to heaven before us. The abstract of the gospel, the gate of heaven, _semita vitae_, "_the path of life_" even Jesus Christ the righteous, who hath beaten the way for us, gone himself before us, and left us the prints of his footsteps for us to follow, where he himself sits ready to receive us. So, the law is the light, the gospel is the way, and Christ is "_the path of life_"-- ^William Austin, 1637.

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

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

The saints, entered as it were into the chamber of God's presence, shall have joy to their ears in hearing their own commendating and praise, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Mt 25:21); and in hearing the divine language of heavenly Canaan; for our bodies shall be _vera et viva_, perfect like Christ's glorious body, who did both hear other and speak himself after his resurrection, as it is apparent in the gospels' history. Now, then, if the words of the wise spoken in due places be like "apples of gold with pictures of silver" (Pr 25:11), if the mellifluous speech of Origen, the silver trumpet of Hillary, the golden mouth of Chrysostom, bewitched as it were their auditory with exceeding great delight; if the gracious eloquence of heathen orators, whose tongues were never touched with a coal from God's altar, could steal away the hearts of their hearers, and carry them up and down whither they would, what a "_fulness of joy_" will it be to hear not only the sanctified, but also the glorified tongues of saints and angels in the kingdom of glory? ... Bonaventure fondly reports at all adventure, that St. Francis hearing an angel a little while playing on a harp, was so moved with extraordinary delight, that he thought himself in another world. Oh! what a "_fulness of joy_" will it be to hear more than twelve legions of angels, accompanied with a number of happy saints which no man is able to number, all at once sing together, "Hallelujah, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." "And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying,

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Re 4:8; 5:13. If the voices of mortal men, and the sound of cornet, trumpet, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and other well-tuned instruments of music, passing through our dull ears in this world be so powerful, that all our affections are diversely transported according to the divers kinds of harmony, then how shall we be ravished in God's presence when we shall hear heavenly airs with heavenly ears!

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

Verse 11.--"_In thy presence is fulness of joy_" The saints on earth are all but _viatores_, wayfaring men, wandering pilgrims far from home; but the saints in heaven are _comprehensores_, safely arrived at the end of their journey. All we here present for the present, are but mere strangers in the midst of danger, we are losing ourselves and losing our lives in the land of the dying. But ere long, we may find our lives and ourselves again in heaven with the Lord of life, being found of him in the land of the living. If when we die, we be in the Lord of life, our souls are sure to be bound up in the bundle of life, that so when we live again we may be sure to find them in the life of the Lord. Now we have but a dram, but a scruple, but a grain of happiness, to an ounce, to a pound, to a thousand weight of heaviness; now we have but a drop of joy to an ocean of sorrow; but a moment of ease to an age of pain; but then (as St. Austin very sweetly in his _Soliloquies_), we shall have endless ease without any pain, true happiness without any heaviness, the greatest measure of felicity without the least of misery, the fullest measure of joy that may be, without any mixture of grief. Here therefore (as St. Gregory the divine adviseth us), let us ease our heaviest loads of sufferings, and sweeten our bitterest cups of sorrows with the continual meditation and constant expectation of _the fulness of joy in the presence of God, and of the pleasure at his right hand for evermore_.

"_In thy presence, IS_" etc., _there it is_, not _there it was_, nor there it may be, nor there it will be, but _there it is_, there it _is_ without cessation or intercision, there it always hath been, and is, and must be. It is an assertion _aeternae veritatis_, that is always true, it may at any time be said that there it is. "In thy presence _is_ the fulness of joy;" and herein consists the consummation of felicity; for what does any man here present wish for more than joy? And what measure of joy can any man wish for more than fulness of joy? and what kind of fulness would any man wish for rather than this fulness, the fulness _kat' e'xoch'n_? And where would any man wish to enjoy this fulness of joy rather than in the presence of God, which is the ever-flowing and the over-flowing fountain of joy? And when would any man wish for this enjoyment of the fulness of joy in the very fountain of joy rather than presently, constantly, and incessantly? Now all these desirables are encircled within the compass of the first remarkable, to make up the consummation of true felicity. "_In thy presence is fulness of joy_"--^"The Consummation of Felicity," by Edward Willan, 1645.

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

Verse 11.--"_In thy presence is FULNESS of joy_" In heaven they are free from want; they can want nothing there unless it be want itself. They may find the want of evil, but never find the evil of want. Evil is

but the want of good, and the want of evil is but the absence of want. God is good, and no want of good can be in God. What want then can be endured in the presence of God, where no evil is, but all good that the fulness of joy may be enjoyed? Here some men eat their meat without any hunger, whilst others hunger without any meat to eat, and some men drink extremely without any thirst, whilst others thirst extremely without any drink. But in the glorious presence of God, not any one can be pampered with too much, nor any one be pined with too little. They that gather much of the heavenly manna, "have nothing over;" and "they that gather little have no lack." They that are once possessed of that presence of God, are so possessed with it that they can never feel the misery of thirst or hunger.--^Edward Willan.

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

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

Verse 11.--"_In thy presence is fulness of joy_" In this life our joy is mixed with sorrow like a prick under the rose. Jacob had joy when his sons returned home from Egypt with the sacks full of corn, but much sorrow when he perceived the silver in the sack's mouth. David had much joy in bringing up the ark of God, but at the same time great sorrow for the breach made upon Uzza. This is the Lord's great wisdom to temper and moderate our joy. As men of a weak constitution must have their wine qualified with water for fear of distemper, so must we in this life (such is our weakness), have our joy mixed with sorrow, lest we turn giddy and insolent. Here our joy is mixed with fear (Ps 2), "Rejoice with trembling;" the women departed from the sepulchre of our Lord "with fear and great joy." Mt 28:8. In our regenerate estate, though we have joy from Christ that is "formed in us," yet the impression of the terrors of God before the time of our new birth remains in us; as in a commotion of the sea by a great tempest after a stormy wind hath ceased, yet the impression of the storm remains and makes an agitation. The tender mother recovering her young child from danger of a fall hath joy from the recovery; but with much fear with the impression of the danger: so after we are recovered here from our dangerous falls by the rich and tender mercies of our God, sometime preventing us, sometime restoring us, though we rejoice in his mercy, and in our own recovery out of the snares of Satan, yet in the midst of our joy the remembrance of former guiltiness and danger do humble our hearts with much sorrow, and some trepidation of heart. As our joy here is mixed with fears, so with sorrow also. Sound believers do look up to Christ crucified, and do rejoice in his incomparable love, that such a person should have died such a death for such as were enemies to God by sinful inclinations and wicked works; they look down also upon their own sins that have wounded and crucified the Lord of glory, and this breaketh the heart, as a widow should mourn, who by her froward and lewd behaviour hath burst the heart of a kind and loving husband.

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

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

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 11.--A sweet picture of heaven. (See Exposition.)

Seventeenth Psalm

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

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

EXPOSITION.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

TITLE.--"_A prayer of David_." Since many of the Psalms consist of _prayers_, the question may be asked why such an inscription more especially belongs to this. But though the others contain divers

prayers mixed with other matters, this is a supplication through its whole course.--_The Venerable Bede_, 672-735.

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

Verse 1.--"_That goeth not out of feigned lips_"--There are such things as "_feigned lips_;" a contradiction between the heart and the tongue, a clamour in the voice and scoffing in the soul, a crying to God, "Thou art my father, the guide of my youth;" and yet speaking and doing evil to the utmost of our power (Jer 3:4,5), as if God could be imposed upon by fawning pretences, and, like old Isaac, take Jacob for Esau, and be cozened by the smell of his garments; as if he could not discern the dark heart under an angel's garb. ... This is an unworthy conceit of God, to fancy that we can satisfy for inward sins, and avert approaching judgments by external offerings, by a loud voice, with a false heart, as if God (like children), would be pleased with the glittering of an empty shell, or the rattling of stones, the chinking of money, a mere voice, and crying without inward frames and intentions of service.--^Stephen Charnock.

Verse 1.--"_Not out of feigned lips_" It is observable, that the eagle soareth on high, little intending to fly to heaven, but to gain her prey; and so it is that many do carry a great deal of seeming devotion in lifting up their eyes towards heaven; but they do it only to accomplish with more ease, safety, and applause their wicked and damnable designs here on earth; such as without are Catos, within Neros; hear them, no man better; search and try them, no man worse; they have Jacob's voice, but Esau's hands; they profess like saints, but practise little Satans; they have their long prayers, but short prayings; they are like apothecaries' gallipots--having without the title of some excellent preservative, but within they are full of deadly poison; counterfeit holiness is their cloak for all manner of villanies, and the midwife to bring forth all their devilish designs.--^Peter Bales, in Spencer's "Things New and Old."

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

Verse 1.--Though thy prayers be never so well framed in regard of words, and reverently performed as to thy external gestures; yet all is nothing, _if thy heart be not in the duty_. For prayer is not a work of the head, or hand, or eyes only, but chiefly a work of the heart, and therefore called in Scripture, the "pouring out of the soul" (1Sa 1:15); and the "pouring out of the heart." Ps 67:8. And, indeed, the very soul of prayer lieth in the pouring out of the soul before the Lord. Whensoever, therefore, thou drawest near unto God in prayer, let it be with thine heart and soul, otherwise thou canst have no assurance of audience, and acceptance; for as Cyprian speaketh, _Quomodo te audiri a Deo postulas_, etc. How canst thou expect the Lord should hear thee, when thou hearest not thyself? or that he should regard thy prayers, when thou regardest not what thou prayest? Certainly that prayer reacheth not the heart of God, which reacheth not our own.--^Thomas Gouge, 1605-1681.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

mouth at our feet, but might joyfully prove the truth of our hymn writer's holy boast--

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 2.--David appeals unto God to judge the righteousness of his heart towards Saul--"_Let my sentence come forth from thy presence_" From Saul and his courtiers there comes a hard sentence; they call me traitor, they call me rebel; but, Lord, leave me not unto their sentence, "_Let my sentence come from thy presence_" that I know will be another sentence than what cometh from them, for thou hast proved me, and tried me, and findest nothing in me.--^Jeremiah Burroughs.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 2.--"_Let my sentence come forth from thy presence_" I. When it will come. II. Who dare meet it _now_. III. How to be among them.

Exposition.

"_Thou hast proved mine heart_" Like Peter, David uses the argument, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." It is a most assuring thing to be able to appeal at once to the Lord, and call upon our Judge to be a witness for our defence. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." "_Thou hast visited me in the night_" As if he had said, "_Lord, thou hast entered my house at all hours; and thou hast seen me when no one else was nigh; thou hast come upon me unawares and marked my unrestrained actions, and thou knowest whether or no I am guilty of the crimes laid at my door." Happy man who can thus remember the omniscient eye, and the omnipresent visitor, and find comfort in the remembrance. We hope we have had our midnight visits from our Lord, and truly they are sweet; so sweet that the recollection of them sets us longing for more of such condescending communings. Lord, if, indeed, we had been hypocrites, should we have had such fellowship, or feel such hungerings after a renewal of it? "_Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing_" Surely the Psalmist means nothing hypocritical or wicked in the sense in which his slanderers accused him; for if the Lord should put the best of his people into the crucible, the dross would be a fearful sight, and would make penitence open her sluices wide. Assayers very soon detect the presence of alloy, and when the chief of all assayers shall, at the last, say of us that he has found nothing, it will be a glorious hour indeed--"They are without fault before the throne of God." Even here, as viewed in our covenant Head, the Lord sees no sin in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel; even the all-detecting glance of Omniscience can see no flaw where the great Substitute covers all with beauty and perfection. "_I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress_" Oh those sad lips of ours! we had need purpose to purpose if we would keep them from exceeding their bounds. The number of diseases of the tongue is as many as the diseases of all the rest of the man put together, and they are more inveterate. Hands and feet one may bind, but who can fetter the lips? iron bands may hold a madman, but what chains can restrain the tongue? It needs more than a purpose to keep this nimble offender within its proper range. Lion-taming and serpent-charming are not to be mentioned in the same day as tongue-taming, for the tongue can no man tame. Those who have to smart from the falsehoods of others should be the more jealous over themselves; perhaps this led the Psalmist to register this holy resolution; and, moreover, he intended thereby to aver that if he had said too much in his own defence, it was not intentional, for he desired in all respects to tune his lips to the sweet and simple music of truth. Notwithstanding all this David was slandered, as if to show us that the purest innocence will be be mired by malice. There is no sunshine without a shadow, no ripe fruit unpecked by the birds.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 3.--" _Thou hast proved mine heart:"--

What! take it at adventure, and not try What metal it is made of? No, not I. Should I now lightly let it pass, Take sullen lead for silver, sounding brass, Instead of solid gold, alas! What would become of it in the great day Of making jewels, 'twould be cast away.

The heart thou giv'st me must be such a one, As is the same throughout. I will have none But that which will abide the fire. Tis not a glitt'ring outside I desire, Whose seeming shows do soon expire: But real worth within, which neither dross, Nor base alloys, make subject unto loss.

If, in the composition of thine heart, A stubborn, steely wilfulness have part, That will not bow and bend to me, Save only in a mere formality Of tinsel-trimm'd hypocrisy, I care not for it, though it show as fair As the first blush of the sun-gilded air.

The heart that in my furnace will not melt, When it the glowing heat thereof hath felt, Turn liquid, and dissolve in tears Of true repentance for its faults, that hears My threat'ning voice, and never fears, Is not an heart worth having. If it be An heart of stone, 'tis not an heart for me.

The heart, that, cast into my furnace, spits And sparkles in my face, falls into fits Of discontented grudging, whines When it is broken of its will, repines At the least suffering, declines My fatherly correction, is an heart On which I care not to bestow mine art.

* * * * *

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

^Francis Quarles.

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

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

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

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

Verses 3,4,5.--Where there is true grace, there is hatred of all sin, for hatred is pro's to' ge'nos. Can a man be resolved to commit what he hates? No, for his inward aversion would secure him more against it than all outward obstacles. As this inward purpose of a good man is against all sin, so more particularly against that which doth so easily beset him. David seems in several places to be naturally inclined to lying, but he takes up a particular resolution against it: (verse 3), "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress;" _zf mam_ <02161> --I have contrived to waylay and intercept the sin of lying when it hath

an occasion to approach me. A good man hath not only purposes, but he endeavours to fasten and strengthen those purposes by prayer; so David (verse 5), "_Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not_" He strengthens himself by stirring up a liveliness in duty, and by avoiding occasions of sin; (verse 4), "_I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer_" whereas, a wicked man neither steps out of the way of temptation, nor steps up to God for strength against it.--^Stephen Charnock.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 3.--"_Thou hast proved mine heart_" The metal, the furnace, the refiner, etc.

Verse 3.--"_Thou hast visited me in the night_" I. Glorious visitor. II. Favoured individual. III. Peculiar season. IV. Refreshing remembrance. V. Practical result.

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

Exposition.

"_Concerning the works of men_" While we are in the midst of men we shall have their works thrust under our notice, and we shall be compelled to keep a corner in our diary headed "concerning the works of men." To be quite clear from the dead works of carnal humanity is the devout desire of souls who are quickened by the Holy Spirit. "_By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer_" He had kept the highway of Scripture, and not chosen the bye-paths of malice. We should soon imitate the example of the worst of men if the grace of God did not use the Word of God as the great preservative from evil. The paths of the destroyer have often tempted us; we have been prompted to become destroyers too, when we have been sorely provoked, and resentment has grown warm; but we have remembered the example of our Lord, who would not call fire from heaven upon his enemies, but meekly prayed, "Father, forgive them." All the ways of sin are the paths of Satan,--the Apollyon or Abaddon, both of which words signify the destroyer. Foolish indeed are those who give their hearts to the old murderer, because for the time he panders to their evil desires. That heavenly Book which lies neglected on many a shelf is the only guide for those who would avoid the enticing and entangling mazes of sin; and it is the best means of preserving the youthful pilgrim from ever treading those dangerous ways. We must follow the one or the other; the Book of Life, or the way of death; the word of the Holy Spirit, or the suggestion of the Evil Spirit. David could urge as the proof of his sincerity that he had no part or lot with the ungodly in their ruinous ways. How can we venture to plead our cause with God, unless we also can wash our hands clean of all connection with the enemies of the Great King?

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 4.--"_By the word of thy lips_" etc. It is a great relief against temptations to have the word ready. The word is called, "The sword of the Spirit," Eph 6:17. In spiritual conflicts there is none like to that. Those that ride abroad in time of danger, will not be without a sword. We are in danger, and had need handle the sword of the Spirit. The more ready the Scripture is with us, the greater advantage in our

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 4.--The highway and the by-paths. _The world and sin_. "The paths of the destroyer"--a significant name for transgression.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

Verse 5.--In fierce assaults and strong temptations, when Satan layeth siege to the soul, shooting his fiery darts, and using stratagems of policy, joining his endeavours with our corruptions, as wind with tide, then we have cause to pray as David, "_Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not_" The apostle also found he had need of help from heaven when he was assaulted, and therefore he prayed "_thrice_" that the thing that he feared might depart from him. 2Co 12. Christ hath taught us to pray daily, "Lead us not into temptation," for it is dangerous; and then temptations are most dangerous, when, 1.

Most suitable --when Satan joins with our disposition or constitution; 2. _Continual_ ; 3. When _opportunity_ and power is greatest.--^Joseph Symonds.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 5.--" _Hold up_ ." I. Who? God. II. What? " _My goings_ ." III. When? Present tense. IV. Where? " _In thy paths_ ." V. Why? " _That my footsteps slip not_ ."

Verse 5.--Let me observe David and learn to pray as he prayed, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." I. See his _course_ . He speaks of his "goings." Religion does not allow a man to sit still. He speaks of his goings "in God's paths." These are threefold. (1). The path of his _commands_ . (2). The path of his _ordinances_ . (3). The path of his _dispensations_ . II. His _concern_ respecting this course. It is the language of--(1) _conviction_ ; (2) of _apprehension_ ; (3) of _weakness_ ; (4) of _confidence_ .--^William Jay.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Verse 6.--" _I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me_ ." I have cried, says the Psalmist, because thou hast heard me. One would think he should have said contrariwise: thou hast heard me because I have cried; yet, he says, I have cried because thou hast heard me; to show that crying doth not always go before hearing with God, as it doth with us; but that God will not only hear our cry, but also hear us before we cry, and will help us.--^T. Playfere.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 6.--_Two words_ , both great, though little, "call" and "hear." _Two persons_ , one little and the other great, "I," "Thee, O God." _Two tenses_ : past, "I have;" future, "Thou wilt." _Two wonders_ , that we do not call more, and that God hears such unworthy prayers.

Exposition.

" _Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness_ ." Marvellous in its antiquity, its distinguishing character, its faithfulness, its immutability, and above all, marvellous in the wonders which it works. That marvellous grace which has redeemed us with the precious blood of God's only begotten, is here invoked to come to the rescue. That grace is sometimes hidden; the text says, "Shew it." Present enjoyments of divine love are matchless cordials to support fainting hearts. Believer, what a prayer is this! Consider it well. O Lord, shew thy marvellous lovingkindness; shew it to my intellect, and remove my ignorance; shew it to my heart, and revive my gratitude; shew it to my faith, and renew my confidence; shew it to my experience, and deliver me from all my fears. The original word here used is the same which in Ps 4:3 is rendered

set apart, and it has the force of, Distinguish thy mercies, set them out, and set apart the choicest to be bestowed upon me in this hour of my severest affliction. "_O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them_" The title here given to our gracious God is eminently consolatory. He is the God of salvation; it is his present and perpetual habit to save believers; he puts forth his best and most glorious strength, using his right hand of wisdom and might, to save all those, of whatsoever rank or class, who trust themselves with him. Happy faith thus to secure the omnipotent protection of heaven! Blessed God, to be thus gracious to unworthy mortals, when they have but grace to rely upon thee! The right hand of God is interposed between the saints and all harm; God is never at a loss for means; his own bare hand is enough. He works without tools as well as with them.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 7 (first sentence).--See

Exposition. A view of divine lovingkindness desired.

Verse 7.--"_O thou_" etc. God, the Saviour of believers.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

"_From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about_" The foes from

whom David sought to be rescued were wicked men. It is hopeful for us when our enemies are God's enemies. They were deadly enemies, whom nothing but his death would satisfy. The foes of a believer's soul are mortal foes most emphatically, for they who war against our faith aim at the very life of our life. Deadly sins are deadly enemies, and what sin is there which hath not death in its bowels? These foes oppressed David, they laid his spirit waste, as invading armies ravage a country, or as wild beasts desolate a land. He likens himself to a besieged city, and complains that his foes compass him about. It may well quicken our business upward, when all around us, every road, is blockaded by deadly foes. This is our daily position, for all around us dangers and sins are lurking. O God, do thou protect us from them all.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 10.--"They are inclosed in their own fat," or their fat has inclosed them; either their eyes, that they can hardly see out of them, or their hearts, so that they are stupid and senseless, and devoid of the fear of God; the phrase is expressive of the multitude of their wealth, and increase of power, by which they were swelled with pride and vanity, and neither feared God nor regarded man; so the Targum paraphrases it, "their riches are multiplied, their fat covers them."--^John Gill.

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

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

Exposition.

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

for the past, or some stumbling-stone to cast in their future path to trip them in days to come.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 11.--"_They have now compassed us in our steps_" Like those who destroy game by battue [Ed. battue: interdiction], and so make a ring around their prey from which their victims cannot escape.--C. H. S.

Verse 11.--"_They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth_" The allusion probably is to the huntsman tracing the footmarks of the animal he pursues.--^Religious Tract Society's Commentary.

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

Exposition.

Lions are not more greedy, nor their ways more cunning than are Satan and his helpers when engaged against the children of God. The blood of souls the adversary thirsts after, and all his strength and craft are exercised to the utmost to satisfy his detestable appetite. We are weak and foolish like sheep; but we have a shepherd wise and strong, who knows the old lion's wiles, and is more than a match for his force; therefore will we not fear, but rest in safety in the fold. Let us beware, however, of our lurking foe; and in those parts of the road where we feel most secure, let us look about us lest, peradventure, our foe should leap upon us.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 12.--"_Like a lion_" etc. In "_Paradise Lost_" we have a fine poetical conception of the arch enemy prowling around our first parents when he first beheld their happiness, and resolved to ruin them.

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

^John Milton.

Verse 12.--We were consulting as to the best means of getting at a rhinoceros cow which we saw standing at some distance under a tree, when a troop of impalas came charging down, with a fine old lioness after them. We went and saw her lying down, but so flat to the ground, head and all, that no man could shoot with any certainty; and she never for a moment took her eyes from us. When we got up to her, she was lying down flat as a plate to the ground; but her head might have been on a pivot, as her watchful eye glared on us all round, without appearing to move her body, as we decreased the circle, in the hopes she would stand up and give us a fair chance of a shot behind the shoulder. ... I looked for a tree to climb up, near enough to make tolerably sure of my shot, and was just getting up one, when the lioness made off.--^William Charles Baldwin, F.R.G.S., in "_African Hunting_" 1863.

Exposition.

"_Arise, O Lord_" The more furious the attack, the more fervent the Psalmist's prayer. His eye rests singly upon the Almighty, and he feels that God has but to rise from the seat of his patience and the work will be performed at once. Let the lion spring upon us, if Jehovah steps between we need no better defence. When God meets our foe face to face in battle, the conflict will soon be over. "_Disappoint him_" Be beforehand with him, outwit and outrun him. Appoint it otherwise than he has appointed, and so disappoint him. "_Cast him down_" Prostrate him. Make him sink upon his knees. Make him bow as the conquered bows before the conqueror. What a glorious sight will it be to behold Satan prostrate beneath the foot of our glorious Lord! Haste, glorious day! "_Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword_" He recognizes the most profane and oppressive as being under the providential rule of the King of kings,

and used as a sword in the divine hand. What can a sword do unless it be wielded by a hand? No more could the wicked annoy us, unless the Lord permitted them so to do. Most translators are, however, agreed that this is not the correct reading, but that it should be as Calvin puts it, "Deliver my soul from the ungodly man by thy sword." Thus David contrasts the sword of the Lord with human aids and reliefs, and rests assured that he is safe enough under the patronage of heaven.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

Exposition.

Almost every word of this verse has furnished matter for discussion to scholars, for it is very obscure. We will, therefore, rest content with the common version, rather than distract the reader with divers translations. "From men which are thy hand_" Having styled the ungodly a sword in his Father's hand, he now likens them to that hand itself, to set forth his conviction that God could as easily remove their violence as a man moves his own hand. He will never slay his child with his own hand. "From men of the world_" mere earthworms; not men of the world to come, but mere dwellers in this narrow sphere of mortality; having no hopes or wishes beyond the ground on which they tread. "Which have their portion in this life_" Like the prodigal, they have their portion, and are not content to wait their Father's time. Like Passion in the "Pilgrim's Progress," they have their best things first, and revel during their little hour. Luther was always afraid lest he should have his portion here, and therefore frequently gave away sums of money which had been presented to him. We cannot have earth and heaven too for our choice and portion; wise men choose that which will last the longest. "Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure_" Their sensual appetite gets the gain which it craved for. God gives to these swine the husks which they hunger for. A generous man does not deny dogs their bones; and our generous God gives even his enemies enough to fill them, if they were not so unreasonable as never to be content. Gold and silver which are locked up in the dark treasuries of the earth are given to the wicked liberally, and they therefore roll in all manner of carnal delights. Every dog has his day, and they have theirs, and a bright summer's day it seems; but ah! how soon it ends in night! "They are full of children_" This was their fondest hope, that a race from their loins would prolong their names far down the page of history, and God has granted them this also; so that they have all that heart can wish. What enviable creatures they seem, but it is only seeming! "They are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes_" They were fat housekeepers, and yet leave no lean wills. Living and dying they lacked for nothing but grace, and alas! that lack spoils everything. They had a fair portion within the little circle of time, but eternity entered not into their calculations. They were penny wise, but pound foolish; they remembered the present, and forgot the future; they fought for the shell, and lost the kernel. How fine a description have we here of many a successful merchant, or popular statesman; and it is, at first sight, very showy and tempting, but in contrast with the glories of the world to come, what are these paltry molehill joys. Self, self, self, all these joys begin and end in basest selfishness; but oh, our God, how rich are those who begin and end in thee! From all the contamination and injury which association with worldly men is sure to bring us, deliver thou us, O God!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

Verse 14.--" _Men which are thy hand_," etc. What shall we say then? Because God maketh use of thy sins, art thou excused? Is not thine evil, because he picketh good out of it? Deceive not thyself therein. When thou hast done such service to thy Master and Maker, though seven and seven years, as Jacob did service to Laban, thou shalt lose thy wages and thy thanks too. Oh, well were thou if thou didst but lose, for thou shalt also gain a sorrowful advantage. It is unprofitable, nay, miserable service which thou hast thus bestowed. Babylon shall be the hammer of the Lord a long time to bruise the nations, himself afterwards bruised; Asshur his rod to scourge his people, but Asshur shall be more scourged. These hammers, rods, axes, saws, other instruments, when they have done their offices, which they never meant, shall be thrown themselves into the fire, and burnt to ashes. Satan did service to God, it cannot be denied, in the afflicting of Job, winnowing of Peter, buffeting of Paul, executing of Judas, and God did a work in all these, either to prove patience, or to confirm faith, or to try strength, or to commend justice; yet is Satan "reserved in chains, under darkness, to the retribution of the great day." Judas did service to God, in getting honour to his blessed name for the redemption of mankind, whilst the world endureth, yet was his wages an alder-tree to hang himself upon, and which is worse, he hangeth in hell for eternal generations. He had his wages, and lost his wages. That which the priest gave him, he lost, and lost his apostleship, but gained the recompense of everlasting unhappiness, and lies in the lowest lake, for the worm and death to gnaw upon without ceasing.--^John King.

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

Verse 14.--" _Men of the world, which have their portion in this life_." The large portion of the wicked in the things of this world, may tell the righteous of how little value this is, in the account of God; in that these things are often given to his enemies plentifully, when denied in such a measure to his children. Now this cannot be because he loves or favours his enemies most; but because these lower things, given them in what degree soever, are so mean in his account, as that his chosen may learn by his distribution of them, to regard them as he does; namely, as no part of their felicity, but as common favours to all his creatures, good or bad, enemies or friends.--^Daniel Wilcox.

Verse 14.--" _Men which have their portion in this life_." God gives wicked men a portion here to show unto them what little good there is in all these things, and to show the world what little good there is in all the things that are here below in the world. Certainly if they were much good they should never have them: it is an argument there is no great excellency in the strength of body, for an ox hath it more than you; an argument there is no great excellency in agility of body, for a dog hath it more than you; an

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

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

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

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

Verse 14.--" _This life_." There is yet another thing to be seen far more monstrous in this creature; that whereas he is endued with reason and counsel, and knoweth that this life is like unto a shadow, to a dream, to a tale that is told, to a watch in the night, to smoke, to chaff which the wind scattereth, to a water-bubble, and such-like fading things; and that life to come shall never have end; he yet nevertheless

setteth his whole mind most carefully upon this present life, which is to-day, and to-morrow is not; but of the life which is everlasting he doth not so much as think. If this be not a monster, I know not what may be called monstrous.-- ^Thomas Tymme.

Verse 14.--What wicked men possess of this world is all that ever they can hope for: why should we grudge them filled bags, or swelling titles! it is their whole portion; they now receive their good things. Hast thou food and clothing? that is children's fare; envy not ungodly men, who flaunt it in the gallantry of the world: they have more than you; but it is all they are like to have; the Psalmist gives us an account of their estate. They are the men of this world, which have their portion in this life, and whose bellies God filleth with his hid treasure. Whereas thou, O Christian, who possessest nothing, art heir-apparent of heaven, co-heir with Jesus Christ, who is the heir of all things, and hast an infinite mass of riches laid up for thee; so great and infinite, that all the stars of heaven are too few to account it by: you have no reason to complain of being kept short; for all that God hath is yours, whether prosperity or adversity, life or death, all is yours. What God gives is for your comfort; what he denies or takes away is for your trial: it is for the increase of those graces which are far more gracious than any temporal enjoyment. If, by seeing wicked and ungodly men flow in wealth and ease, when thou art forced to struggle against the inconveniences and difficulties of a poor estate, thou hast learnt a holy contempt and disdain of the world, believe it, God hath herein given thee more than if he had given thee the world itself.--^Ezekiel Hopkins.

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

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

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

be followed up by the most fearful visitations of divine wrath.--^John Morison.

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

Verse 14.--" _Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure_." The hearts of saints only are filled with the "_hidden manna_", but the bellies of the wicked are often filled with _hidden treasure_; that is, with those dainties and good things which are virtually hidden in, and formally spring out of, the belly and bowels of the earth. The Lord easily grants them their wish in such things, and gives them "_their portion_", which is all their portion, "_in this life_." For as they are but common professors, so these are but common mercies, such as many of his enemies receive, who are but fatted as oxen for the slaughter, and fitted for destruction. True happiness is not to be judged by lands or houses, by gold or silver. The world is a narrow bound: unless we get beyond the creature, and set our hopes above this world, we cannot be happy. As hypocrites desire, so they attain much of the world, but they shall attain no more, how much soever they seem to desire it.--^Joseph Caryl.

Verse 14.--" _Whose belly thou fillest_." That is, their sensual appetite, as often-times that term is used (Rom 16:18; Php 3:19), "_with thy hid treasures_;" namely the riches which either God is wont to hide in the bowels of the earth, or lock up in the repository of providence, dispensing them at his own pleasure.--^John Howe.

Verse 14.--" _Whose belly thou fillest_," etc.:-

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

^Richard Mant.

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

Verse 14.--" _They are full of children_." Margin, their children are full. The margin probably expresses the sense of the Hebrew better than the text. The literal rendering would be, "satisfied are their sons;" that is, they have enough to satisfy the wants of their children. The expression, "they are full of children," is harsh and unnatural, and is not demanded by the original, or by the main thought in the passage. The obvious

signification is, that they have enough for themselves and for their children.--^Albert Barnes.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 14.--" _Men of the world, which have their portion in this life_." Who they are? What they have? Where they have it? What next?

Verse 14.--" _Men which are thy hand_." Providential control and use of wicked men.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

Verse 15.--" _I shall be satisfied_," etc. The fulness of the felicity of heaven may appear if we _compare it with the joys and comforts of the Holy Spirit_. Such they are, as that the Scripture styles them strong consolations (Heb 6:17); _full joys_ (Joh 15:11); _joy unspeakable and full of glory_ (1Pe 1:8); _abounding consolations_. (2Co 1:5). And yet all the joy and peace that believers are partakers of in this life is but as a drop to the ocean, as a single cluster to the whole vintage, as the thyme or honey upon the thigh of a bee to the whole hive fully fraught with it, or as the break and peep of day to the bright noontide. But yet these tastes of the water, wine, and honey of this celestial Canaan, with which the Holy Spirit makes glad the hearts of believers, are both far more desirable and satisfactory than the overflowing streams of all earthly felicities. And there are none who have once tasted of them, but say as the Samaritan woman did, "Lord, give me that water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw_." Joh 4:15. So also the first and early dawns of the heavenly light fill the soul with more serenity, and ravish it with more pure joy, than the brightest sunshine of all worldly splendour can ever do. I have read of a devout

person who but dreaming of heaven, the signatures and impression it made upon his fancy were so strong, as that when he awake he knew not his cell, could not distinguish the night from the day, nor difference by his taste, oil from wine; still he was calling for his vision and saying, *Redde mihi campos floridos, columnam auream, comitem Hieronymum, assistentes angelos*: give me my fresh and fragrant fields again, my golden pillar of light, Jerome my companion, angels my assistants. If heaven in a dream produce such ecstasies as drown and overwhelm the exercises of the senses to inferior objects, what trances and complacencies must the fruition of it work in those who have their whole rational appetite filled, and their body beautified with its endless glory?--[^]William Spurstow, 1656.

Verse 15.--"*I shall be satisfied*." Have you never seen how when they were finishing the interior of buildings they kept the scaffolding up? The old Pope, when he had Michael Angelo employed in decorating the interior of that magnificent structure, the Sistine Chapel, demanded that the scaffolding should be taken down so that he could see the glowing colours that with matchless skill were being laid on. Patiently and assiduously did that noble artist labour, toiling by day, and almost by night, bringing out his prophets and sibyls and pictures wondrous for their beauty and significance, until the work was done. The day before it was done, if you had gone into that chapel and looked up, what would you have seen? Posts, planks, ropes, lime, mortar, slop, dirt. But when all was finished, the workmen came, and the scaffolding was removed. And then, although the floor was yet covered with rubbish and litter, when you looked up, it was as if heaven itself had been opened, and you looked into the courts of God and angels. Now, the scaffolding is kept around men long after the fresco is commenced to be painted; and wondrous disclosures will be made when God shall take down this scaffolding body, and reveal what you have been doing. By sorrow and by joy; by joys which are but bright colours, and by sorrows which are but shadows of bright colours; by prayer; by the influences of the sanctuary; by your pleasures; by your business; by reverses; by successes and by failures; by what strengthened your confidence, and by what broke it down; by the things that you rejoiced in, and by the things that you mourned over--by all that God is working in you. And you are to be perfected, not according to the things that you plan, but according to the divine pattern. Your portrait and mine are being painted, and God by wondrous strokes and influences is working us up to his own ideal. Over and above what you are doing for yourself, God is working to make you like him. And the wondrous declaration is, that when you stand before God, and see what has been done for you, you shall be "*satisfied*." Oh, word that has been wandering solitary and without a habitation ever since the world began, and the morning stars sang together for joy! Has there ever been a human creature that could stand on earth while clothed in the flesh, and say, "I am satisfied"? What is the meaning of the word? Sufficiently filled; filled full; filled up in every part. And when God's work is complete, we shall stand before him, and, with the bright ideal and glorified conception of heavenly aspiration upon us, looking up to God, and back on ourselves, we shall say, "I am satisfied;" for we shall be like him. Amen. Why should we not be satisfied?--[^]Henry Ward Beecher, in "Royal Truths," 1862.

Verse 15.--"*When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness*." He speaks here of the resurrection; he calls it an awaking, for you know death is called a sleep. "Those that are asleep in the Lord shall rise first." He had spoken before of those that had put their happiness in the comforts of this life, suitable to their bodies, to the animal state of their bodies; that is clear by verse (14), "Deliver me from the men that are thine hand, O Lord, who have their portion in this life, whose belly thou fillest with thy treasure: they are full of children, and leave to them outward things," bodily things. "But as for me," said he, "I will behold thy face in thy righteousness" (there is the vision of God which is his happiness in his soul): "and I shall be satisfied when I awake" (when I rise again), "with thine image." It is not the image of God only upon himself that he means here. Why? Because that doth not satisfy a holy heart, but it is that image of the invisible God which the human nature of Jesus Christ is, who, in opposition to all these outward pleasures! will be all in all to us; he is a spiritual creature, his human nature is spiritualised, made glorious, and our bodies shall be made spiritual likewise. "The body is made for the Lord, and the Lord for the body," and this when they are both raised up; Christ is raised up already, and because he hath ordained the one to be serviceable to the other, he will also raise up our bodies; and when he doth raise me up, saith David, though other men have their bellies full here, and have animal pleasures they delight in; yet when I shall awake at latter day, and shall see this image of thine, shall see thy Son, I shall be satisfied: "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thine image."--[^]Thomas Goodwin.

Verse 15.--"*I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness*." In this Psalm holy David's afflictions are neither few nor small; his *innocency* that is wounded by malicious slanderers, his *life* that is in

jeopardy by deadly enemies that compass him about; his present condition that is embittered unto him by the pressing wants of a barren wilderness, while his foes live deliciously in Saul's court. And yet under the weight and combination of so many sore evils, David carries himself as one that is neither hopeless nor forsaken, yea, lays his estate in the balance against theirs, and in this low ebb of his, vies with them for happiness; and at last shutting up the Psalm with a triumphant epiphonema, concludes himself to be by far the better man. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." They, 'tis true, enjoy the face of their king, whose favour is as a cloud of latter rain promising a fruitful harvest of many blessings, "but I," saith he, "shall behold the face of God in righteousness," whose lovingkindness is better than life, clothed with all its royalties. They have their bellies filled with hidden treasure, having more than a common hand of bounty opened unto them; but I have more gladness put into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased. They have their portion in hand, and as being men of this world; but I have mine laid up in the other: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." In these words we have his and every believer's eternal happiness in the other life, set forth in three particulars as a most effectual antidote against present troubles and temptations that arise from the malice of wicked men against them.--[^]William Spurstow.

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

Verse 15.--"I shall be satisfied ... with thy likeness." Let a man who is thirsty be brought to an ocean of pure water, and he has enough. If there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, then sure there is enough to satisfy us. The soul is but finite, but God is infinite. Though God be a good that satisfies, yet he does not surfeit. Fresh joys spring continually from his face; and he is as much to be desired after millions of years by glorified souls as at the first moment. There is a fulness in God that satisfies, and yet so much sweetness that the soul still desires. God is a delicious good. That which is the chief good must ravish the soul with pleasure; there must be in it rapturous delight and quintessence of joy. In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima immo rapitur: the love of God drops such infinite suavity into the soul as is unspeakable and full of glory. If there be so much delight in God, when we see him only by faith (1Pe 1:8), what will the joy of vision be, when we shall see him face to face! If the saints have found so much delight in God while they were suffering, oh, what joy and delight will they have when they are being crowned! If flames are beds of roses, what will it be to lean on the bosom of Jesus! What a bed of roses that will be! God is a superlative good. He is better than anything you can put in competition with him; he is better than health, riches, honour. Other things maintain life, he gives life. Who would put anything in balance with the Deity? Who would weigh a feather against a mountain of gold? God excels all other things more infinitely than the sun the light of a taper. God is an eternal good. He is the Ancient of days, yet never decays, nor waxes old. Da 7:9. The joy he gives is eternal, the crown fadeth not away. 1Pe 5:4. The glorified soul shall be ever solacing itself in God, feasting on his love, and sunning itself in the light of his countenance. We read of the river of pleasure at God's right hand; but will not this in time be dried up? No. There is a fountain at the bottom which feeds it. Ps 36:9. "With the Lord is a fountain of life." Thus God is the chief good, and the enjoyment of God for ever is the highest felicity of which the soul is capable.--[^]Thomas Watson.

Verse 15.--"When I awake," etc. The sincere Christian is progressive, never at his journey's end till he gets to heaven; this keeps him always in motion, advancing in his desires and endeavours forward: he is

thankful for little grace, but not content with great measures of grace. "_When I awake_" saith David, "_I shall be satisfied with thy likeness_" He had many a sweet entertainment at the house of God in his ordinances. The spirit of God was the messenger that brought him many a covered dish from God's table, inward consolations which the world knew not of. Yet David has not enough, it is heaven alone that can give him his full draught. They say the Gauls, when they first tasted of the wines of Italy, were so taken with their lusciousness and sweetness, that they could not be content to trade thither for this wine, but resolved they would conquer the land where they grew. Thus the sincere soul thinks it not enough to receive a little now and then of grace and comfort from heaven, by trading and holding commerce at a distance with God in his ordinances here below, but projects and meditates a conquest of that holy land and blessed place from which such rich commodities come, that he may drink the wine of that kingdom in that kingdom.--^William Gurnall.

Verse 15.--"_When I awake_" How apt and obvious is the analogy between our awaking out of natural sleep, and the holy soul's rising up out of the darkness and torpor of its present state into the enlivening light of God's presence? It is truly said so to _awake_ at its first quitting these darksome regions, when it lays aside its cumbersome night-veil. It doth so more perfectly in the joyful morning of the resurrection-day when mortality is swallowed up in life, and all the yet hovering shadows of it are vanished and fled away. And how known and usual an application this is of the metaphorical terms of sleeping and awaking in Holy Writ, I need not tell them who have read the Bible. Nor doth this interpretation less fitly accord to the other contents of this verse; for to what state do the sight of God's face, and satisfaction with his likeness, so fully agree, as to that of future blessedness in the other world? But then the contexture of discourse in this and the foregoing verse together, seems plainly to determine us to this sense: for what can be more conspicuous in them, than a purposed comparison, an opposition of two states of felicity mutually to each other? That of the wicked whom he calls _men of time_ (as the words _cheled_ <02465> _math_ <04962> are rendered by Pagninus--_Homines de tempore_--and do literally signify) and whose portion, he tells us, is in this life: and the righteous man's, his own; which he expected not to be till he should awake, that is, not till after his life.--^John Howe.

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

Verse 15.--There is a threefold meaning in this verse, inasmuch as it is in Christ alone, the firstborn from the dead, the express image of Jehovah's glory, that the saints will rise immortal, incorruptible, and be like the angels in heaven. 1. They will greatly delight in the glorious state in which they will rise. 2. They will greatly delight in Jesus, in whom, and by whom, resurrection and immortality are brought to light; and 3. They will delight greatly in beholding the blessed and reconciled countenance of Jehovah, the Father, whom no eye of flesh can see. This is the difference between the appearance of God to Israel on Mount Sinai, and the happy state in which the saints will behold him in the resurrection. Glorious as the scene on Sinai was, yet the Lord said to Israel, "You have seen no _tem-wnfh_ <08544>, no manner of similitude," or likeness, or countenance; but David speaks of the spiritual glory of the triumphant saints in the resurrection, when they shall see Jehovah as he is, and rejoice in his beatific presence for ever and ever.--^Benjamin Weiss, in loc, 1858.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 15.--This is the language (1) of a man whose mind is made up; who has decided for himself; who

does not suspend his conduct upon the resolution of others. (2) Of a man rising in life, and with great prospects before him. (3) It is the language of a Jew.

Verse 15.--_The beholding of God's face_ signifies two things. I. The enjoyment of his favour. II. Intimate communion with him.--^William Jay.

Verse 15.--See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 25. Title, "The Hope of Future Bliss." Divisions. I. The Spirit of this utterance. II. The matter of it. III. The contrast implied in it.

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

Eighteenth Psalm

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

If it be remembered that the second (2) and the forty-ninth (49) verses are both quoted in the New Testament (Heb 2:13; Ro 15:9) as the words of the Lord Jesus, it will be clear that a greater than David is here. Reader, you will not need our aid in this respect: if you know Jesus you will readily find him in his sorrows, deliverance, and triumphs all through this wonderful Psalm.

DIVISION.--The first three verses (1-3) are the proem or preface in which the resolve to bless God is declared. Delivering mercy is most poetically extolled from verse 4-19; and then the happy songster, from verse 20-28, protests that God had acted righteously in thus favouring him. Filled with grateful joy he again pictures his deliverance, and anticipates future victories from verse 29-45; and in closing speaks with evident prophetic foresight of the glorious triumphs of the Messiah, David's seed and the Lord's anointed.

EXPOSITION.

"I will love thee, O Lord." With strong, hearty affection will I cling to thee; as a child to its parent, or a spouse to her husband. The word is intensely forcible, the love is of the deepest kind. "I will love heartily, with my inmost bowels." Here is a fixed resolution to abide in the nearest and most intimate union with the Most High. Our triune God deserves the warmest love of all our hearts. Father, Son and Spirit have each a claim upon our love. The solemn purpose never to cease loving naturally springs from present fervour of affection. It is wrong to make rash resolutions, but this when made in the strength of God is most wise and fitting. "My strength." Our God is the strength of our life, our graces, our works, our hopes, our conflicts, our victories. This verse is not found in 1Sa 22, and is a most precious addition, placed above all and after all to form the pinnacle of the temple, the apex of the pyramid. Love is still the crowning grace.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.--The general argument of the Psalm may be thus stated: it is a magnificent eucharistic ode. It begins with a celebration of the glorious perfections of the divinity, whose assistance the speaker had so often experienced. He describes, or rather, he delineates, his perils, the power of his enemies, his sudden deliverance from them, and the indignation and power of his divine deliverer manifested in their overthrow. He paints these in so lively colours, that while we read we seem to see the lightning, to hear the thunders, to feel the earthquake. He afterwards describes his victories, so that we seem to be eye-witnesses of them, and take part in them. He predicts a wide-extended empire, and concludes with a lofty expression of grateful adoration of Jehovah, the author of all his deliverances and triumphs. The style is

highly oratorical and poetical, sublime, and full of uncommon figures of speech. It is the natural language of a person of the highest mental endowments, under a divine inspiration, deeply affected by remarkable divine benefits, and filled with the most lofty conceptions of the divine character and dispensations.--
^John Brown, D.D., 1853.

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

Whole Psalm.--The eighteenth Psalm is called by Michaelis more artificial, and less truly terrible than the Mosaic odes. In structure it may be so, but surely not in spirit. It appears to many besides us, one of the most magnificent lyrical raptures in the Scriptures. As if the poet had dipped his pen in "the brightness of that light which was before his eye," so he describes the descending God. Perhaps it may be objected that the _nodus_ is hardly worthy of the _vindex_--to deliver David from his enemies, could Deity ever be imagined to come down? But the objector knows not the character of the ancient Hebrew mind. God in its view had not to descend from heaven; he was nigh--a cloud like a man's hand might conceal--a cry, a look might bring him down. And why should not David's fancy clothe him, as he came, in a panoply befitting his dignity, in clouds spangled with coals of fire? If he was to descend, why not in state? The proof of the grandeur of this Psalm is in the fact, that it has borne the test of almost every translation, and made doggerel erect itself, and become divine. Even Sternhold and Hopkins its fiery whirlwind lifts up, purifies, touches into true power, and then throws down, helpless and panting, upon their ancient common. Perhaps the great charm of the eighteenth, apart from the poetry of the descent, is the exquisite and subtle alternation of the _I_ and the _Thou_. We have spoken of parallelism, as the key to the mechanism of Hebrew song. We find this as existing between David and God--the delivered and the deliverer--beautifully pursued throughout the whole of this Psalm. "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised." "He sent from above; he took me; he drew me out of many waters." "Thou wilt light my candle." "Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation." "Thou hast girded me with strength unto battle." "Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies." "Thou hast made me the head of the heathen." It has been ingeniously argued, that the existence of the _I_ suggests, inevitably as a polar opposite, the thought of the _Thou_, that the personality of man proves thus the personality of God; but, be this as it may, David's perception of that personality is nowhere so intense as here. He seems not only to see, but to feel and touch, the object of his gratitude and worship.--^George Gilfillan, in "The Bards of the Bible," 1852.

Whole Psalm.--He that would be wise, let him read the Proverbs; he that would be holy, let him read the Psalms. Every line in this book breathes peculiar sanctity. This Psalm, though placed among the first, was penned among the last, as the preface assures us, and is left as the epitome of the general history of David's life. It is twice recorded in the Scripture (2Sa 22, and in this book of Psalms), for the excellency and sweetness thereof; surely that we should take double notice of it. Holy David, being near the shore, here looks on his former dangers and deliverances with a thankful heart, and writes this Psalm to bless the Lord: as if each of you that are grown into years should review your lives and observe the wonderful goodness and providence of God towards you; and then sit down and write a modest memorial of his most remarkable mercies, for the comfort of yourselves and posterity; an excellent practice. What a comfort would it be for you to read how good your God was to your father or grandfather, that are dead and gone! So would your children rejoice in the Lord upon the reading of his goodness to you; and you cannot have a better pattern for this than holy David, who wrote this Psalm when he was threescore and seven years old; when he had outlived most of his troubles, and almost ready for his journey to his Father in heaven, he resolves to leave this good report of him upon earth. And I pray mark how he begins: he sets not up trophies to himself, but triumphs in his God--"_I_ will love thee, O Lord, my strength_." As the _love of God_ is the beginning of all our mercies, so _love to God_ should be the end and effect of them all. As the stream leads us to the spring, so all the gifts of God must lead us to the giver of them. Lord, thou hast saved me from sickness, "_I_ will love thee_;" from death and hell, "_I_ will love thee_;" on me thou hast bestowed grace and comfort, "_I_ will love thee, O Lord, my strength_." And after he had heaped on God all the sweet names he could devise (verse 2), as the true saint thinks he can never speak too well of God, or too ill of himself, then he begins his narrative. 1. Of his _dangers_ (verse 4); "_Snares of

death_," "_Floods of ungodly men_," "_Sorrows of hell_." Hell and earth are combined against each holy man, and will trouble sufficiently in this world, if they cannot keep him out of a better. 2. Of his _retreat_, and that was, earnest prayer to God (verse 6), "_I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God_." When our prayers are cries ardent and importunate, then they speed: "_My cry came before him, even into his ears_." The mother trifles while the child whimpers, but when he raises his note--strains every nerve and cries every vein--then she throws all aside, and gives him his desire. While our prayers are only whispers, our God can take his rest; but when we fall to crying, "Now will I arise, saith the Lord." 3. Of his _rescue_ (verses 7-20), by the powerful and terrible arm of the Lord, who is in a lofty strain brought in to his servant's help, as if he would mingle heaven and earth together, rather than leave his child in the lion's paws. 4. Of the _reason_ of this gracious dealing of God with him (verse 20, etc.) He was a righteous person, and he had a righteous cause. And thereupon he turns to God, saying, Thou hast dealt with me just as thou art wont to do, for "_with the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright_."--Richard Steele's "Plain Discourse upon Uprightness," 1670.

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

TITLE.--"_The servant of the Lord_;"--the name given to Moses (Jos 1:1,13,15, and in nine other places of that book) and to Joshua (Jos 24:29; Jud 2:8); but to none other except David (here, and in the title to Ps 36.). Cp. Ac 13:36, _hup^rete"_ <5256>. This is significant; reminding us of the place occupied by David in the history of Israel. He was the appointed successor of Moses and Joshua, who extended the power of Israel over the whole region allotted to them by Divine promise.--^W. Kay, 1871.

TITLE.--This Psalm, which is entitled a _shirah_ (or song), is David's hymn of praise to God for his deliverance from all his enemies (see the title, and above, 2Sa 22), and has an appropriate place in the present group of Psalms, which speak of resurrection after suffering. It is entitled a Psalm of David, "_the servant of the Lord_," and thus is coupled with another Psalm of deliverance, Ps 36.--^Christopher Wordsworth.

Verse 1.--"_I will love thee, O Lord_."--The word whereby the Psalmist expresseth his entire affection, in the noun signifieth a womb, and importeth such an affection as cometh from the innermost part of man (_rechem_ <07358> matrix), from his bowels, from the bottom of his heart, as we speak. It is, therefore, oft put for such pity and compassion as moveth the bowels. Some, therefore, thus translate that phrase, "From my innermost bowels will I love thee, O Lord." To give evidence of his entire and ardent love of God, he oft professeth his wonderful great love to God's commandments, whereof he saith with admiration, "Oh, how I love thy law! I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. I love them exceedingly" (Ps 119:97,127,167); therefore, he saith to God, "Consider how I love thy precepts" (verse Ps 119:159).--^William Gouge, 1575-1653.

Verse 1.--"_I will love thee_" Intimately as a mother loves the child that comes out of her womb.--^Westminster Assembly's Annotations, 1651.

Verses 1,2.--God hath, as it were, made himself over to believers. David doth not say, God will give or bestow salvation upon me; but he saith, "He is the horn of my salvation." It is God himself who is the salvation and the portion of his people. They would not care much for salvation if God were not their salvation. It more pleaseth the saints that they enjoy God, than that they enjoy salvation. False and carnal spirits will express a great deal of desire after salvation, for they like salvation, heaven, and glory well; but they never express any longing desire after God and Jesus Christ. They love salvation, but they care not for a Saviour. Now that which faith pitcheth most upon is God himself; he shall be my salvation, let me have him, and that is salvation enough; he is my life, he is my comfort, he is my riches, he is my honour, and he is my all. Thus David's heart acted immediately upon God, "_I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my

buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower_." It pleased holy David more that God was his strength, than that God gave him strength; that God was his deliverer, than that he was delivered; that God was his fortress, his buckler, his horn, his high tower, than that he gave him the effect of all these. It pleased David, and it pleases all the saints more that God is their salvation, whether temporal or eternal, than that he saves them: the saints look more at God than at all that is God's.--^Joseph Caryl.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.--Love's resolve, love's logic, love's trials, love's victories. James Hervey has two sermons upon "Love to God" from this text.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 2.--"_The Lord is my rock_." As the rocks that are hard to be clambered unto are good refuges to fly unto from the face of pursuers, so God is the safety of all such as in distress do fly to him for succour.--^Robert Cawdray.

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

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

expressed, Ps 140:7, "Thou hast covered," and thou wilt cover "my head in the day of battle."--^John Brown.

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

Verse 2.--"_The Lord is my high tower_" If a man do run to a tower, yet if that be a weak and an insufficient tower, without men and munition, and a ruinous shaken tower; or if a man do make choice of a tower, a strong sufficient tower, yet if in his danger he betake not himself to that tower, but he sit still; or if he sit not still, yet he but only go and walk on easily towards it, he may well be met withal, and a danger may arrest him, surprise him, and cut him off before he get the tower over his head. But the man that will be safe, as he must choose a strong tower, so he must go to, nay, run into that tower. Running will not secure a man unless the tower be strong ... David was got unto his tower, and in that tower there was thundering ordnance, and David put fire to them by prayer, verse 6, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears." Here David prays and gives fire to the cannon, and what followed? See verses 7,8,13,14. "Then the earth shook and trembled," etc. "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils," etc. "The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them." There were no guns nor ordnance invented and in use in David's time, and yet David's prayers being in this tower, did him as good service against his enemies as all the ordnance and cannons in the world have done. David had thundering ordnance, and with them discomfited his enemies long before powder and guns were invented. It is a memorable and well known story of that Christian legion that was in Marcus Aurelius's army: the enemy being in great straits, those Christian soldiers did by their prayers not only procure rain, by which his languishing army was refreshed, but also obtained hail mixed with thunderbolts against his enemies, upon which he honoured them with the name of Legio fulminatrix, the Thundering Legion. They used David's cannon against the enemy, and discharged that thundering ordnance by their prayers, and that to the confusion of their enemies.--^Jeremiah Dyke's "Righteous Man's Tower," 1639.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Verse 2.--God the all-sufficient portion of his people.--C. Simeon's Works, Vol. v., p. 85.

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 4.--" _Sorrows of death_." It is heaven's peculiar to be the land of the living; all this life is at most but the _shadow_ of death, the _gate_ of death, the _sorrows_ of death, the _snares_ of death, the _terrors_ of death, the _chambers_ of death, the _sentence_ of death, the _savour_ of death, the _ministration_ of death, the _way_ of death.--^Matthew Griffith. 1634.

Verse 4.--" _The bands or cords of death encompassed me_." It is not very easy to fix the precise meaning of the phrase, "bands" or "cords" of death. It may either be considered as equivalent to "the bands by which the dead are bound," in which case, to be encircled with the bands of death is just a figurative expression for being dead; or it may be considered as equivalent to the bands in which a person is bound in the prospect of a violent death, and by which his violent death is secured, he being prevented from escaping. It has been supposed by some, that the allusion is to the ancient mode of hunting wild animals. A considerable tract of country was surrounded with strong ropes. The circle was gradually contracted, till the object of pursuit was so confined as to become an easy prey to the hunter. These cords were the cords of death, securing the death of the animal. The phrase is applicable to our Lord in both senses; but as "the floods" of wickedness, or the wicked, are represented as making him afraid subsequently to his being encircled with the cords of death, I am disposed to understand it in the latter of these two senses.--^John Brown.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

" _In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God_." Prayer is that postern gate which is left open even when the city is straitly besieged by the enemy; it is that way upward from the pit of despair to which the spiritual miner flies at once when the floods from beneath break forth upon him. Observe that he _calls_, and then _cries_; prayer grows in vehemence as it proceeds. Note also that he first invokes his God under the name of Jehovah, and then advances to a more familiar name, " _my God_;" thus faith increases by exercise, and he whom we at first viewed as Lord is soon seen to be our God in covenant. It is never an ill time to pray; no distress should prevent us from using the divine remedy of supplication. Above the noise of the raging billows of death, or the barking dogs of hell, the feeblest cry of a true believer will be heard in heaven. " _He heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears_." Far up within the bejewelled walls, and through the gates of pearl, the cry of the suffering suppliant was heard. Music of angels and harmony of seraphs availed not to drown or even to impair the voice of that humble call. The king heard it in his palace of light unsufferable, and lent a willing

ear to the cry of his own beloved child. O honoured prayer, to be able thus through Jesus' blood to penetrate the very ears and heart of Deity. The voice and the cry are themselves heard directly by the Lord, and not made to pass through the medium of saints and intercessors; "My cry came before Him;" the operation of prayer with God is immediate and personal. We may cry with confident and familiar importunity, while our Father himself listens.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 6.--" I called upon the Lord and cried." Prayer is not eloquence but earnestness; not the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; it is the cry of faith to the ear of mercy.--[^]Hannah Moore, 1745--1833.

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

There was no great space between the cry and its answer. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but is swift to rescue his afflicted. David has in his mind's eye the glorious manifestations of God in Egypt, at Sinai, and on different occasions to Joshua and the judges; and he considers that his own case exhibits the same glory of power and goodness, and that, therefore, he may accommodate the

descriptions of former displays of the divine majesty into his hymn of praise. "Then the earth shook and trembled." Observe how the most solid and immovable things feel the force of supplication. Prayer has shaken houses, opened prison doors, and made stout hearts to quail. Prayer rings the alarm bell, and the Master of the house arises to the rescue, shaking all things beneath his tread. "The foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because of his wrath." He who fixed the world's pillars can make them rock in their sockets, and can upheave the corner-stones of creation. The huge roots of the towering mountains are torn up when the Lord bestirs himself in anger to smite the enemies of his people. How shall puny man be able to face it out with God when the very mountains quake with fear? Let not the boaster dream that his present false confidence will support him in the dread day of wrath.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 7.--"Then the earth shook and trembled." The word *gflash* <01607> signifies, to move or shake violently: it is employed, also, to denote the reeling and staggering of a drunken man. Jer 25:16.--[^]John Morison, in loc.

Verse 7.--Let no appearing impossibilities make you question God's accomplishment of any of his gracious words. Though you cannot see how the thing can be done, 'tis enough if God hath said that he will do it. There can be no obstructions to promised salvation which we need to fear. He who is the God of this salvation and the Author of the promise will prepare his own way for the doing of his own work, so that "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low." Lu 3:5. Though the valleys be so deep that we cannot see the bottom, and the mountains so high that we cannot see the tops of them, yet God knows how to raise the one and level the other. Isa 58:1. "I that speak in righteousness (or faithfulness) am mighty to save." If anything would keep back the kingdom of Christ, it would be our infidelity; but he will come though he should find no faith on the earth. See Ro 3:3. Cast not away your confidence because he defers his performances. Though providences run cross, though they move backwards and forwards, you have a sure and faithful word to rely upon. Promises, though they be for a time seemingly delayed, cannot be finally frustrated. Dare not to harbour such a thought within yourselves as Ps 77:8; "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" The being of God may as well fail as the promise of God. That which does not come in your time, will be hastened in his time, which is always the more convenient season. Accuse him not of slowness who hath said, "I come quickly," that is, he comes as soon as all things are ready and ripe for his appearance. 'Tis as true that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise" (2Pe 3:4), as that he is never guilty of breaking his promise. Wait, therefore, how long soever he tarry; do not give over expecting: the heart of God is not turned though his face be hid; and prayers are not flung back, though they be not instantly answered.--[^]Timothy Cruso.

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

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

Verses 7-9.--In the night in which the Idumaeans lay before Jerusalem, there arose a prodigious tempest and fierce winds, with most vehement rains, frequent lightnings, and terrible thunderings, and great roarings of the shaken earth; and it was manifest that the state of the universe was disordered at the slaughter of men; so that one might guess that these were signs of no small calamity ... At the day of Pentecost, when the priests, by night, went into the inner temple, according to their custom, to execute their office, they said they perceived, first of all, a shake and a noise, and after that a sudden voice, "Let us go hence." ... A few days after the feast of unleavened bread, a strange and almost incredible sight

was seen, which would, I suppose, be taken for a mere fable, were it not related by such as saw it, and did not the miseries which followed appear answerable to the signs; for, before the sun set, were seen on high, in the air, all over the country, chariots and armed regiments moving swiftly in the clouds, and encompassing the city.--[^]Flavius Josephus, 37-103.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Verse 8.--"_There went up a smoke out of his nostrils_" *_aph fshfn flfh_ <0639> <06227> <05927>*. Or there *_ascended into his nose_*, as the words, literally rendered, signify. The ancients placed the seat of anger in the nose, or nostrils; because when it grows warm and violent, it discovers itself, as it were, by a heated vehement breath, that proceeds from them.--[^]Samuel Chandler, D.D., F.R. and A.S.S., 1766.

Verses 8-19.--David calls the full force of poetical imagery to aid, to describe in a becoming manner the marvels of his deliverances. He means to say that they were as manifest as the signs of heaven and earth, as sudden and powerful as the phenomena in the kingdom of nature surprise terrified mortals. *_Deliverance_* being his theme, he might have taken the figure from the *_peaceable_* phenomena of the heavens. But since man heeds heaven more in *_anger_* than in *_blessing_*, and regards God more when he descends on earth in the *_storm_* than in the *_rainbow_*, David describes the blessed condescension of God by the figure of a tempest. In order to thoroughly appreciate the beauty and truthfulness of this figure, we should endeavour to realise the full power of an Oriental storm, as it is described in Ps 29. Solitary lightning precedes the discharge--this is meant by the *_coals_* in verse 8: the clouds approach the mountain summits--*_the heavens bow_*, as verse 9 has it; the storm shakes its pinions; enwrapped in thick clouds as in a tent, God descends to the earth; hail (not unfrequently attending Eastern storms) and lightning issue from the black clouds, through the dissolving layers of which is seen the fiery splendour which hides the Lord of nature. He speaks, and thunder is his voice; he shoots, and flashes of lightning are his arrows. At his rebuke, and at the blast of his breath the earth recedes--the sea foams up, and its beds are seen--the land bursts, and the foundations of the world are discovered. And lo! an arm of deliverance issues forth from the black clouds, and the destructive fire grasps the wretched one who had cried out from the depths, pulls him forth, and delivers him from all his enemies! Yes, the hand of the Lord has done marvellous things in the life of David. But the *_eye of faith_* alone could perceive in them all the hand of God. Thousands whose experiences of the delivering hand of God are not less signal than those of David, stop short at the powers of nature, and instead of bending the knee before the All-merciful God, content themselves to express with cold hearts their admiration of the changes of the destiny of man.--[^]Augustus F. Tholuck, D.D., Ph.D. 1856.

Exposition.

Amid the terror of the storm Jehovah the Avenger descended, bending beneath his foot the arch of heaven. "_He bowed the heavens also, and came down_" He came in haste, and spurned everything which impeded his rapidity. The thickest gloom concealed his splendour, "_and darkness was under his

feet_;" he fought within the dense vapours, as a warrior in clouds of smoke and dust, and found out the hearts of his enemies with the sharp falchion of his vengeance. Darkness is no impediment to God; its densest gloom he makes his tent and secret pavilion. See how prayer moves earth and heaven, and raises storms to overthrow in a moment the foes of God's Israel. Things were bad for David before he prayed, but they were much worse for his foes so soon as the petition had gone up to heaven. A trustful heart, by enlisting the divine aid, turns the tables on its enemies. If I must have an enemy let him not be a man of prayer, or he will soon get the better of me by calling in his God into the quarrel.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verses 9-11:-- "He also bowed the heavens, And thence he did descend; And thickest clouds of darkness did Under his feet attend.

And he upon a cherub rode, And thereon he did fly; Yea, on the swift wings of the wind, His flight was from on high.

He darkness made his secret place; About him for his tent Dark waters were, and thickest clouds Of the airy firmament."

^Scotch Version, 1649.

Verses 9-12: "In his descent, bow'd heaven with earth did meet, And gloomy darkness roll'd beneath his feet; A golden winged cherub he bestrid, And on the swiftly-flying tempest rid.

He darkness made his secret cabinet; Thick fogs and dropping clouds about him set; The beams of his bright presence these expel, Whence showers of burning coals and hailstones fell."

^George Sandys, 1577-1643.

Exposition.

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

"He on the wings of cherubim Uplifted, in paternal glory rode Far into chaos."

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 10.--" _Cherub_." The Hebrew name hath affinity with _Rechub_, a chariot, used in Ps 104:3, almost in like sense as " _cherub_ " is here; and the _cherubims_ are called a chariot, 1Ch 28:18; and God's angels are his chariots, Ps 68:18, and they seem to be meant in this place; for as the angels are said to fly, Da 9:21; so the _cherubims_ had wings, Ex 25:20, and are by the apostle called "cherubims of glory," Heb 9:5. In Ps 80:2, God is said "to sit on the cherubims," as here, to ride; and " _a cherub_ " may be put for many, or all the _cherubims_, as chariot for chariots, Ps 68:18.--^Henry Ainsworth.

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

Verse 10.--" _Cherub_."-- " _He on the wings of _cherub_ rode sublime On the crystalline sky."

^John Milton.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 12.--" _Coals of fire_." The word signifies, living, " _burning coals_." Where the lightning fell, it devoured all before it, and burned whatever it touched into burning embers.--^Samuel Chandler.

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 13.--"_Hailstones and coals of fire_" The terrific in its relation to Jehovah.

Exposition.

The lightnings were darted forth as forked arrows upon the hosts of the foe, and speedily "_scattered them_" Boastful sinners prove to be great cowards when Jehovah enters the lists with them. They despise his words, and are very tongue-valiant, but when it comes to blows they fly apace. The glittering names, and the fierce bolts of fire "_discomfited them_" God is never at a loss for weapons. Woe be unto him that contendeth with his maker! God's arrows never miss their aim; they are feathered with lightning, and barbed with everlasting death. Fly, O sinner, to the rock of refuge before these arrows stick fast in thy soul.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 14.--"_Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them_" etc. O that you who are now strangers to God would but consider these things! O that you would but think what this battle may be, where the combatants are so unequal! Stand still, O sun, in the valley of Ajalon, till the Lord have avenged him of his enemies! Muster yourselves, O ye stars, and fight in your courses against those miserable sinners that have waged war against their Maker; plant your mighty cannons, shoot down huge hailstones, arrows of fire, and hot thunderbolts! Oh, how do the wounded fall! How many are the slain of the Lord, multitudes in the Valley of Decision, for the day of the Lord is terrible. Behold, God's enemies falling by thousands, behold the garments rolling in blood, hear the prancing of his terrible ones, the mountains are covered with horses and chariots of fire. God's soldiers run from one place to another with their flaming swords in their hands, armed with the justice of God, jealousy, power, and indignation! Oh, the dreadful slaughter that is made! Millions, millions fall; they are not able to stand; not one of them can lift up his hand; their hearts fail them; paleness and trembling hath seized upon the stoutest of them all. The bow of the Lord is strong; from the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of the Lord turneth not back, the sword of the Almighty returns not empty. How do the mighty ones fall in this battle! A hot battle indeed, in which none escape! Who is he that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? He that is glorious in his apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me. For I will tread them in mine anger and trample them in my fury; and I will bring down their strength to the earth: the hand of the Lord shall be known, the power of the mighty Jehovah shall be felt, and his indignation towards his enemies. For behold he will come with fire and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire; for by fire and by his sword will he plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many, and the saints shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me. For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest. This shall be the portion of their cup! This it is to fight against God! This it is to defy the Lord of Hosts!--^James Janeway.

Verse 14.--"_He shot out his lightnings_" _r f b a d b f r f q_ <07232> <01300>. LXX _a'strapa's e'pl"thune_ _Fulgura multiplicavit_; Vulg. and so all the versions. He multiplied his thunder-bolts; or, shot them out thick one after another; as the word properly signifies.

h f m a m <02000>. _And discomfited them_, as we render the word; or rather, as I think it should be translated, _and melted them_; namely, the heavens.--^Samuel Chandler.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 15.--" _The foundations of the world were discovered_;" i.e., such large and deep chasms, or apertures, were made by the violence of the earthquake, as one might almost see the very foundations, or as Jonah calls them, _the bottoms_, or rather, _the extremities of the mountains_, in the bottom of the sea. Jon 2:6.--^Samuel Chandler.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 16.--" _He sent from above_," etc. He " _sent_" angels, or assistance otherwise.--^Matthew Poole.

Verse 16.--" _He took_." God's grasp cannot be broken. None can pluck his chosen out of his hand.--^William S. Plumer.

Verse 16.--" _Drew me out of many waters_." This hath reference to Moses' case, who was "drawn out of the water," and thereupon called _Mosheh_ (Ex 2:10); that word _Mashah_ is used here by David, and nowhere else in Scripture. " _Waters_," signify _troubles_, and sometimes multitudes of _people_.--^H. Ainsworth.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 18.--" _They prevented me in the day of my calamity_;" i.e., came on me suddenly unawares, when I was unprovided and helpless, and must have destroyed me had not God upheld and supported me when I was in danger of perishing. God was to the Psalmist _mishfn_ <04937>, " _for a staff_" to support him. What the staff is to one that is ready to fall, the means of recovering and preserving him; that was God to David in the time of his extremity. For he several times preserved him from Saul, when he, David, thought his destruction by him almost unavoidable. See 1Sa 23:26,27.--^Samuel Chandler.

Verse 18.--" _They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay_." When Henry the Eighth had spoken and written bitterly against Luther; saith Luther, Tell the Henries, the bishops, the Turks, and the devil himself, do what they can, we are the children of the kingdom, worshipping of the true

God, whom they, and such as they, spit upon and crucified. And of the same spirit were many martyrs. Basil affirms of the primitive saints, that they had so much courage and confidence in their sufferings, that many of the heathens seeing their heroic zeal and constancy, turned Christians.--^Charles Bradbury.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 18.--The enemy's "craft," "_They prevented me in the day of my calamity." The enemy chained. "_But the Lord was my stay_"

Exposition.

"_He brought me forth also into a large place_" After pining awhile in the prison-house Joseph reached the palace, and from the cave of Adullam David mounted to the throne. Sweet is pleasure after pain. Enlargement is the more delightful after a season of pinching poverty and sorrowful confinement. Besieged souls delight in the broad fields of the promise when God drives off the enemy and sets open the gates of the environed city. The Lord does not leave his work half done, for having routed the foe he leads out the captive into liberty. Large indeed is the possession and place of the believer in Jesus, there need be no limit to his peace, for there is no bound to his privilege. "_He delivered me, because he delighted in me_" Free grace lies at the foundation. Rest assured, if we go deep enough, sovereign grace is the truth which lies at the bottom of every well of mercy. Deep sea fisheries in the ocean of divine bounty always bring the pearls of electing, discriminating love to light. Why Jehovah should delight in us is an answerless question, and a mystery which angels cannot solve; but that he does delight in his beloved is certain, and is the fruitful root of favours as numerous as they are precious. Believer, sit down, and inwardly digest the instructive sentence now before us, and learn to view the uncaused love of God as the cause of all the loving-kindness of which we are the partakers.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

character.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 21.--"I have not wickedly departed from my God;" that is, with a purpose and resolution of heart to continue in a way of sinning; and that is the property of sincerity. A man indeed may be overtaken and surprised by a temptation, but it is not with a resolution to forsake God and to cleave unto the sin, or rest in it. He will not sleep in it, spare it, or favour it; that is, to do wickedly against God, to have a double heart and a double eye; to look upon two objects, partly at God and partly at sin; so to keep God, as to keep some sin also, as it is with all false-hearted men in the world. They look not upon God alone, let them pretend to religion never so much, yet they look not unto God alone, but upon something else together with God; as Herod regarded John, but regarded his Herodias more; and the young man in the gospel, comes to Christ, yet he looks after his estate; and Judas followed in Christ, yet looks after the bag; this is to depart wickedly from God.--^William Strong, 1650.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

"For all his judgments were before me." The word, the character, and the actions of God should be

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 23.--"_I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity_" He who says, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart;" and who by the apostle, in the tenth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, is identified with Jesus Christ, says also (verse Heb 10:12), "innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore mine heart faileth me," and in the forty-first Psalm, "He whose familiar friend, to whom he had committed a trust, who ate of his bread, lifted up his heel against him," whom our Lord in the thirteenth chapter of the gospel of John identifies with himself, says (verse Joh 13:4), "Lord, be merciful to me: heal my soul for I have sinned;" I am guilty "before thee." The difficulty is removed by the undoubtedly true principle--the principle which, above all others, gives Christianity its peculiar character--"He who knew no sin, was made sin;" "On his righteous servant, Jehovah made to fall the iniquities of us all." In this sense, "innumerable iniquities compassed him," the iniquities made to fall on him made "his" as to their liabilities--by divine appointment laid hold of him. In the sense of _culpa_--blame-worthiness--he had no sin. In the sense of _reatus_--liability to the penal effects of sin--never had any one so much sin to bear as he--"He bore the sins of many."--^John Brown.

Verse 23.--"_I was upright before him_" Hence observe:--first, that a godly man may have his heart upright and perfect even in the imperfection of his ways. Secondly, a man that is sincere is in God's

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

Verse 23.--"I was upright," etc. An upright Christian will not allow himself in any known sin; he dares not touch the forbidden fruit. Ge 39:9. "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Though it be a complexion-sin, he disinherits it. There is no man but doth propend and incline more to one sin than another; as in the body there is one humour predominant, or as in the hive there is one master-bee; so in the heart there is one master-sin; there is one sin which is not only near to a man as the garment, but dear to him as the right eye. This is Satan's fort-royal, all his strength lies here; and though we beat down his out-works, gross sin, yet if we let him hold this fort of complexion-sin, it is as much as he desires. The devil can hold a man as fast by this one link, as by a whole chain of vices. The fowler hath the bird fast enough by one wing. Now, an upright Christian will not indulge himself in this complexion-sin: "I was upright before him, and kept myself from mine iniquity." An upright Christian takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through his dearest sin. Herod did many things, but there was one sin so dear to him, that he would sooner behead the prophet, than behead that sin. Herod would have a gap for his incest. An upright heart is not only angry with sin (which may admit of reconciliation), but hates sin; and if he sees this serpent creeping into his bosom, the nearer it is the more he hates it.--^Thomas Watson.

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

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

Verse 23.--"Mine iniquity." A man's darling sin may change with the change of a man's condition, and some occasion that may present itself. What was Saul's and Jehu's sin before they came unto the crown we know not; but surely it was that wherein their lust did afterwards run out--the establishing a kingdom upon their posterity. Wantonness may be the darling of a man's youth, and worldliness the darling of his age; and a man's being raised unto honour, and having the opportunities that he had not in times past, the lust may run in another channel, he having now such an opportunity as before he never expected.--^William Strong.

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

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

Verse 23.--Growth in mortification ... Men may deceive themselves when they estimate their progress herein by having overcome such lusts as their natures are not so prone unto. The surest way is to take a judgment of it from the decay of a man's bosom-sin, even as David did estimate his uprightness by his "keeping himself from his iniquity;" so a man of his growth in uprightness. When physicians would judge of a consumption of the whole, they do it not by the falling away of any part whatever, as of the flesh in the face alone, or any the like; such a particular abatement of flesh in some one part may come from some other cause; but they use to judge by the falling away of the brawn of the hands, or arms and thighs, etc., for these are the more solid parts. The like judgments do physicians make upon other diseases, and of the abatement of them from the decrease in such symptoms as are pathognomical, and proper, and peculiar to them. In like manner also the estimate of the progress of the victories of a conqueror in an enemy's kingdom is not taken from the taking or burning of a few villages or dorps, but by taking the forts and strongest holds, and by what ground he hath won upon the chief strength, and by what forces he hath cut off the main army. Do the like in the decrease of, and victory over, your lusts.--^Thomas Goodwin.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Verse 23.--The sure trial of uprightness.--^Dr. Bates.

Exposition.

God first gives us holiness, and then rewards us for it. We are his workmanship; vessels made unto honour; and when made, the honour is not withheld from the vessel; though, in fact, it all belongs to the Potter upon whose wheel the vessel was fashioned. The prize is awarded to the flower at the show, but the gardener reared it; the child wins the prize from the schoolmaster, but the real honour of his schooling lies with his master, although instead of receiving he gives the reward.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 25.--"_With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright_" "_An upright_"--the same word is oft translated "_perfect_" he is good throughout, though not thoroughly; not one that personates religion, but that is a religious person. He is perfect, because he would be so. So Noah is termed (Ge 6:9); "Noah was a just man and perfect (i.e., upright) in his generation:" he was a good man in a bad age. He was like a glowing spark of fire in a sea of water, which is perfect goodness; and therefore the Holy Ghost doth so hang upon his name, as if he could not give

over--it is an excellent preacher's observation--verse Ge 6:8, "But Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God. And Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah: Noah begat three sons." Noah, Noah, Noah, I love the sound of thy name; and so are all your names precious to God, though hated by men, if the name of God be dear and sweet to you. 'Tis also sometimes translated "plain." Ge 25:27. Jacob was *t_fm ysh_ <08535> <0376>*, "a plain," that is, an upright man, "dwelling in tents." Esau was "a cunning hunter," but Jacob was a plain man without welt or gard; you might well know his heart by his tongue, save once when Rebekah put a cunning trick into his head, otherwise he was a most "upright," downright man. And the plain meaning of it is, a simple, cordial, unfeigned, and exact man: this is the man we are looking for.

"_Man_." This substantive the Hebrews use to drown in the adjective, but here the Holy Ghost exhibits a word, and a choice one too, signifying *_a strong, valiant man_*; the same word (Ps 45:3), "O mighty man!" that's meant of our Lord Christ, who was a most strong and valiant man, that could meet the wrath of God, the malice of the devil, and the sin of man, in the face and come off with triumph. And so the Dutch translate this clause in 2Sa 22: "With the right valiant person, thou behavest thyself upright." In short, if the words were literally translated, they run thus:--*_a man of uprightness_*: that is every way you behold him, an upright man: like an even die, cast him which way you will he will be found square and right; a stiff and strong man to tread down both lusts within and temptations without; an *_Athanasius contra mundum_*, a *_Luther contra Romam_*; this is a man of an excellent spirit, and such is our upright man. "*_Thou wilt show thyself upright_*," or, "wilt be upright with him;" for one word in the Hebrew makes all these six, "Thou wilt *_upright_* it with him." If men will deal plainly with God, he will deal plainly with them. He that is upright in performing his duty shall find God upright in performing his promises. It is God's way to carry to men as they carry to him. If thou hast a design to please him, he will have a design to please thee; if thou wilt echo to him when he calls, he'll echo to thee when thou callest. On the other side; if a man will wrestle with God, he will wrestle with him; if thou wilt be fast and loose with him, and walk frowardly towards him, thou shalt have as good as thou bringest; if thou wilt provoke him with never-ending sins, he will pursue thee with never-ending torments; if thou wilt sin in *_tuo eterno_*, thou must suffer in *_suo eterno_*, and every man shall find like for like ... An upright heart is *_single without division_*. Unto an hypocrite there be "gods many and lords many," and he must have an heart for each; but to the upright there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, and one heart will serve them both. He that fixes his heart upon the creatures, for every creature he must have an heart, and the dividing of his heart destroys him. Hos 10:2. Worldly profits knock at the door, he must have an heart for them; carnal pleasures present themselves, he must have an heart for them also; sinful preferments appear, they must have an heart too--*_Necessarium numerus parvus, opinionum nullus_*; of necessary objects the number is few, of needless vanities the number is endless. The *_upright_* man hath made choice of God and hath enough.--[^]Richard Steele.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 25.--Equity of the divine procedure.--[^]C. Simeon.

Exposition.

"*_With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward_*." The sinner's frowardness is sinful and rebellious, and the only sense in which the term can be applied to the Most Holy God is that of judicial opposition and sternness, in which the Judge of all the earth will act at cross-purposes with the offender, and let him see that all things are not to be made subservient to wicked whims and wilful fancies. Calvin very forcibly says, "This brutish and monstrous stupidity in men compels God to invent new modes of expression, and as it were to clothe himself with a different character. There is a similar sentence in Le 26:21-24, where God says, "and if ye walk contrary unto (or perversely with) me, then will I also walk contrary unto (or perversely, or roughly, or at random with) you." As if he had said

that their obstinacy and stubbornness would make him on his part forget his accustomed forbearance and gentleness, and cast himself recklessly or at random against them. We see then what the stubborn at length gain by their, obduracy; it is this, that God hardens himself still more to break them in pieces, and if they are of stone, he causes them to feel that he has the hardness of iron. The Jewish tradition was that the manna tasted according to each man's mouth; certainly God shows himself to each individual according to his character.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

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

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

" _For thou wilt save the afflicted people_" This is a comforting assurance for the poor in spirit whose spiritual griefs admit of no sufficient solace from any other than a divine hand. They cannot save themselves nor can others do it, but God will save them. " _But wilt bring down high looks_" Those who look down on others with scorn shall be looked down upon with contempt ere long. The Lord abhors a proud look. What a reason for repentance and humiliation! How much better to be humble than to provoke

God to humble us in his wrath! A considerable number of clauses occur in this passage in the future tense; how forcibly are we thus brought to remember that our present joy or sorrow is not to have so much weight with us as the great and eternal future!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 27.--" _The afflicted people_." The word rendered " _afflicted_," properly signifies "poor" or "needy." The persons spoken of are obviously afflicted ones, for they need to be saved or delivered; but it is not their affliction, so much as their poverty, that is indicated by the epithet here given them; and, from the poor being contrasted, not with the wealthy, but with the proud--for that is the meaning of the figurative expression, "the man of high looks"--it seems plain that, though the great body of the class referred to have always been found among the comparatively "poor in this world," the reference is to those poor ones whom our Lord represents as "poor in spirit."--^John Brown.

Verse 27.--" _High looks_:" namely, _the proud_ ; the raising up of the eyebrows being a natural sign of that vice. Ps 101:5; Pr 6:17.--^John Diodati.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 28 (first clause).--" _Thou also shalt_ "--when none else can. And notice too, how here, and often elsewhere, the Psalmist begins with speaking of God, and ends with speaking to him. So the bride in the Canticles, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of _his_ mouth, for _thy_ love is better than wine."--^Dionysius the Carthusian (1471), quoted by J. M. Neale.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 28.--A comfortable hope for an uncomfortable state.

Exposition.

Some repetitions are not vain repetitions. Second thoughts upon God's mercy should be and often are the best. Like wines on the lees our gratitude grows stronger and sweeter as we meditate upon divine

goodness. The verses which we have now to consider are the ripe fruit of a thankful spirit; they are apples of gold as to matter, and they are placed in baskets of silver as to their language. They describe the believer's victorious career and his enemies' confusion.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Verse 29.--"_By my God have I leaped over a wall_" or, "taken a fort."--[^]Henry Hammond.

Verse 29.--"_Leaped over a wall_" This probably refers to his having taken some remarkable town by scaling the ramparts.--[^]John Kitto, in "The Pictorial Bible."

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

"_As for God, his way is perfect_" Far past all fault and error are God's dealings with his people; all his actions are resplendent with justice, truth, tenderness, mercy, and holiness. Every way of God is complete in itself, and all his ways put together are matchless in harmony and goodness. Is it not very consolatory to believe that he who has begun to bless us will perfect his work, for all his ways are "_perfect_"? Nor must the divine "_word_" be without its song of praise. "_The word of the Lord is tried_" like silver refined in the furnace. The doctrines are glorious, the precepts are pure, the promises are faithful, and the whole revelation is superlatively full of grace and truth. David had tried it, thousands have tried it, we have tried it, and it has never failed. It was meet that when way and word had been extolled, the Lord himself should be magnified; hence it is added, "_He is a buckler to all those that trust in him_" No armour of proof or shield of brass so well secures the warrior as the covenant God of Israel protects his warring people. He himself is the buckler of trustful ones; what a thought is this! What peace may every trusting soul enjoy!

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 31.--"_For who is God save the Lord_" Here first in the Psalms, occurs the name *Eloah*, rendered God. It occurs more than *fifty* times in the Scriptures, but only *four* times in the Psalms. It is

the singular of Elohim. Many have supposed that this name specially refers to God as an object of religious worship. That idea may well be prominent in this place.--^William S. Plumer.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 31.--A challenge. I. To the gods. World, pleasure, etc. Which among these deserve the name? II. To the rocks, self-confidence, superstition, etc. On which can we trust?

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Verse 33.--"He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places:" that is, he doth give swiftness and speed to his church; as Augustine interpreteth it, transcendendo spinosa, et umbrosa implicamenta hujus saepculi, passing lightly through the thorny and shady incumbrances of this world. "He will make me walk upon my high places." David saith, "He setteth me upon high places." For, consider David, as he then was, when he composed this Psalm, it was at the time when God had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. For then God set his feet on high places, settling his kingdom, and establishing him in the place of Saul.--^Edward Marbury.

Verse 33.--"He maketh my feet like hinds' feet:" ayflfh regel shfvfh_ <0355> <07272> <07737>. Celerity of motion was considered as one of the qualities of an ancient hero. Achilles is celebrated for being po'sas ""ku's. Virgil's Nisus is hyperbolically described, "Et ventis et fulminis ocior alis;" and the men of God, who came to David, "Men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler," are said to have had "faces like the faces of lions," and to have been "as swift as the roes upon the mountains.") 1Ch 12:8. Asahel is described as "light of foot as a wild roe" (2Sa 2:18); and Saul

seems called the *roe* (in the English translation, "the beauty") of Israel. 2Sa 1:19. It has been said that the legs of the hind are straighter than those of the buck, and that *she* is swifter than *he* is; but there is no sufficient proof of this. Gataker gives the true account of it when he says, "The female formula is often used for the species." This is not uncommon in Hebrew. The female ass obviously stands for the ass species. Ge 12:16; Job 1:3; 42:12. Some (at the head of whom is Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, P. i. L. ii. c. 17), have supposed the reference to be to the peculiar hardness of the hoof of the roe, which enables it to walk firmly, without danger of falling, on the roughest and rockiest places. Virgil calls the hind "*aeripedem*," brass-footed. Others suppose the reference to be to its agility and celerity. There is nothing to prevent our supposing that there is a reference to both these distinguishing qualities of the hind's feet.--[^]John Brown.

Verse 33.--"*He maketh my feet like hinds' feet*," etc. He maketh me able to stand on the sides of mountains and rocks, which were anciently used as fastnesses in time of war. The feet of the sheep, the goat, and the hart are particularly adapted to standing in such places. Mr. Merrick has here very appositely cited the following passage from Xenophon; *Lib. de Venatione*: *episko`ei'n sei' e'chonta ta's ku'nas t'as me'n e'n o'resi e'ot''sas l'aphous*. See also Ps 104:18, where the same property of standing on the rocks and steep cliffs is attributed to the wild goat.--[^]Stephen Street, M.A., in loc., 1790.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

Verse 34.--"*Steel*." The word so rendered in the authorised version, properly means "copper" (*nechwshfh* <05154>). It is doubtful if the Hebrews were acquainted with the process of hardening iron into steel, for though the "northern iron" of Jer 15:12, has been supposed by some to be steel, this is by no means certain; it may have only been a superior sort of iron.--[^]William Lindsay Alexander, in "Kitto's Cyclopaedia."

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

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

[^]Alexander Pope, 1688-1744. (Translation of Homer).

Exposition.

"*Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation*." Above all we must take the shield of faith, for nothing else can quench Satan's fiery darts; this shield is of celestial workmanship, and is in all cases a direct gift from God himself; it is the channel, the sign, the guarantee, and the earnest of perfect salvation. "*Thy right hand hath holden me up*." Secret support is administered to us by the preserving grace of God, and at the same time Providence kindly yields us manifest aid. We are such babes that we cannot stand alone; but when the Lord's right hand upholds us, we are like brazen pillars which cannot be

moved. "_Thy gentleness hath made me great_." There are several readings of this sentence. The word is capable of being translated, "thy _goodness_ hath made me great." David saw much of benevolence in God's action towards him, and he gratefully ascribed all his greatness not to his own goodness, but to the goodness of God. "Thy _providence_" is another reading, which is indeed nothing more than goodness in action. Goodness is the bud of which providence is the flower; or goodness is the seed of which providence is the harvest. Some render it, "thy _help_" which is but another word for providence; providence being the firm ally of the saints, aiding them in the service of their Lord. Certain learned annotators tell us that the text means, "thy _humility_ hath made me great." "Thy _condescension_" may, perhaps, serve as a comprehensive reading, combining the ideas which we have already mentioned, as well as that of humility. It is God's making himself little which is the cause of our being made great. We are so little that if God should manifest his greatness without condescension, we should be trampled under his feet; but God, who must stoop to view the skies and bow to see what angels do, looks to the lowly and contrite, and makes them great. While these are the translations which have been given to the adopted text of the original, we find that there are other readings altogether; as for instance, the Septuagint, which reads, "thy discipline"--thy fatherly correction--"hath made me great;" while the Chaldee paraphrase reads, "thy word hath increased me." Still the idea is the same. David ascribes all his own greatness to the condescending goodness and graciousness of his Father in heaven. Let us all feel this sentiment in our own hearts, and confess that whatever of goodness or greatness God may have put upon us, we must cast our crowns at his feet, and cry, "_thy gentleness hath made me great_."

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 35.--"_The shield of thy salvation_" What it is? Faith. Whence it comes? "Thou hast given." What it secures? "Salvation." Who have received it?

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

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verses 37,38:--

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

^William Cowper, 1731-1800.

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 38.--"_I have wounded them_" etc. Greater is he that is in us than he that is against us, and God

shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly. Ro 15:20. ^W. Wilson.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Verse 41.--"_They shall cry, but there shall be none to help them_," etc. Sad examples enough there are of the truth of this prophecy. Of Esau it is written that he "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Heb 12:17. Of Antiochus, though he vowed in his last illness, "that also he would become a Jew himself, and go through all the world that was inhabited, and declare the power of God, yet," continues the historian, "for all this his pains would not cease, for the just judgment of God was come upon him." 2 Macc. 9:17, 18. But most appropriately to this passage, it is written of Saul, "When he enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim, nor by prophets." 1Sa 28:6. And therefore, the prophet warns us: "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains (Jer 13:16): as Saul's feet, indeed, stumbled on the dark mountains of Gilboa. "_Even unto the Lord shall they cry_:" but not, as it has been well remarked, by a Mediator: and so, crying to him in their own name, and by their own merits, they cry in vain.--^John Lorinus (1569-1634), and Remigius (900), quoted by J. M. Neale.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

"_The strangers shall fade away_" Like sear leaves or blasted trees our foes and Christ's foes shall find no sap and stamina remaining in them. Those who are strangers to Jesus are strangers to all lasting happiness; those must soon fade who refuse to be watered from the river of life. "_And be afraid out of

their close places_." Out of their mountain fastnesses the heathen crept in fear to own allegiance to Israel's king, and even so, from the castles of self-confidence and the dens of carnal security, poor sinners come bending before the Saviour, Christ the Lord. Our sins which have entrenched themselves in our flesh and blood as in impregnable forts, shall yet be driven forth by the sanctifying energy of the Holy Spirit, and we shall serve the Lord in singleness of heart.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

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

Exposition.

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

Jehovah lives, my rock be blest! Praised be the God who gives me rest!

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS.

Verse 46.--"_The Lord liveth: and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted_"--Let us unite our hearts in this song for a close of our praises. Honours _die_, pleasures _die_, the world _dies_; but "_The Lord liveth_" My flesh is as _sand_; my fleshly life, strength, glory, is as _a word written on sand_; but "_blessed be my ROCK_" Those are for a moment; this stands for ever. The curse shall devour those; everlasting blessings on the head of this. Let outward salvations vanish; let the saved be crucified; let the "_God_" of our salvations "_be exalted_" This Lord is _my rock_; this God is _my salvation_.--^Peter Sterry, 1649.

Verse 46.--"_The Lord liveth_" Why do you not oppose one God to all the armies of evils that beset you round? why do you not take the more content in God when you have the less of the creature to take content in? why do you not boast in your God? and bear up yourselves big with your hopes in God and expectations from him? Do you not see young heirs to great estates act and spend accordingly? And, why shall you, being the King of heaven's son, be lean and ragged from day to day, as though you were not worth a groat? O sirs, live upon your portion, chide yourselves for living besides what you have. There are great and precious promises, rich, enriching mercies; you may make use of God's all-sufficiency; you can blame none but yourselves if you be defective or discouraged. A woman, truly godly for the main, having buried a child, and sitting alone in sadness, did yet bear up her heart with the expression, "God lives"; and having parted with another, still she redoubled, "Comforts die, but God lives." At last her dear husband

dies, and she sat oppressed and most overwhelmed with sorrow. A little child she had yet surviving, having observed what before she spoke to comfort herself, comes to her and saith, "Is God dead, mother? is God dead?" This reached her heart, and by God's blessing recovered her former confidence in her God, who is a living God. Thus do you chide yourselves; ask your fainting spirits under pressing outward sorrows, is not God alive? and why then doth not thy soul revive? why doth thy heart die within thee when comforts die! Cannot a living God support thy dying hopes? Thus, Christians, argue down your discouraged and disquieted spirits as David did.--[^]Oliver Heywood's "Sure Mercies of David." 1672.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Exposition.

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

Exposition.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

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

Exposition.

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

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

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 50.--The greatness of salvation, "_great deliverance_;" its channel, "_the King_;" and its perpetuity, "_for evermore_."

