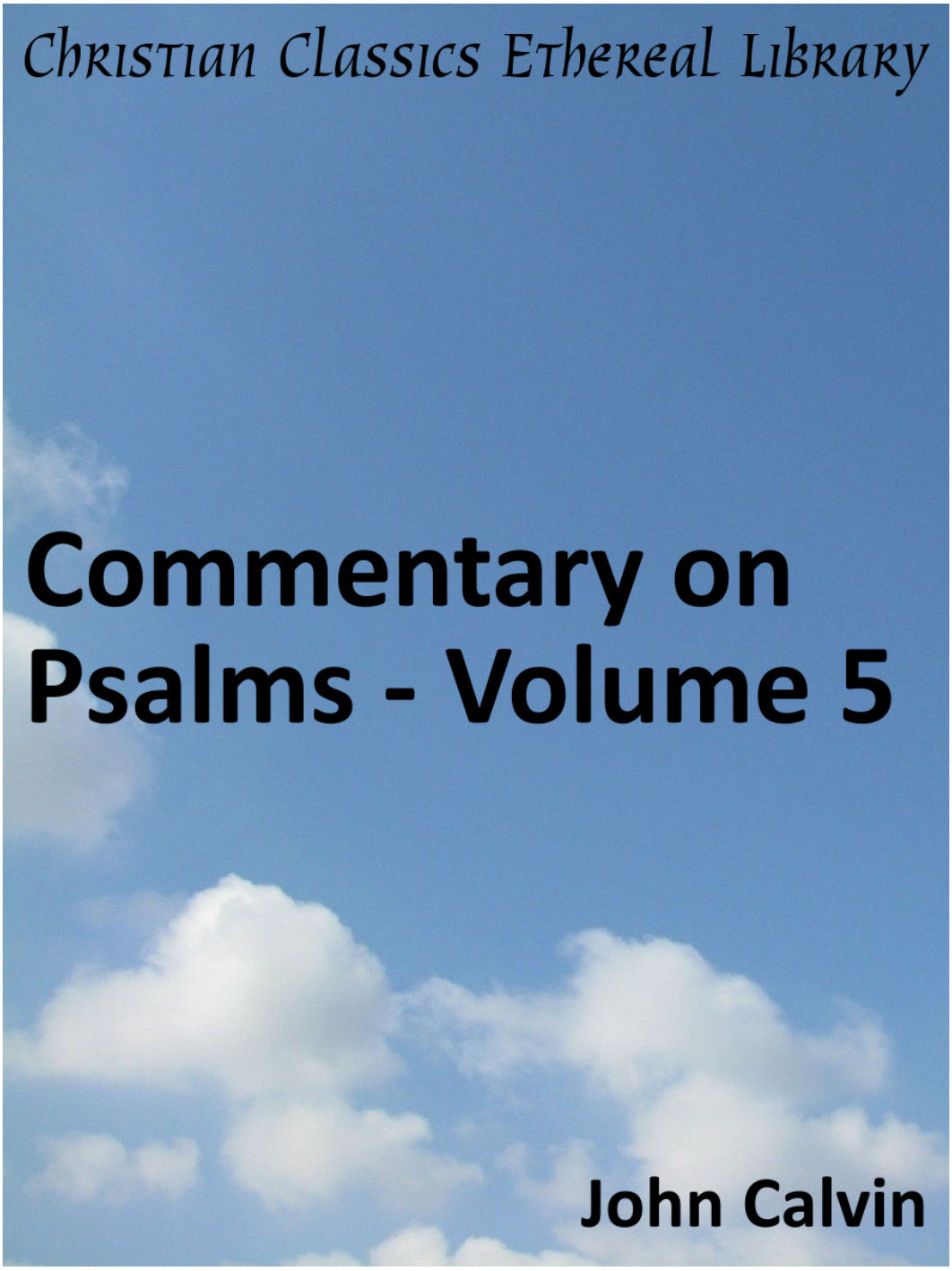
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Commentary on Psalms - Volume 5
John Calvin

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Commentary on Psalms - Volume 5

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Description: Calvin found Psalms to be one of the richest books in the Bible. As he writes in the introduction, "there is no other book in which we are more perfectly taught the right manner of praising God, or in which we are more powerfully stirred up to the performance of this religious exercise." This commentary--the last Calvin wrote--clearly expressed Calvin's deep love for this book. Calvin's *Commentary on Psalms* is thus one of his best commentaries, and one can greatly profit from reading even a portion of it.
Tim Perrine
CCEL Staff Writer
This volume contains Calvin's commentary on chapters 119 through 150.

Subjects: The Bible
Works about the Bible

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COMMENTARY
ON
THE BOOK OF PSALMS

BY JOHN CALVIN

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN, AND COLLATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S FRENCH VERSION,
BY THE REV. JAMES ANDERSON

VOLUME FIFTH

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In bringing to a close his labors on Calvin's Commentary On The Psalms, the Editor begs leave to state, that in addition to the General Index, and the Indices Of Texts Of Scripture, and of Hebrew Words, originally contemplated, it has been deemed highly desirable to give at the end of the Commentary a Translation; or Calvin's Version Of The Psalms arranged in parallelisms, together with a Table Of Those Passages In The Psalms Which Are Quoted In The New Testament, and a Table Of The Particular Subjects Of Each Psalm, according to Calvin's interpretation. These additions, it is hoped, will be considered as improvements. From the extent to which they have increased the size of this Volume, it has been found necessary to omit the Appendix of Additional Criticisms to which reference is made in some of the footnotes throughout the work.

To exhibit the Psalms arranged in the metrical order, was an idea which appears never to have suggested itself to the mind of Calvin. In his time, indeed, and long after it, the peculiar character of Hebrew Poetry was not understood. It was not till a recent period that any steady light was thrown on the laws of its composition. A vast amount of learning had indeed been expended on the subject, and a variety of hypotheses had been suggested by successive writers to unravel a question so intricate and mysterious; but no satisfactory result was attained until it was investigated by the learned Bishop Lowth, to whose genius and erudition we are indebted for the discovery of this long lost secret. He has proved, with a clearness and force of evidence which has now commanded universal assent, that Hebrew Poetry bears no resemblance in its structure to the Poetry of Greece and Rome, that it has no rhyming termination of lines as in the Poetry of our own language, and that its peculiar, and perhaps its sole characteristic, lies in a felicitous arrangement of words into what he denominates Parallelism. In other words, its leading peculiarity is that each sentence consists generally of two parts, closely corresponding to each other, not indeed in the number of syllables, but in the ideas which they express, or in their grammatical constructive form, the second being synonymous (or, as Bishop Jebb would denominate it, cognate) with the first, — or antipathetic to it in its terms and sentiments, — or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction, such as noun answering to noun, verb to verb, member to member, negative to negative, interrogative to interrogative. [1] The division of these sacred poems into hemistichs or lines is, therefore, the form in which they ought naturally to be arranged; and such an arrangement is attended with great advantages. It exhibits to the eye the pecu-

1 This sentence expresses the three specific heads into which Lowth discovered Hebrew parallelism, — which involves in it much variety and many gradations, — may be generally And more loosely *distributed, Parallels Synonymous,* (or, according to JEBB, *Parallels Cognate,) Parallels Antithetic, and Parallels Synthetic* or *Constructive.* For an example of the first, see Psalm 1:1-5; of the second, see Psalm 20:7, 8; and of the third, see Psalm 148:7-13.

liar structure of Hebrew poetical composition, and is, besides, an important aid in Scriptural Interpretation, as it often contributes to the elucidation of obscure and difficult passages, and enables even the mere English reader to discover a thousand beauties, which, without such a help, would escape his notice.

In translating this parallel version, two of Calvin's translations of the Hebrew text were at the service of the Editor, — the Latin and the French. The former is strictly literal, rarely changing the Hebrew idiom, or even inserting a supplementary term, and uniformly giving the arrangement of the words as they stand in the inspired original. The latter is also upon the whole literal, though in some instances it changes the Hebrew idiom into the French, as well as frequently inserts such supplementary terms as the sense seems to require; and disregarding the arrangement of the words in the original, it gives them in the order most suitable to the genius of the French tongue. The Editor has followed Calvin's Latin Version, and has rendered it literally, retaining the Hebrew modes of expression, and the arrangement of the words in the sequence of the Hebrew text, except in a very few instances where a deviation seemed necessary to render the reading intelligible. Occasionally he has found it necessary to insert some supplementary words. These, when taken from Calvin's French Version, as is generally the case, are printed simply in *italics,* and when supplied by the Editor are printed in *italics* and enclosed within brackets. By adhering to the Hebrew order of the words, the arrangements may sometimes appear harsh and uncouth; but very often they give much beauty and force to the expression. And in retaining the Hebrew idioms, the Editor has felt little scruple, considering that as our English Bible is a literal verbal translation of the Original Hebrew, many of these are quite familiar to us, and from their peculiar grace have even become naturalized in our language.

"The Hebrew idioms," says Addison, "run into the English with a peculiar grace and beauty. Our language has received innumerable elegencies's and improvements from that infusion of Hebraisms which are derived to it out of the poetical passages in Holy Writ. They give a force and energy to our expressions, warm and animate our language, and convey our thoughts in more ardent and intense phrases than any that are to be met with in our own tongue. There is something so pathetic in this kind of diction, that it often sets the mind in a flame, and makes our heart burn within us."

The utility of the two Tables adverted to is too obvious to require to be dwelt upon. From the former the reader will perceive how completely the inspiration of the Psalms is established by New Testament authority, and how highly they were appreciated by Christ and His Apostles, there being no portion of Old Testament Scripture from which they so frequently quoted. The other Table will readily serve as a guide to the selection of such Psalms as may be adapted to the doctrines of the Christian system, the duties of the Christian life, or the varied circumstances, whether prosperous or adverse, in which the Christian or the Church of God may be placed.

J.A.
EDINBURGH, April 1849.

Psalm 119:121-128

121. I have done judgment and righteousness: give me not up to my oppressors. **122.** Become surety for thy servant for good, that the proud may not oppress me. **123.** My eyes have failed for thy salvation, and for thy righteous word. [2] **124.** Deal with thy servant according to thy goodness, and teach me thy statutes. **125.** I am thy servant, give me understanding, that I may learn thy testimonies. **126.** It is time for thee, O Jehovah! to be doing for they have destroyed thy law. **127.** And therefore I have loved thy statutes above gold, [3] yea even above the most fine gold [4] **128.** Therefore I have esteemed all thy commandments to be altogether right, and have hated every way of lying.

121. *I have done judgment and righteousness.* The Prophet implores the help of God against the wicked who troubled him, and he does so in such a manner as at the same time to testify that the harassing treatment he received from them was on his part altogether undeserved. If we would have God to come down to succor us, it becomes us to see to it that we meet him with the testimony of a good conscience. As He everywhere promises his aid to the afflicted who are unrighteously oppressed, it is no superfluous protestation which the Prophet makes, that he had not provoked his enemies, but had restrained himself from all injury and wrong-doing, and had not even attempted to requite evil for evil. In asserting that he had at all times *done judgment,* he means that whatever rite wicked practiced, he steadfastly persevered in following after integrity, and never turned aside from what was just and right in any of his public or private transactions.

122. *Become surety for thy servant for good.* This prayer is almost similar to that of the preceding verse; for I prefer translating the Hebrew verb ערב, *arob,* by *Become surety for,* to rendering, as others do, *Delight thy servant in good,* or *Make thy servant to delight in good* According to this second version, the words are a prayer that God would rejoice his servant with his benefits. There is a third translation, by which they become a prayer that God would inspire his heart with the love and desire of rectitude; for true perfection consists in our taking pleasure in justice and uprightness. But as from the last clause of the verse it is obvious

2 Literally, "for the word of thy righteousness." Calvin understands it of the divine promises. Phillips translates "for the word of thy justice," "that is," says he, "for the sentence of justice on my oppressors, as the first part of the verse teaches; for the passing this sentence will be equivalent to the granting the salvation which the Psalmist so ardently desired."

3 "*Above gold.* מזהב, *mizahab,* more than *resplendent gold;* gold without any stain or rust." — Dr. *Adam Clarke*

4 "Ou, marguerites." — Fr. *marg.* "Or, pearls." "פז, *umipaz, above solid gold;* gold separated from the dross, perfectly refined." — *Dr. Adam Clarke.*

that David here desires succor against his enemies, the verb *Become surety* is the more appropriate rendering [5] Lord, as if he had said, since the proud cruelly rush upon me to destroy me, interpose thyself between us, as if thou wert my surety. The letter ל, *lamed,* which signifies *for,* is not indeed prefixed to the noun, but this is no valid objection to our translation, as that letter is often understood. It is a form of expression full of comfort, to represent God as performing the office of a surety in order to effect our deliverance. He is said metaphorically to become surety for us, just as if, on finding us indebted in a large sum of money, he discharged us of the obligation, by paying down the money to our creditor. The prayer is to this effect, That God would not suffer the wicked to exercise their cruelty against us at their pleasure, but that he would interpose as a defender to save us. By these words the Prophet intimates, that he was in extreme danger, and that he had nothing else left him in which to hope but the help of God.

123. *My eyes have failed for thy salvation.* [6] In the first place he testifies, that he had been afflicted with severe troubles, and that not for a short time only, but for a period so protracted as might have exhausted his patience and occasioned despondency. But so far was this from being the effect they produced, that he declares that in all these long and wearisome conflicts his heart had never sunk into despair. We have before explained *failing for salvation* as denoting that although there was no prospect of an end to his calamities, and although despair presented itself on every side, yet he strove against temptation even to the fainting of his soul. Should we understand the past tense of the verb as put for the present, in which sense it seems to be employed, the Prophet in that case intimates, that his eyes fail him not because they become fatigued, but because through earnest looking they contract as it were a dimness, and that yet he does not cease to wait continually for the salvation of God. In short, the failing of his eyes indicates perseverance combined with severe and arduous effort, and it is opposed to the momentary ardor of those who immediately faint, if God does not grant their requests. This expression also denotes a painful earnestness,

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5 ערב This verb signifies *to be pleasant, acceptable.* So Bucer has translated the first part of the verse, *oblecta servum tuum bono;* and indeed the Chaldee has given the same sense to the verb, for it is rendered by שמח, *make merry.* But the other meaning which it has, viz. *to become surety,* is evidently more suitable; for the expression *Be surety for thy servant for good,* corresponds very well with the previous and subsequent petitions, which are for deliverance from the hands of the enemy." — *Phillips.*

6 "In times of great sorrow, when the heart is oppressed with care, and when danger threatens on every side, the human eye expresses with amazing accuracy the distressing and anguished emotions of the soul. The posture here described is that of an individual who perceives himself surrounded with enemies of the most formidable character, who feels his own weakness and insufficiency to enter into conflict with them, but who is eagerly looking for the arrival of a devoted and powerful friend, who has promised to succor him in the hour of his calamity." — *Dr. Morison.*

which almost consumes all the senses. As to the term *salvation,* he does not limit it to one kind of help, but comprehends under it the continual course of God's grace, until he put his believing people in the possession of *complete* salvation. He expresses the manner in which he waited for salvation, which was by depending upon God's word in which two things are to be attended to, first, that we can only be said to wait for salvation from God, when, confiding in his promises, we actually betake ourselves to him for protection; and secondly, that we then only yield to God the praise of salvation, when we continue to keep our hope firmly fixed on his word. This is the way in which He is to be sought; and although he may conceal from our view the working of his hand, we ought to repose in his bare promises. This is the reason why David calls God's word *righteous.* He would hereby confirm his faith in the truth of the divine promises for God in promising liberally does not cherish in his people delusive expectations.

124. *Deal with thy servant according to thy goodness.* The two clauses of this verse must be read correctly; for he does not first separately desire God to deal well with him, and next desire him to be his master and teacher. He rather beseeches him in the exercise of that goodness and mercy, which he is wont to display towards all his people, to instruct him in his law. The object of the Prophet's request then is, that God would teach him in his statutes. But he begins with the divine mercy, employing it as an argument to prevail with God to grant him what he desires. This prayer then must be resolved thus: Lord, deal gently with me, and manifest thy goodness towards me by instructing me in thy commandments. Our whole happiness undoubtedly consists in our having that true wisdom which is to be derived from the word of God; and our only hope of obtaining this wisdom lies in God's being pleased to display his mercy and goodness towards us. The Prophet, therefore, magnifies the greatness and excellence of the benefit of being instructed in the divine law, when he requests that it may be bestowed upon him as a free gift.

125. *I am thy servant, give me understanding.* Here the prayer of the preceding verse is repeated. The repetition shows how ardently he wished the blessing prayed for, and how earnest and importunate he was in pleading with God for it. By the words he expresses still more plainly in what way it is that God teaches his own people — that he does so by illuminating with sound knowledge their understandings, which otherwise would be blind. It would profit us little to have the divine law sounding in our ears, or to have it exhibited in writing before our eyes, and to have it expounded by the voice of man, did not God correct our slowness of apprehension, and render us docile by the secret influence of his Spirit. We are not to suppose that David advances any meritorious claims before God when he boasts of being his servant. Men, indeed, commonly imagine that when we are previously well prepared, God then adds new grace, which they term *subsequent grace.* But the Prophet, so far from boasting of his own worth, rather declares how deep the obligations were under which he lay to God. It is not in the power of any man to make himself a servant of the Most High,

nor can any man bring anything of his own as a price with which to purchase so great an honor. Of this the Prophet was well aware. He knew that there is not one of the whole human family who is worthy of being enrolled among that order; and therefore he does nothing more than adduce the grace he had obtained, as an argument that God according to his usual way would perfect what he had begun. In a similar manner he speaks in Psalm 116:6,

"I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid:"

in which place it is abundantly manifest that he does not boast of his services, but only declares that he is one of the members of the Church.

126. *It is time for thee, O Jehovah! to be doing.* It being the object of the Prophet to imprecate upon the impious and wicked the vengeance which they have deserved, he says, that the fit time for executing it had now arrived, inasmuch as they had carried to a great extent their wanton forwardness against God. The general verb *doing* is more emphatic than if one more specific had been used. The language is as if he had said, that God would seem to delay too long, if he did not now execute the office of a judge. It is the peculiar work of God to restrain the wicked, and even to punish them severely when he finds that their repentance is utterly hopeless. If it is alleged, that this prayer is inconsistent with the law of charity, it may be replied, that David here speaks of reprobates, whose amendment is become desperate. His heart, there is no doubt, was governed by the spirit of wisdom. Besides, it is to be remembered, that he does not complain of his own private wrongs. It is a pure and honest zeal which moves him to desire the destruction of the wicked despisers of God; for he adduces no other reason for the prayer, than that the wicked *destroyed God's law.* By this he gives evidence, that nothing was dearer to him than the service of God, and that nothing was held by him in higher recommendation than the observance of the law. I have already repeatedly warned you, in other places, that our zeal is forward and disordered whenever its moving principle is a sense of our own personal injuries. It is, therefore, to be carefully noticed, that the Prophet's grief proceeded from no other cause than that he could not endure to see the divine law violated. In short, this is a prayer that God would restore to order the confused and ruinous state of things in the world. It remains for us to learn from David's example, whenever the earth is fraught and defiled with wickedness to such a degree that the fear of him has become almost extinct, to call upon him to show himself the maintainer of his own glory. This doctrine is of use in sustaining our hope and patience whenever God suspends the execution of his judgments longer than we would incline. Previous to his addressing himself to God, the Prophet adopts it as a principle, that, although God may seem for a time to take no notice of what his creatures do, yet he never forgets his office, but delays the execution of his judgments for wise reasons, that at length he may execute them when the seasonable time arrives.

127. *And therefore I have loved thy statutes above gold.* This verse, I have no doubt, is connected with the preceding; for otherwise the illative particle *therefore* would be without

meaning. Viewing it in this connection, I understand the Psalmist as intimating, that the reason why he esteemed God's law as more valuable than gold and precious stones, was because he had fixed in his mind a thorough persuasion of the truth, that although God may connive for a time at wickedness, the making havoc of all uprightness and equity will not always remain unpunished. Yea, the more he saw the wicked outrageously breaking forth into wickedness, the more was he incited by a holy indignation burning in his heart, to love the law. This is a passage deserving of special attention, for the baneful influence of evil example is well known, every man thinking that he may lawfully do whatever is commonly practiced around him. Whence it comes to pass, that evil company carries us away like a tempest. The more diligently then ought we to meditate on this doctrine, That when the wicked claim to themselves an unbridled liberty, it behoves us to contemplate with the eyes of faith the judgments of God, in order to our being thereby quickened to the observance of the divine law. If attention to this doctrine has been needful from the beginning, at the present day it is necessary to exert ourselves, that we may not be involved in violating the law of God with the wicked conspiracy which almost the whole world have formed to violate it. The more outrageously the wicked vaunt themselves, let our veneration for and our love of the divine law proportionally increase.

128. *Therefore I have esteemed all thy commandments to be altogether right* [7] This verse, like the preceding, is connected with the 26th, and the connection may be brought out by observing, that the Prophet, waiting patiently for God's judgments, and also earnestly calling for their infliction, had subscribed to the law of God in every particular, and embraced it without a single exception — and moreover, that he hated every false way. Literally, it is *all the commandments of all;* but the words *of all* are to be referred to things and not to persons, as if he had said, that he approved of all the laws which God had ordained, whatever they enjoined. [8] A similar form of expression occurs in Ezekiel 44:30, "all oblations of all things" — that is to say, whatever kind of oblations men offer. The Prophet has not laid down this sentiment in such express terms without good reason; for there is nothing to which we are naturally more inclined than to despise or reject whatever in God's law is not agreeable to us. Every man, according as he is tainted with this or that particular vice, would desire their

7 Durell translates this verse — "For, as much as I esteem all thy precepts, etc., therefore I hate," etc.

8 "*All the precepts of everything, i.e.,* all precepts concerning all things. I embrace thy revealed Word, without any exceptions. The Psalmist states, that he had most diligently applied his mind to the consideration of all God's commandments, the circumstances and occasions on which they were given, and he observed that they abounded in justice and holiness. Since, therefore, they are all equally just and holy, whatsoever is contrary to them he regarded as unjust, impure, false and detestable. Hammond remarks, that 'the reduplication of the universal particle ⌧ is emphatic *all, even all;*' and so the plain rendering is most current, *all thy commandments, even all,* have I approved." — *Phillips.*

the commandment which forbids it were razed out of the law. But we cannot lawfully make any addition to it, or take away anything from it; and since God has joined his commandments together by a sacred and inviolable bond, to separate any one of them from the rest is altogether unwarrantable. We perceive then how the Prophet, inspired with a holy jealousy for the law, contended against the wicked rebellion of those who despised it. And assuredly, when we see that the ungodly mock God with such effrontery, at one time rising up audaciously against him, trod at another perverting every part of the law, it becomes us to be the more inflamed with zeal, and to be the more courageous in maintaining the truth of God. The extreme impiety of our age especially demands of all the faithful that they should exercise themselves in this holy zeal. Profane men strive to outdo one another in scornfully aspersing the doctrine of salvation, and endeavor to bring God's sacred Word into contempt by their derisive jeers. Others pour forth their blasphemies without intermission. We cannot, therefore, avoid being chargeable with the crime of treacherous indifference, if our hearts are not warmed with zeal, and unless we burn with a holy jealousy. The Prophet not merely says, that he approved of God's law wholly and without exception, but he adds, *that he hated every way of lying,* or *every false way.* And, undoubtedly, no one subscribes in good earnest to the law of God, but he who rejects all the slanders by which the wicked taint or obscure the purity of sound doctrine. *By way of lying,* the Prophet doubtless means whatever is opposed to the purity of the law, intimating that he detested all corruption's which are contrary to the Word of God.

Psalm 119:129-136

129. Thy testimonies are marvelous; therefore my soul hath kept them. **130.** The entrance of thy words is light, which giveth understanding to the little ones. **131.** I opened my mouth and panted, because I loved thy commandments. **132.** Look upon me, and be merciful to me, according to thy judgment towards them that love thy name. **133.** Direct my steps according to thy word, and let no iniquity have [9] dominion in me. **134.** Deliver me from the oppression of men; and I will keep thy precepts. **135.** Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes. **136.** Rivers of waters run from my eyes, because they have not kept thy law.

129. *Thy testimonies are marvelous.* I have given this translation to avoid an ambiguous form of expression. The Prophet does not simply mean, that the doctrine of the law is wonderful, but that it contains high and hidden mysteries. Accordingly he declares, that the sublime and admirable wisdom which he found comprehended in the divine law led him to regard it with reverence. This is to be carefully marked, for the law of God is proudly despised by the great majority of mankind, when they do not duly taste its doctrine, nor acknowledge that God speaks from his throne in heaven, that, the pride of the flesh being abased, he may raise us upward by the apprehension of faith. We also gather from this passage, that it is impossible for any man to keep the law of God from the heart, unless he contemplate it with feelings of reverence: for reverence is the beginning of pure and right subjection. Accordingly, I have said that many despise God's Word, because they think it inferior to the acuteness of their own understandings. Yea, many are led to break forth more audaciously into this heaven-daring contempt, from the vanity of showing their own ingenuity. But, although worldly men may flatter themselves in that proud disdain of the divine law, yet the commendation which the Prophet pronounces upon it still holds true, that it comprehends mysteries which far transcend all the conceptions of the human mind.

130. *The entrance of thy word is light.* The amount is, that the light of the truth revealed in God's word, is so distinct that the very first sight of it illuminates the mind. The word פתח *pethach,* properly signifies *an opening,* [10] but metaphorically it is taken for *a gate.* Accordingly the old translator has rendered it *beginning,* which is not improper, provided it is understood of the rudiments or first elements of the divine law. It is as if the Prophet had — "Not only do those who have attained an accurate acquaintance with the whole law, and

9 In the French it is, "that no iniquity may have," etc.

10 "פתח *pethach,* 'the *opening* of thy words giveth light:' when I open my Bible to read, light springs up in my mind." — Dr. *Adam Clarke.* The corresponding word in Syriac signifies *to enlighten,* and in Arabic *to explain.* Hence, in the opinion of some, פתח, *pethach,* is the expounding of thy word.

who have made the study of it the business of their lives, discern there a clear light, but also those who have studied it even very imperfectly, and who have only, so to speak, entered the porch." Now we must reason from the less to the greater. If tyroes and novices begin to be enlightened at their first entrance, what will be the case when a man is admitted to a full and perfect knowledge?

In the second clause the Prophet unfolds his meaning more fully. By *little ones* he denotes such as neither excel in ingenuity nor are endued with wisdom, but rather are unskilled in letters, and unrefined by education. Of such he affirms that, as soon as they have learned the first principles of the law of God, they will be endued with understanding. It ought to have a most powerful influence in exciting in us an earnest desire to become acquainted with the law of God, when we are told that even those who, in the estimation of the world, are fools, and contemptible simpletons, provided they apply their minds to this subject, acquire from it wisdom sufficient to lead them to eternal salvation. Although it is not given to all men to attain to the highest degree in this wisdom, yet it is common to all the godly to profit so far as to know the certain and unerring rule by which to regulate their life. Thus no man who surrenders himself to the teaching of God, will loose his labor in his school, for from his first entrance he will reap inestimable fruit. Meanwhile we are warned, that all who follow their own understanding, wander in darkness. By affirming that *the little ones are enlightened,* David intimates, that it is only when men, divested of all self confidence, submit themselves with humble and docile minds to God, that they are in a proper state for becoming proficient scholars in the study of the divine law. Let the Papists mock, as they are accustomed to do, because we would have the Scriptures to be read by all men without exception; yet it is no falsehood which God utters by the mouth of David, when he affirms that the light of his truth is exhibited to fools. God will not, therefore, disappoint the desire of such as acknowledge their own ignorance, and submit themselves humbly to his teaching.

131. *I opened my mouth and panted.* [11] By these words the Psalmist would have us to understand that he was inflamed with such love to and longing for the divine law, that he was unceasingly sighing after it. In comparing himself to such as are hungry, or to such as burn with parching thirst, he has used a very appropriate metaphor. As such persons indicate the vehemence of their desire by opening the mouth, and by distressful panting, as if they

11 The allusion, according to some, is to an exhausted or thirsty traveler in hot countries, who gasps and pants for the cooling breeze, or the refreshing fountain. According to others this is a metaphor, taken from an exhausted animal in the chase, which runs open-mouthed, to take in the cooling air, the heart beating high, and the muscular force being nearly expended through fatigue. In either view the language is extremely expressive, showing how intensely the Psalmist longed for the refreshment and delight which an acquaintance with the word of God affords. And if the "opening of God's words," mentioned in the preceding verse, means the expounding of them, David here points out his eager desire to hear God's word expounded.

would suck up the whole air, even so the Prophet affirms that he himself was oppressed with continual uneasiness. The opening of the mouth, then, and the drawing of breath, are set in opposition to a cold assent to the word of God. Here the Holy Spirit teaches with what earnestness of soul the knowledge of divine truth is to be sought. Whence it follows, that such as make little or no proficiency in God's law, are punished by their own indolence or carelessness. When David affirms that he panted continually, he points out not only his ardor but also his constancy.

132. *Look upon me, and be merciful to me.* In this verse he beseeches God to have a regard to him: as he is accustomed always to look to those who are his people. The Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠ *mishpat,* translated *judgment,* signifies in this passage, as in many others, *a common rule,* or *ordinary usage.* [12] He next adds the purpose for which he desires that God would look upon him, namely, that he may be relieved from his miseries. This, then, is the prayer of an afflicted man, who, when apparently destitute of all help, and unable to come to any other conclusion than that he is neglected and forsaken of God, yet reflects with himself, that, for God to forsake him, was foreign to his nature and to his usual manner of procedure. It is as if he had said — Although I can perceive no token of thy favor, yea, although my condition is so wretched and desperate, that, judging according to sense and reason, I deem that thou hast turned the back: upon me; yet, as from the beginning of the world to the present day, thou hast testified, by numberless proofs, that thou art merciful to thy servants, I beseech time that, acting according to this rule, thou wouldst now exercise the like loving-kindness towards me. It is to be particularly noticed, lest those whom God does not immediately answer may become discouraged, that the Prophet had been long oppressed by miseries, without any prospect of relief. Yet it is at the same time to be observed, that the Prophets sole ground of confidence in asking this from God is his free goodness. Whence we gather that, although he was a man of eminent sanctity, yet the undeserved grace of God was his only refuge. With respect to the word *judgment,* let us learn from the Prophet's example to acquaint ourselves with the nature of God, from the various experiences we have had of it that we may have certain evidence that he is merciful to us. And, in truth, were not his grace known to us from the daily experience we have of it, which of us would dare to approach him? But if our eyes are not blind, we must perceive the very clear testimonies by which he fortifies our faith, so that we need not doubt that all the godly are the objects of his regard; only we must endeavor to be among the number of those *who love his name.* By this title is meant genuine believers; for those who only slavishly fear God are not worthy of being reckoned among his servants. He requires a voluntary obedience from us, so that nothing may be more delightful to us than to follow whithersoever he calls us. It is, however,

12 "*According to the custom, or usual mode of acting.* So Luther — *as thou art accustomed to do,* etc. In Genesis 40:13 — 'Thou shalt deliver the cup, ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *according to custom.*'"— *Phillips.*

at the same time to be observed, that this love proceeds from faith; yea, the Prophet here commends the grand effect of faith, by separating the godly, who lean upon the grace of God, from worldly men, who, having given their hearts to the enticements of the world, never lift up their minds towards heaven.

133. *Direct my steps according to thy word.* By these words he shows, as he has often done before in other places, that the only rule of living well is for men to regulate themselves wholly by the law of God. We have already repeatedly seen in this Psalm, that so long as men allow there-selves to wander after their own inventions, God rejects whatever they do, however laborious the efforts they may put forth. But as the Prophet declares that men's lives are then only framed aright when they yield themselves wholly to the obeying of God, so, on the other hand, he confesses that to do this is not within their own will or power. God's law, it is evident, will not make us better by merely prescribing to us what is right. Hence the outward preaching of it is compared to a dead letter. David, then, well instructed in the law, prays for an obedient heart being given him, that he may walk in the way set before him. Here two points are particularly deserving of our notice — first, that God deals bountifully with men, when he invites them to himself by his word and doctrine; and, secondly, that still all this is lifeless and unprofitable, until he govern by his Spirit those whom he has already taught by his word. As the Psalmist desires not simply to have his steps directed, but to have them directed to God's word, we may learn that he did not hunt after secret revelations, and set the word at nought, as many fanatics do, but connected the external doctrine with the inward grace of the Holy Spirit; and herein consists the completeness of the faithful, in that God engraves on their hearts what he shows by his word to be right. Nothing, therefore, is more foolish than the fancy of those who say, that in enjoining upon men what he would have them to do, God estimates the strength which they have to perform it. In vain does divine truth sound in our ears, if the Spirit of God does not effectually pierce into our hearts. The Prophet confesses that it is to no purpose for him to read or hear the law of God, unless his life is regulated by the secret influence of the Holy Spirit, that he may thus be enabled to walk in that righteousness which the law enjoins. In the second clause he reminds us how necessary it is for us to be continually presenting this prayer at the throne of grace, acknowledging that he is the bond-slave of sin until God stretch forth his hand to deliver him. *direct* me, says he, *that iniquity may not have dominion in me.* [13] So long, then, as we are left to ourselves, Satan exercises', over us his despotic sway uncontrolled, so that we have not power to rid ourselves of iniquity. The freedom of the godly consists solely in this — that they are governed by the Spirit of God, and thus preserved from succumbing to iniquity, although harassed with hard and painful conflicts.

13 ⊠⊠, *bi*, IN *me.* Let me have no governor but God; let the throne of my heart be filled by him, and none other. — *Dr. Adam Clark*

134. *Deliver me from the oppression of men.* When recounting what had befallen himself, the Prophet shows, by his own example, that all the godly are exposed to rapine and oppression, and that, like sheep in the mouths of wolves, they will be inevitably destroyed unless God defend them. As very few are governed by the Spirit of God, it is no wonder if all love of equity is banished from the world, and if all men are found everywhere rushing into all kinds of wickedness, some impelled by cruelty, [14] and others devoted to fraud and deceit. When, therefore, the Prophet saw that he was overwhelmed on all sides with injuries, he betook himself to God as his deliverer. By the word *deliver* he intimates, that unless he is preserved in a wonderful manner, it is all over with him. In the second clause, he engages that he will not prove ungrateful for his deliverance: *And I will keep thy precepts* Nothing more effectually strengthens us, in an earnest desire and endeavor to follow after integrity and righteousness, than when we find by experience, that God's defense is of more value to us than all the unlawful helps to which worldly men unusually have recourse. We are taught from this passage, that when engaged in contest with the wicked, we ought not to suffer our minds to be actuated by malice, but that, however violently and unjustly they may assault us, we should rest; contented with the deliverance which God bestows, and with that alone; and again, that every instance in which we experience the grace of God in delivering us, should be a spur to incite us to follow after uprightness. He delivers us for no other end, but that the fruits of our deliverance may be manifested in our life; and we are too perverse if that experience is not sufficient to convince us, that all who persevere in the unfeigned fear of God, will always abide in safety by his aid, although the whole world may be against them.

135. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.* There is here the repetition of a prayer which we have several times met with before in this Psalm. The Prophet intimates, that he regarded nothing as of more importance than rightly to understand the divine law. When he beseeches God *to make his face to shine upon his servant,* he, in the first place, seeks to win the fatherly favor of God — for nothing is to be hoped for from Him unless we have an interest in his favor — but he at the same time, shows the greatness of the blessing. There is no testimony of the love of God, as if he had said, which I am more desirous to obtain than to be enabled to make progress in his law. Whence we gather, as I have lately observed, that he preferred divine truth to all the possessions of the world. Would to God that this affection were vigorous in our hearts! But that which the Prophet extols so highly, is neglected by the great proportion of mankind. If individuals are to be found stimulated by this desire, we see them presently falling back to the Measurements of the world, so that there are very few, indeed, who renouncing all other desires, seek earnestly with David to become acquainted with the doctrine of the law. Besides, as God vouchsafes this privilege only to those whom he has embraced with his fatherly love, it is proper for us to begin with this prayer,

14 In the French version it is "avarice."

That he would make his face to shine upon us. This form of expression, however, conveys something more — it implies, that it is only when God illumines the minds of his believing people with the true knowledge of the law, that he delights them with the beams of his favor. It often happens that, even in regard to them, God's countenance is overcast with clouds in this respect, namely, when he deprives them of tasting the sweetness of his word.

136. *Rivers of waters run from my eyes.* [15] Here David affirms that he was inflamed with no ordinary zeal for the glory of God, inasmuch as he dissolved wholly into tears on account of the contempt put upon the divine law. He speaks hyperbolically; but still he truly and plainly expresses the disposition of mind with which he was endued; and it corresponds with what he says in altogether place, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (Psalm 69:9.) Wherever the Spirit of God reigns, he excites this ardent zeal, which burns the hearts of the godly when they see the commandment of the Most High God accounted as a thing of nought. It is not enough that each of us endeavor to please God; we must also desire that his law may be held in estimation by all men. In this way holy Lot, as the Apostle Peter testifies, vexed his soul when he beheld Sodom a sink of all kinds of wickedness. (2 Peter 2:8.) If, in former times, the ungodliness of the world extorted from the children of God such bitter grief, so great is the corruption into which we at this day are fallen, that those who can look upon the present state of things unconcerned and without tears, are thrice, yea four times, insensible. How great in our day is the frenzy of the world in despising God and neglecting his doctrine? A few, no doubt, are to be found who with the mouth profess their willingness to receive it, but scarcely one in ten proves the sincerity of his profession by his life. Meanwhile countless multitudes are hurried away to the impostures of Satan and to the Pope; others are as thoughtless and indifferent about their salvation as the lower animals; [16] and many Epicureans openly mock at all religion. If there is, then, the smallest portion of piety remaining in us, full rivers of tears, and not merely small drops, will flow from our eyes. But if we would give evidence of pure and uncorrupted zeal, let our grief begin at ourselves — at our seeing that we are yet far from having attained to a perfect observance of the law; yea, that the depraved lusts of our carnal nature are often rising up against the righteousness of God.

15 *Rivers of waters* — that is, a great profusion of tears. "The Orientals are in general very copious weepers; and this strong hyperbole is still much employed among them to express the highest degree of lamenting grief." — Illustrated *Commentary upon the Bible.*

16 "Les autres s'endorment sans grand soin de leur salut comme bestes brutes." — Fr

Psalm 119:137-144

137. O Jehovah! thou art righteous, and thy judgments are right. **138.** Thou hast commanded righteousness in thy testimonies, and truth greatly. **139.** My zeal hath consumed me, because my adversaries have forgotten thy words. **140.** Thy word is exceedingly refined, and thy servant hath loved it. **141.** I am insignificant and despised; I have not forgotten thy commandments. **142.** Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness; and the law is truth. **143.** Trouble and anguish have come upon me; but thy commandments are my delight. **144.** The righteousness of thy testimonies endereth for ever; give me understanding and I shall live.

137. O *Jehovah! thou art righteous.* The Prophet yields to God the praise of righteousness, and also acknowledges that it is to be found in his law. Some understand *judgments* as referring to those infliction's by which God chastises the sins of men; but this does not seem so fitly to agree with the scope of the passage. Besides, as the adjective ישר, *yashar,* translated *right,* is put in the singular number with the word *judgments,* the sentence should be explained thus that there is not any one of the judgments of God which is not right. Should we be inclined to take ישר as a substantive, the sense will be almost the same. All men indeed grant that God is righteous; but the Prophet has expressed more than the common sort of men, yea than the whole world, perceive in reference to this subject; for in designating God *righteous,* he means, that as soon as we depart from Him, we will not find a particle of righteousness anywhere else. When he adds that the evidence and testimony of this righteousness are to be seen in the law, he teaches us that God is robbed of his praise, if we do not subscribe to all his commandments. To the same purpose is the following verse, which declares that God has taught in his law full and perfect righteousness and truth. The adverb, מאד, *meod,* which signifies *greatly,* is with more propriety connected with the nouns than with the verb *commanded;* inasmuch as it was God's design to exhibit in the law a perfect rule of righteousness. The doctrine of the law is honored with these encomiums, that all of us may learn to derive wisdom from it, and that no man may devise for himself any other standard of rectitude or righteousness than that which is exhibited in the law; a very necessary lesson, since every man would willingly frame for himself a new pattern or standard of righteousness.

139. *My zeal hath consumed me.* [17] The Psalmist speaks of his persecutors, by whom it is certain he had been subjected to much trouble. But although they were virulent and cruel towards him, he avows that it was not so much his own private wrongs which offended him

17 "*Hath consumed me.* The strong term here made use of corresponds very well with the forcible language of the preceding verse. My zeal for thy word is so great, that when I see how my enemies disregard it, I am overpowered by feelings of shame at their neglect." — *Phillips.*

as the violation of God's law; yea rather, that he was so consumed with grief on that account as not to be affected at all with his own individual troubles. This is an example from which much profit may be derived. We are too tender and delicate in bearing wrongs; and hence it is that if we are but touched with a finger, we are instantly inflamed with anger, whilst at the same time we are but coldly affected at the most grievous offenses committed against God. But if we are animated with the zeal that inspired the Prophet it will carry us away to another kind of sorrow, which will take entire possession of our souls.

140. *Thy word is exceedingly refined.* In this verse he intimates that the cause of his zeal was the love which he bore to heavenly doctrine. For to be displeased with or severely to condemn the contempt of divine truth, unless we are bound to it by the cords of love, is pure hypocrisy. And he affirms that his love to God's word was not a rash, or a blind and inconsiderate affection, but that he loved it, because like gold or silver which has been refined, it was pure and free from all dregs and dross. This is the idea contained in the metaphorical term ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *tseruphah,* translated *refined;* [18] and though it seems to be commonplace, yet, vindicating God's word from all perverse and malicious judgments, it expresses graphically the true obedience of faith. How few are there who are not guilty, either by their distrust, or waywardness, or pride, or voluptuousness, of casting upon God's word some spot or stain! The flesh then being so rebellious, it is no small commendation of revealed truth, when it is compared to gold well refined, so that it shines pure from all defilement. Farther, it serves not a little to show the truth of this testimony, that the Prophet confirms it by his own experience. The more effectually to repress the foolish rashness with which we are chargeable whenever we imagine that there is any fault in God's word, he declares that in commending it he gives utterance to the unfeigned feeling of his heart, having experienced a blissful pleasure in that purity of which he speaks.

141. *I am, insignificant and despised.* The meaning is, that although he was tried with poverty and many other calamities, he steadily persevered in the exercise of true godliness, and in the observance of the law. On that account, as he states, he was despised by wicked men. Every man gives praise to God just in proportion as he is gorged with his benefits; and very few will be found applying their minds to the service of God, unless they have all their wishes gratified. Hence it comes to pass that hypocrites, as long as they are pampered to the full, accumulate riches and increase in power, are very lavish in praising God. But let them

18 Dr. Adam Clarke translates ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *tseruphah,* by *purification.* This rendering conveys a beautiful idea. God's word is not only *a purified thing,* but *a thing that purifies.* It cleanses from sin every heart with which it comes into contact. "Now ye are clean," said Christ,

"by the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3.) This tendency of the word to impart a measure of its own purity to such as yield to its influence, endears it to all God's people; and for this reason they make it the subject of their constant meditation.

be treated in some degree roughly, and immediately the blessed name of God is heard of no more. Since then men are ordinarily mercenary in serving God, let us learn from the Prophet's example that true godliness is disinterested, so that when under its influence we *cease* not to praise God, although he may afflict us with adversity and make us despised in the eyes of the world. These upbraiding words of Christ in John 6:26, ought, no doubt, to be carefully attended to,

"Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." (John 6:26)

The persons then who serve God ingenuously and sincerely, are such as continue steadfast in his fear, although their condition in this world may be mean and despised; in short, they are such as seek not their reward on earth, but through heat and cold, poverty and danger, slanders and mockeries, persevere with unwearied steps in the course of their warfare.

142. *Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness.* Here the law of God is honored by the additional encomium, that it is everlasting righteousness and truth; as if it had been said, that all other rules of life, with whatever attractions they may appear to be recommended, are but a shadow, which quickly vanishes away. The Psalmist, no doubt, indirectly contrasts the doctrine of the law with all the human precepts which were ever delivered, that he may bring all the faithful in subjection to it, since it is the school of perfect wisdom. There may be more of plausibility in the refined and subtle disquisition's of men; but there is in them nothing firm or solid at bottom, as there is in God's law. This firmness of the divine law he proves in the following verse from one instance — the continual comfort he found in it when grievously harassed with temptations. And the true test of the profit we have reaped from it is, when we oppose to all the distresses of whatever kind which may straiten us, the consolation derived from the word of God, that thereby all sadness may be effaced from our minds. David here expresses something more than he did in the preceding verse; for there he only said that he reverently served God, although from his rough and hard treatment he might seem to lose his labor; but now when distressed and tormented, he affirms that he finds in the law of God the most soothing delight, which mitigates all grief's, and not only tempers their bitterness, but also seasons them with a certain sweetness. And assuredly when this taste does not exist to afford us delight, nothing is more natural than for us to be swallowed up of sorrow. Nor ought we to omit noticing the form of expression which the Prophet employs, by which he teaches, that although he was besieged and shut up on all sides, he found a remedy sufficiently powerful in improving the consolation offered him by the word of God. As this could not be true of the bare commandments, which so far from remedying our distresses, rather fill us with anxiety, there is no doubt that under the word *commandments* there is comprehended by the figure synecdoche, the whole doctrine of the law, in which God not only requires what is right, but in which also calling his elect

ones to the hope of eternal salvation, he opens the gate of perfect happiness. Yea, under the term *law* are comprehended both free adoption, and also the promises which flow from it.

144. *The righteousness of thy testimonies endureth forever.* The Psalmist repeats what he had already before stated, that there is a great dissimilarity between the righteousness of God's testimonies and man's inventions; the splendor of the last quickly vanishing away, whereas the other continues steadfast for ever. He repeats this twice; for although the world is forced to attribute the praise of righteousness to the law of God, yet the majority of mankind are carried away after their own speculations, so that there is nothing more difficult than to hold us fast in our obedience to God. David's drift is to show that everlasting righteousness is not comprehended elsewhere than in God's law, and that it is in vain to seek for it anywhere else; and there is accordingly here laid down a clearer definition of righteousness, which is, that righteousness consists in our keeping ourselves within the bounds of the law. As to the last clause of the verse, *Give me understanding and I shall live,* I read it in connection with the preceding clause; for although David desires to have his mind enlightened by God, yet he does not conceive of any other way by which he was to obtain an enlightened understanding than by his profiting aright in the study of the law. Farther, he here teaches, that men cannot, properly speaking, be said to live when they are destitute of the light of heavenly wisdom; and as the end for which men are created is not that, like swine or asses, they may stuff their bellies, but that they may exercise themselves in the knowledge and service of God, when they turn away from such employment, their life is worse than a thousand deaths. David therefore protests that for him to live was not merely to be fed with meat and drink, and to enjoy earthly comforts, but to aspire after a better life, which he could not do save under the guidance of faith. This is a very necessary warning; for although it is universally acknowledged that man is born with this distinction, that he excels the lower animals in intelligence, yet the great bulk of mankind, as if with deliberate purpose: stifle whatever light God pours into their understandings. I indeed admit that all men desire to be sharp-witted; but how few aspire to heaven, and consider that the fear of,God is the beginning of wisdom. Since then meditation upon the celestial life is buried by earthly cares, men do nothing else than plunge into the grave, so that while living to the world, they die to God. Under the term *life,* however, as I have elsewhere said, the Prophet denotes the utmost he could wish. Lord, as if he had said, although I am already dead, yet if thou art pleased to illumine my mind with the knowledge of heavenly truth, this grace alone will be sufficient to revive me.

Psalm 119:145-152

145. ח I have cried with my whole heart; answer me, O Jehovah! and I will keep thy statutes. **146.** ח I have called upon thee; save me, and I will keep thy testimonies. **147.** ח I have prevented the twilight, [19] and have cried: I have looked up to thy word. **148.** ח My eyes have prevented the night-watches, to meditate upon thy word. **149.** ח Hear my yoke, O Jehovah! According to thy mercy, quicken me according to thy judgment. **150.** ח The pursuers of malice have drawn near; they have departed from thy law. **151.** ח Thou, O Jehovah! art near; and all thy commandments are truth. **152.** ח I have known from thy testimonies from the beginning that thou hast established them for ever.

145 *I have cried with my whole heart.* This verse may be so read and connected as that in the end of it the Psalmist may show what he desired in crying; [20] and thus the meaning would be, that as he was inflamed with an intense desire to keep the law, he continually made supplication to God on that subject. But the subsequent verse compels us to take a different view, for the same thing is, no doubt, there again repeated. The Prophet then requests that God would hear him; and in token of his gratitude he promises to keep God's commandments. He simply uses the indefinite term *cry;* and thus he does not express what the prayers were which he offered up to God, but only shows, that while the children of this world are distracted by a multiplicity of objects, he directed all the affections of his heart exclusively to God, because he depended solely on him. As the world is compelled to acknowledge that God is the author of all good things, many formal prayers proceed from that principle. It was the consideration of this which led David to affirm that he prayed with his whole heart. When he shall have obtained his requests, he proposes to himself the glory of God as his end, resolving to devote himself with so much the more ardent affection to the work of serving him. Although God declares that he is served aright by the sacrifice of praise, yet David, to distinguish himself from hypocrites who profane the name of God by their cold and feigned praises, with good reason declares that he will give thanks by his life and works.

In the following verse he makes no new statement; but he speaks more expressly. In the first place, he says that he cried to God; and next he adds, that he commended his welfare to Him by prayer; thereby intimating that whether he was in safety, or whether imminent danger threatened him with death, he uniformly reposed upon God, being fully persuaded that the only way in which he could continue safe was by having him for the guardian and protector of his welfare.

19 The word which Calvin uses for "the twilight" is "crepusculum."

20 According to this view, the last clause would read, "that I may keep thy statutes."

147. *I have prevented the twilight.* The Hebrew noun ⊠⊠⊠, *nesheph,* is in this place improperly translated by *crepusculum, twilight;* for it rather signifies the dawn of morning. But as the Latin's derive the word *crepusculum,* from *creperus,* which signifies *doubtful* or *uncertain,* so that it may signify the doubtful and intermediate time between light and darkness, I have not been particularly nice in the selection of the term only let my readers understand that the evening twilight commencing with sunset is not here denoted, but the imperfect light which precedes the rising of the sun. David then expresses the most eager haste when he says, that he prevented the dawn of the morning by his prayers. The verb *cry* always conveys the idea of earnestness; referring, as it does, not so much to the loudness of the voice as to the vehemency and ardor of the mind. In mentioning his haste, his object is the better to set forth his perseverance; for he tells us, that although he betook himself to prayer with such promptitude, yet he did not immediately become weary of that exercise, like the unbelieving, who, if God does not suddenly grant them their requests, murmur and complain against him. Thus, in conjoining patience of hope with earnestness of desire, he shows what is the true manner of praying; even as Paul, in Philippians 4:6, when he exhorts us to

"let our requests be made known unto God with thanksgiving," (Philippians 4:6)

admonishes us, while engaged in the exercise of prayer, to bridle our turbulent affections, because one of the ends of prayer is to nourish our hope. Nor is the mention made of *the word* in the close of the verse superfluous; for it is only by having the Word of God continually before our eyes, that we can bridle the wanton impetuosity of our corrupt nature.

148. *My eyes have prevented the night watchers.* [21] The Psalmist here intimates, that he was more sedulously intent on meditating upon the law of God than watchmen of the night

21 The Hebrews divided the natural day into three portions--morning, noon, and evening — which are mentioned by David as seasons in which he engaged in prayer. (Psalm 55:17.) They also divided the night into three parts, called "watches," consisting of four hours each, and commencing at our six o'clock in the evening. In Lamentations 2:19, we read of the first watch; or, as it is there designated, "the beginning of the watches;" in Judges 7:19, of "the middle watch;" and in Exodus 14:24, of "the morning watch." A similar division of the night seems to have been made by other ancient nations, as appears from the references made to it by Homer and the early Greek writers. The Greeks and Romans, however, in improving their military discipline, afterwards divided the night into four watches, each consisting of three hours; and when the Jews fell under the dominion of the latter people, they adopted from them this division of the night. Hence we read of "the fourth watch of the night" in Matthew 14:25. And the four watches are mentioned together in Mark 13:35: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing,
or in the morning." The time at which each of these four watches began and ended is thus determined by Dr. Hales, who has written elaborately on the subject: "1. Οψε, *the late,* began at sunset, and ended with the third hour of the night, including the evening-dawn, or twilight. It was also called οψια ὡρα, *eventide,* Mark 11:11; or simply οψια, *evening,* John 20:19, etc. 2. Μεσονυκτιον, *the midnight,* lasted from the third hour till midnight.

were to keep watch. Others are of opinion, that the verb ⌧⌧⌧, *suach,* is put for *to discourse.* If this opinion is admitted, the sense will be, that the Prophet, not from ostentation, but for the welfare of his brethren, was so desirous of communicating instruction, that he gave himself no rest. The word *meditate* is, however, more appropriate in this place; for the night is an unseasonable time for discoursing upon the law of God; but at that season, when alone, he silently recalled to his memory what he had previously learned, so that he passed no part of the night without meditating upon the law.

149. *Hear my voice, O Jehovah! according to thy mercy.* In the first place he declares, that the goodness of God was the only ground of his hope of being heard by him. Whatever blessings the saints may plead for in prayer, their opening argument must be the free and unmerited grace of God. Nor is the term *judgments* [22] in the second clause to be taken in a different sense. As God has revealed his goodness in his word, his word is the source from which we must derive our assurance of his goodness. The Prophet, then, sensible that he had need of the divine mercy, betook himself directly to the word, in which God, sweetly alluring men to himself, promises that his grace will be ready and open for all. That each, therefore, may be confidently persuaded that God will be merciful to him in particular, let him learn from the example of the Prophet to entreat God to show himself such as he has promised to be. Some expound the word *judgments* by *manner* or *custom*; [23] because, God's usual way is to deal graciously with all his people. I would not altogether reject this exposition; but I think it is harsh and foreign to the scope of the text, while the meaning which I have adduced comes out very naturally. Moreover, he desires *to be quickened,* to testify that even in the, midst of life he is dead, except in so far as he is sustained by the power of God. And assuredly, all who are duly acquainted with their own infirmity, esteeming their life as nothing, will crave to be quickened every moment. It is also to be added, that God often so exercised his servant, that with good reason he might send up his prayers, as it were, out of the sepulcher, to be restored from death to life.

150. *The pursuers of malice have drawn near.* As the Hebrew word ⌧⌧⌧⌧ *rodphee,* translated *the pursuers of,* is put in the construct state, that is to say, as it is so related to the

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3. Αλεκτοροφωνια, *the cock-crowing,* midnight till the third hour after, or the ninth hour of the night. It included the two cock-crowings, with the second or principal of which it ended. 4. Πρωι, *the early,* lasted from the ninth to the twelfth hor of the night, or sunrise, including the morning-dawn or twilight. It is also called πρωια, *morning, or morningtide,* (ώρα being understood,) John 18:28, etc. "When the Psalmist here declares, that his eyes prevented the nightwatches, we are to understand him as chiefly referring to the middle and morning watches, which falling at that period of the night when men in general are devoted to rest, envinced the strength, fervour, and self-sacrificing character of his devotions." — *Dr. Morison.*

22 By "judgments," Calvin means "God's Word," as the reader will observe from what follows.

23 Walford translates, "Revive me, e Jehovah! according to thy wonted manner."

word ⬚⬚⬚, *zimmah,* rendered *wickedness,* that in Latin the latter would be put in the genitive ease, I expound the clause as denoting that they draw near to do mischief. I wonder what could move interpreters to translate — The *pursuers have approached,* or *drawn near to wickedness;* which the idiom of the language will not admit, to say nothing of the fact that ⬚⬚⬚, *zimmah,* signifies rather *perversity* or *malice,* than *wickedness.* David therefore says, that those who are vehemently bent on malice are pursuing him close behind, and that they rush upon him with such violence in order to do him mischief, as plainly to indicate that they are far off from God's law, since they east far from them all regard to uprightness and equity. It was a most wretched condition for him to be in, to behold his enemies, who had shaken off all fear of God and reverence for his law, ready with uplifted hand to smite him to death, had not God been near to defend him, as he adds in the subsequent verse —

151. *Thou, O Jehovah! art near.* He encourages himself from the consolatory consideration, that God, when he sees his own people sore pressed, comes forward, seasonably to afford them succor; even as Paul on this subject says,

"Be not over-careful, the Lord is at hand, let your moderation be known to all men "
(Philippians 4:5)

The concluding sentence of the verse is to this effect, That God never forsakes nor disappoints his people in their necessity, because he is true to his promises; and in them he assures us, that the welfare of his people will always be the object of his care. That therefore we may be fully persuaded that the hand of God is always ready to repulse the assaults of our enemies, let us retain a settled belief of the truth, that he does not in vain promise in his word to be the guardian of our welfare.

152. *I have known from thy testimonies* [24] *from the beginning.* Others here translate, *I have known long ago of thy testimonies.* [25] This translation I would not directly reject; but I am more inclined to retain the sense which I have given, namely, That the Prophet not only knew the everlasting steadfastness which characterizes the testimonies of God; but that he had also derived this knowledge from the testimonies themselves. When the Hebrews would express the meaning conveyed by the Latin preposition *de,* they frequently use the particle ⬚⬚, or the letter ⬚, *beth.* He therefore says, that he had learned from God's testimonies, or had been taught by them, that *they are established for ever* [26] This indeed is the chief point

24 "De testimoniis tuis." — *Lat.*

25 Walford's rendering is, "I have known thy testimonies long since." Phillips translates "of old;" and gives this explanation, "I have been acquainted with thy testimonies ever since I have possessed any knowledge, i.e. as soon as I came to years of reflection. 'From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.'
2 Timothy 3:15."

26 *Thou hast established them for ever.* That is, thy revelations are unalterable and everlasting, as the attributes of their great Author, and can never fail those who rely upon them, in time, or in eternity." — *Warner on the Psalter.*

of faith, That the word of God is not only distinguished for fidelity and steadfastness for a time, but that it continues unchangeable for ever. Were it otherwise, it could not include within it the hope of eternal salvation. That the assurance of this immutabiliy of God's word may be rooted in our minds, the inward revelation of the Holy Spirit is indeed necessary; for until God seal within us the certainty of his word, our belief of its certainty will be continually wavering. Yet the Prophet, not without cause, affirms, that he learned this truth from the word; for when God shines into us by his Spirit, he at the same time causes that sacred truth which endures for ever to shine forth in the mirror of his word.

Psalm 119:153-160

153. Behold my affliction, and rescue me: for I have not forgotten thy law. **154.** Debate my cause, and redeem me: quicken thy according to thy word. **155.** Safety is far from the wicked; because they have not sought thy statutes. **156.** O Jehovah! Thy tender mercies are many: quicken me according to thy judgments. **157.** My persecutors and oppressors are many: [27] I have not swerved from thy testimonies. **158.** I saw the perfidious, and chid them; because they have not kept thy word. **159.** Behold O Jehovah! how have loved thy commandments: quicken me according to thy loving kindness. **160.** The beginning [literally, the head [28]] of thy word is truth; and all the judgment of thy righteousness is everlasting.

153. *Behold my affliction and rescue me.* The Psalmist teaches by his own example that those who are devoted to the service and fear of God, must not be discouraged though they are not rewarded for it in this world. Their condition upon earth is one of warfare, and therefore they should not be dismayed by diversity, but rather rest satisfied with the consolatory consideration, that the gate of prayer is open to them. Yet the Prophet does not boast of his, endeavors to keep the law, as if he would have God to pay him wages for his service, but only to show that he was one of God's servants, just as he has spoken of his hope that he was so in other places. This reason, *for I have not forgotten thy law,* on account of which he beseeches God to consider his affliction and to rescue him, is peculiarly forcible in the present case; for it is an evidence of no ordinary courage when, instead of being led away from the fear of God by adversity, we wrestle against temptations and seek him even when he seems purposely to drive us away from him.

154. *Debate thy cause, and redeem me.* In this verse David specifics the kind of his affliction, which was the wrongful and harassing treatment which he met with at the hands of evil and unprincipled men. The reading literally is, *Plead my cause,* which is the same thing as to undertake a cause, or to take the charge of defending one in judgment, or to maintain the right of the oppressed. In the first place the Prophet in invoking God to defend his cause, shows that he is wrongfully oppressed, either by violence, calumnies, or crafty policies; and

27 "Ou, forts robustes " — *Fr.* "Or, very strong."

28 The word in the Hebrew text is ראש, *rash.* Dr. Adam Clarke suggests an explanation, which is at least ingenious. The first word in the book of Genesis is בראשית, *bereshith,* "in the beginning;" which is derived from ראש, *rash,* or *raash.* He therefore asks whether David in here calling the ראש of God's word truth, may not refer to בראשית, the first word in the book of Genesis? If so, the meaning is, Every word thou hast spoken from בראשית, the first in Genesis, to the end of the law and the prophets, and all that thou wilt yet speak, are true and shall have in due time their fulfillment.

in seeking *to be redeemed,* he intimates that he was unable to make any resistance, or that he was so entangled in their snares, as to have no remaining hope except in the deliverance of God. In the second clause the letter ל, *lamed,* seems to be taken for the letter כ, *caph,* the mark of similitude, [29] as would appear from his having used a little before (Psalm 119:149) a similar form of prayer. Again, as David here complains that he is held as it were in fetters by his enemies, unless he is delivered by the hand of his Redeemer, he with good reason beseeches God to restore him to life; for he who is rims abased is like a person dead. It is also aptly added *according to thy word;* for it is from the promises which God makes in his word of becoming our deliverer that the hope of life shines upon us. Whence the Prophet, when earnestly desiring to be brought from darkness to light, sustains and encourages himself by the word. If a different sense is preferred, then David is not to be understood as simply asking that life may be given him, but as praying for spiritual life, that he may be encouraged to exercise faith, to cultivate the fear of God, and to cherish the desire of living a holy life.

155 *Safety is far from the wicked.* Fully persuaded that the world is governed by the secret providence of God, who is a just judge, the Prophet draws from that source the doctrine, That the wicked are far removed from safety, and safety from them. Hence proceeds the confidence of prayer; for as God is turned away from the despisers of his word, so he is ready to succor his servants. It is to be noticed, that when the Prophet saw that his enemies were elated by their prosperity, he on the contrary lifted up his heart by faith that thus he might come to the settled persuasion that all their delights were cursed and tended to destruction. Whenever then the wicked prosper in the world according to their wishes, so that being pampered to the full they exult in their own fatness, let us learn, in order to defend ourselves, to lay hold upon this buckler which the Holy Spirit is holding out to us, namely, that they shall at length miserably perish, because they seek not the commandments of God. From this we draw a contrary doctrine, That although genuine believers, whilst they walk sincerely in the fear of God may be as sheep appointed to the slaughter, yet their salvation, which is under the special care and protection of God's secret providence, is just at hand. In this sense the Prophet adds in the following verse,

156. *O Jehovah,! thy tender mercies are many;* as if he had said that no offenders are safe but those who betake themselves to the divine mercy. Farther, to encourage himself to approach God with the greater confidence, he not only says that God is merciful, but he mightily magnifies and extols his compassion's. From this we gather that he was so contented with them, as not to seek any aid from his own merits. It is however at the same time to be noted, that the Prophet was far from being lightly troubled with many temptations, seeing he was forced to oppose to them this vast abundance of mercy. It makes little difference

29 "La letre כ, qui signifie Sclon." — Fr. "The letter כ, which signifies 'According to.'"

whether we read *great* or *many* The prayer which follows, *Quicken me according to thy judgments,* I explain as referring to the promises. The original word for *judgment* is by some translated *manner* or *custom;* but I have already shown above that such a translation is less suitable than the other. The Prophet then again confirms the truth, That life cannot be hoped for or asked from God, unless hope is produced by his word; and he often repeats this truth, because it is one of which we are marvelously forgetful. But that we may boldly appropriate to ourselves all the grace which God promises to his servants, let the doctrine of the great and manifold tender mercies of God be ever present to our thoughts. If we imagine that God makes his promises because he is bound to do it, or because we have deserved it, doubting or mistrust will steal upon our minds, which will shut the gate against our prayers. But if we are thoroughly persuaded that the sole cause by which God is moved to promise us salvation is the mercy inherent in his own nature, we will approach him without hesitation or doubt, because he has bound himself to us of his own accord.

157. *My persecutors and oppressors are many.* The Psalmist here as in other places testifies, that although he had been provoked by many injuries, yet he had not departed from the right way; which, as I have elsewhere observed, was an evidence of great and singular constancy. It is an easy matter to act well when we are among the good; but if wicked men afflict us, if one man openly assault us by force, if another rob us of our property, if a third circumvent us by wiles, and a fourth attack us by calumnies, it is difficult for us to persevere in our integrity, and we rather begin to howl among the wolves. Besides, the license which is allowed them of doing what they please without the fear of being punished, is a powerful engine for shaking our faith, because, when God thus winks at the wicked, he seems to abandon us for a prey. The Prophet therefore, by *God's testimonies,* means not only the rule of holy and righteous living, but also the promises. Lord, as if he had said, I have not turned away from the path of integrity, although the conduct of the wicked has presented me with a temptation to do so; nor have I shaken off nay confidence in thy grace, but have waited patiently for thy succor. Both these are necessary. For although he who has suffered wrongs may contend against the malice of his enemies by his well — doing, and may refrain from every act of retaliation, yet, provided he does not depend wholly upon God, this uprightness will not be sufficient to save him. Not that any man behaves himself in a manner so moderate, except he who leans upon God and waits upon him as his deliverer; but granting that such could be the ease, there would not be sufficient power in this half virtue to save him. The salvation of God is reserved for the faithful who ask it in the exercise of lively faith. And whoever, persuaded that God will be his deliverer, pillars and supports his mind on the divine promises, will endeavor also to overcome evil with good.

158. *I saw the perfidious and child them.* In this verse the Psalmist proceeds yet farther, declaring that he was inflamed with a holy zeal when he saw the law of God despised by the wicked. Expositors are not however agreed as to one word in the text, namely the verb

⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, *ethkotatah,* which we have rendered *chid,* some deriving it from ⊠⊠⊠, *kut,* which often signifies *to debate* or *contend with,* it being in the conjugation *hithpael,* while others derive it from ⊠⊠⊠ *karat,* which signifies *to kill* or *to destroy.* I adopt the former interpretation, because it is more generally received among the learned, and is most appropriate. The Prophet then teaches that he was inflamed with such zeal for the law of God that he could no longer endure the impious mockery directed against it. The verb *debate* may however be understood as well of the vexation or anger which he felt in himself, as of the rebuke which he openly administered to the despisers of God; and therefore some translate it, *I shuddered,* or *I was grieved* [30] Nor assuredly will any person enter into debate with others for maintaining the glory of God, but he who is first chafed within himself, and has been grieved at heart; even as on the other hand, after this holy indignation there almost always follows transitive action; that is to say, it passes from the thought to the effect. [31] In short, we are admonished by the example of the Prophet, that we ought to feel such displeasure at the contempt of God's word as that our heart grows hot even to chiding. In the first place, then, let grief affect us inwardly; and next, whenever opportunity shall present itself, let; us strenuously endeavor to repress the forwardness and pride of the wicked, and let us not hesitate to do so from the fear of provoking their resentment against us.

159. *Behold, O Jehovah how I have loved thy commandments.* What I have state before must be remembered — that when the saints speak of their own piety before God they are not chargeable with obtruding their own merits as the ground of their confidence; but they regard this as, a settled principle, that God, who distinguishes his servants from the profane and wicked, will be merciful to them because they seek him with their whole heart. Besides, an unfeigned love of God's law is an undoubted evidence of adoption, since this love is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Prophet, therefore, although he arrogates nothing to himself, very properly adduces his own piety for the purpose, of encouraging himself to entertain the more assured hope of obtaining his request, through the grace of God which he had experienced. At the same time we are taught that there can be no true keeping of the law but what springs from free and spontaneous love. God demands voluntary sacrifices, and the commencement of a good life is to love him, as Moses declares, (Deuteronomy 10:12,)

"And now, O Israel! what doth the Lord require of thee,
but to love him."

The same thing is also repeated in the summary of the law: (Deuteronomy 6:5,) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." For this reason David has previously stated, that the law of God was not only precious but also delightful to him. Now as in keeping the law it behoves us to begin with voluntary obedience, so that nothing may delight us more than the right-

30 "Invasit me horror." — *Piscator.*

31 "C'est a dire, on vient de la pensee a l'effect." — *Fr.*

eousness of God, so on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that a sense of the free goodness of God and of his fatherly love is indispensably necessary in order to our hearts being beheld to this affection. So far are the bare commandment's from winning men to obey them, that they rather frighten them away. Hence it is evident, that it is only when a man shall have tasted the goodness of God from the teaching of the law, that he will apply his heart to love it in return. The frequency with which the Prophet repeats the prayer, *that God would quicken him,* teaches us that he knew well the frailty of his own life, so that in his estimation men live only in so far as God every moment breathes life into them. Besides, it is probable that he had been continually besieged by many deaths, to the end he might the more earnestly betake himself to the fountain of life. He again rests his faith upon the goodness of God as its foundation — *quicken me according to thy loving-kindness* — from which we perceive how far he was from boasting of his own merits when he protested in the preceding sentence that he loved God's law.

160. *The beginning of thy word is truth.* The design of the Prophet it is not difficult to perceive; but the words admit of being understood in two ways. Some interpret the noun *beginning* as denoting that the truth of God shines forth conspicuously in his word, immediately when we enter for the first time upon the study of it, so that this entrance may justly be called the beginning of the word. This sentence contains the profitable doctrine, that if we are finished with eyes of understanding, we will no sooner cast our eyes upon heavenly doctrine than the truth of it will meet our view. Others, however, give a different explanation, and perhaps with no less propriety, eliciting this sense, That the word of God has been from the beginning certain and infallible truth, and will continue so even to the end. These two clauses hang very well together — that God has been true to his word from the beginning, and that he will continue to be so everlastingly and immutably. The interpretation which refers the word *judgment* to the works of God and not to his doctrine, I would not altogether condemn, yet it is not in harmony with the context. Let us then retain this sense, That from the time when God began to speak he has always been faithful to his promises, and has never disappointed the hope of his people; and that the course of this faithfulness has been so uniform, that from the beginning even to the end his word is true and faithful.

Psalm 119:161-168

161. ☒ Princes have persecuted me without a cause; yet my heart hath beer, afraid at thy word **162.** ☒ I have rejoiced at thy word as one who hath found great spoil. **163.** ☒ I have hated and abhorred deceit; but I have loved thy law. **164.** ☒ Seven times a day have I praised thee, because of thy righteous judgments. [32] **165.** ☒ Great peace have them that love thy law, and there will be no stumbling-block for them. [33] **166.** ☒ Jehovah I have waited for thy salvation and have done thy commandments. **167.** ☒ My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I have loved them exceeding. **168.** ☒ I have kept thy commandments and thy testimonies; for all my ways are before thee.

161 *Princes have persecuted me without a cause.* [34] Here the Psalmist, informs us that sore and grievous as his temptation had been, he was restrained by the fear of God from desiring to attempt anything unworthy of the character of a godly man. We are prone to fall into despair when princes who are armed with power to overwhelm us are hostile to and molest us. The evil is also aggravated from the consideration that it is the very persons who ought to be as bucklers to defend us, who employ their strength in hurting us. Yea, when the afflicted are stricken by those in high places, they in a manner think that the hand of God is against them. There was also this peculiarity in the case of the Prophet, that he had to encounter the grandees of the chosen people — men whom God had placed in such honor-able stations, to the end they might be the pillars of the Church. Some give, more restricted exposition, which is, that David followed the exhortation of Christ in Matthew 10:28,

"Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell;"

a sentiment which although it had not as yet been uttered by Christ's mouth, ought nevertheless to have been fixed in the hearts of all the godly. The sense, then, in their opinion is, that the Prophet had not been turned aside from the fear of God by any of the threatening or terrors of his enemies. But his commendation of his own constancy is to be understood in a more extended sense than this. The exhortation of Isaiah is well known,

"Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid; sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." (Isaiah 8:12,13)

32 Literally, "Because of the judgments of thy righteousness."

33 "*They have not any offense, i.e.* no occasion to bring them into sin, but such as, with God's Spirit assisting them, they are enabled to overcome. The love of the law is a security to them from the enticements of wickedness, by which others are drawn aside from the path of rectitude, and are brought to ruin." — *Phillips.*

34 "David was persecuted by Saul and his associates 'without a cause.'" — *Warner on the Psalter.*

The Prophet in that place shows in general what the weapons are, with which the faithful being armed will succeed in vanquishing all the assaults of the world — he shows that they will do so, provided they not only stand in awe of God, but also rest assured that he will always be the guardian of their welfare, so that they may cast all their cares upon him. Thus it will come to pass that, resting contented with his protection, they will not turn aside to practice whatever may be sinful to secure their safety. In like manner the Prophet, in the passage before us, affirms that although being oppressed by the wrongful violence of princes, he presented a sad spectacle, yet he did not succumb, but considered what was lawful for him to do, and did not attempt to rival their wicked practices, by repelling craft with craft and violence with violence. In this text, as is evident from the connection, *to be afraid at God's word,* is to restrain one's self and to attempt nothing which is unlawful. I have already said that the adverb ⌧⌧⌧, *hinnam, without a cause,* is added for the sake of amplification; for the temptation was so much the harder from the fact, that the tyrants, without cause and merely to gratify their own wicked inclination, assaulted an innocent individual. Men of a good disposition and of a noble mind, it is well known, are more easily excited to anger when the object assaulted is one who has done wrong to nobody. It was therefore a signal proof of self-control for the Prophet to bridle himself by the word of God, that he might not vie with others in evil doing, or, overcome with temptation, go out of the place which had been assigned him in the social body. Let us then learn to remain peaceable, although princes tyrannically abuse the power which God has committed to them, lest by creating insurrection we break in upon the peace and order of society.

162. *I have rejoiced at thy word as one who hath found great spoil* No gain, it is well known, brings greater joy than that which conquerors acquire from the spoil of their enemies; for to the gain there is added the glory of triumph; and when profit comes on a sudden, the delight experienced is from that circumstance the greater. This is the reason why David compares the knowledge he had obtained of heavenly doctrine with spoils rather than with other riches; for by these words he intimates that his greatest joy was derived from the word of God, to which no gain however desirable could at all approach. From this was learn that he was contented with the word of God as a thing in which was all his delight, and in which he found solid felicity; which could not be, but, in the way of his first withdrawing his heart from all depraved desires. Nor is it wonderful to find David placing the whole sum of a happy life in the word of God, in which he well knew the treasure of eternal life to be included and offered to him by means of free adoption.

163. *I have hated and abhorred deceit.* In this verse he declares more distinctly what I have adverted to a little before, that he was cleansed from corrupt affections that he might bestow upon the law of God such honor and estimation as it deserved. Having elsewhere met with almost the same sentence, I shall but briefly touch upon the reason why the Prophet affirms that *he hated deceit* before he speaks of his love and devotedness to the law.

As hypocrisy is in the hearts of all men by nature, and as we are naturally prone to vanity and deceitfulness, we ought diligently to labor to purge our hearts, that the love of the law may reign in them. Now if the beginning of a good life and the first point of righteousness is to hate and abhor deceit, it follows that nothing is more excellent than integrity; for unless that virtue hold the chief place, all the other virtues speedily disappear. Nor is *abhorring* superfluously added to *hating,* the design being to teach us that it is not enough to hate falsehood with a common hatred, but that God's children must hate it with a deadly hatred. Now if the love of the law and the hatred of falsehood are inseparably conjoined, it is a plain inference that all who are not taught in the school of God are infected with deceit and hypocrisy.

164. *Seven times a day have I praised thee.* By the adverb *seven times,* the Prophet means that he was continually or very often engaged in celebrating the praises of God; just as it is said in Proverbs 24:16, "A just man falleth seven times," when he often falls into divers temptations. [35] The phrase *the judgments of God* being in many places taken for the punishments which God inflicts upon sinners, and also sometimes applied in general to the providence by which he governs the world, some understand the Prophet as praising God because he affords such manifest proofs of his justice both in punishing the wicked and in the whole government of the world. But I rather agree with others who refer the phrase to the divine law; not that I dislike the former interpretation, but because in this psalm the great topic upon which the Psalmist chiefly insists is the commendation of God's law. The amount then is, that when David was assiduously occupied in meditating upon the law of God, he found it distinguished by so great perfection of righteousness and wisdom, that from time to time he burst forth into the exercise of praise and thanksgiving. This diligence in praising God shows that David not only spoke reverently and honourably of the divine law, but that he accounted it an inestimable boon conferred upon the human race. It was not simply admiration which constrained him to this commendation, but a principle of gratitude; for he saw that nothing more excellent could be bestowed upon men than their being renewed to a blessed and an endless life by the incorruptible seed of heavenly truth. Yet scarcely one in a hundred of those to whom God offers this treasure puts himself to the trouble of giving God thanks for it even in an ordinary manner. On the contrary, there reigns such vile ingratitude everywhere in the world, that some scornfully reject divine truth,

35 Among many other texts of Scripture which might be quoted to show that the number seven is often used for many, or an indefinite number, we may refer only to Genesis 4:15 and Leviticus 24:18. Some of the Jewish Rabbies, however, affirm that David is here to be understood literally, observing, that the devout Hebrews were accustomed to praise God twice in the morning before reading the ten commandments, and once after; twice in the evening before reading the same portion of inspiration, and twice after; which makes up the number of seven times a day.

and others despise or slight it, while others rail and gnash their teeth against it if they find anything in it which does not please them.

165. *Great peace have they who love thy law.* If we take the word *peace* for a prosperous or happy condition of life — a sense in which the Hebrews often employ it — the word rendered *stumbling-block,* to correspond with it, will be used for *adversity;* as if it had been said, that those who love God's law shall continually prosper and retain their position, although the whole world should fall into ruins. But a different interpretation will be equally appropriate, namely, that they have great peace, because, being persuaded that both their persons and their life are acceptable to God, they calmly repose themselves on a good conscience. This tranquil state of conscience, this serenity of mind, is justly reckoned the chief point of a happy life, that is to say it is so, when it proceeds from God's being reconciled to us, and from his fatherly favor shining in our hearts. The Prophet justly teaches that we attain this peace from the love of the law; for whoever would make it to depend upon anything else, will be from time to time trembling at every little blast. If this sense is adopted, the word *stumbling-block,* in the second clause, will signify all the troubles and disquietudes of mind with which all who lean not upon God's word are miserably distressed and tormented, and with which they are driven about either by their own depraved passions, or by the caprice of other men. But in whatever way understand these two words, *peace* and *stumbling-block,* the design of the Prophet will remain the same, which is to show, that those who are not devoted to God are miserable; for although they may applaud themselves for a time, yet they will meet with many stumbling-blocks to drive them suddenly out of their course. From the term *love,* we gather that this peace is not acquired by a slavish observance of the law, but proceeds from faith; for the law has no sweetness to attract us to it, unless it exhibit to us God in the character of a father, and tranquilize our minds by the assurance of eternal salvation. So far from enjoying peace, all worldly men and despisers of God are justly punished by their own depravity and obdurate rebellion; for each of them is his own executioner, and the more fiercely they rage against the word of God, the sorer are they tormented, until they bring upon themselves utter destruction. The godly, it is true, are also tormented or distressed, but this inward consolation wipes away all their sorrow, or, raising them up, enables them to surmount all stumbling-blocks, or so relieves them, that they faint not.

166 *O Jehovah! I have waited for thy salvation.* It is not without cause that the Prophet often repeats this sentence, which is in all men's mouths, there being nothing easier than to ascribe to God the praise and office of saving, while yet there is hardly to be met with in the world a single example of steadfast hope, when men come to wrestle with temptations for any length of time. From the order of the words we learn, that if a man would keep himself in the fear of God, and the love of the law, it is necessary for him, above all things, [36] to seek for salvation in God. If faith in God's grace be removed from our minds, or patience

36 "Primum," *Lat* — "Devant toutes choses," *Fr.*

shaken off, we will be carried away hither and thither, and will cease any longer to cultivate godliness. The chief virtue of the faithful, therefore, is a patient endurance of the cross and mortification by which they calmly submit themselves to God; for so long as no adversity happens to hypocrites, they seem, also to be well-affectioned to the work of serving him. There are also other reasons why it behoves us to keep our minds intent upon the salvation of God, if we desire to regulate our life aright; for if the, allurements of the world hold us in their snares, we will immediately become discouraged. The reason, as we plainly see, why the hearts of the great majority fail, is because it is difficult to believe assuredly that salvation is to be hoped for only from the grace of God. That we may therefore persevere in serving God, it is indispensable that faith shine on the future before us, and next, that patience accompany us, to nourish within us the love of righteousness. For, as we have said, our alacrity in persevering proceeds from this, that with a patient spirit we suffer our salvation to lie hidden in the bosom of God, and that we doubt not of his at length, proving a faithful rewarder of all such as seek him, although he may withdraw his favor from the eye of sense. In the subsequent verse the Psalmist confirms this doctrine by other words, saying, *that he kept God's testimonies with his soul* By the word *soul* he expresses still more forcibly than before, that he had the doctrine of the law enclosed within the deepest recesses of his heart. The cause of this peculiarly diligent keeping of the law, was the singular love which he had to it, as he states in the concluding clause of the verse. He who by constraint and in a slavish manner obeys the law, is so far from receiving it into the secret habitation of his heart to keep it there, that he would have it removed far away from him.

168. *I have kept thy commandments and thy testimonies.* What the Psalmist had expressed more strongly, he now repeats more simply, adding there to reason. He abbreviates the statement as made in the preceding verse only by here omitting the word *soul,* which he there uses, whilst to *commandments* he joins *testimonies,* in order the more distinctly to show that he does not speak exclusively of the rule of an upright and holy life, but also comprehends the whole covenant of salvation. And, assuredly, the doctrine of the law could not be so sweet and attractive from its commanding what is right, did it not at the same time exhibit the free favor of God. The reason which the Prophet assigns for his keeping God's commandments and testimonies — *for all my ways are before thee* [37] — is to this effect, That the truth, which he well knew, that nothing is hidden from God, served as a bridle to keep him devoted to the cultivation of godliness; for if we live not as under the omniscient inspection of God, the fickle lustfulness of the flesh quickly carries us away now one way

37 "*All my ways are before thee*" The meaning of this expression may be gathered from other scriptural phrases: such as 'walking before God;' or 'in his sight;' which merely signify to live holy and righteously, so as to be acceptable in his sight. God is omniscient, and, consequently, 'all the ways' or actions of men are 'before him,' or open to his knowledge and sight." — *Warner.*

and now another. The meaning, also, may be this — that he made God the arbiter and judge of his life; for in Scripture language those are said *to walk before God,* who refer all their actions to him, and, as it were, withdrawing themselves from the sight of men, present themselves at his judgment-seat. In this way he gives us to understand that he had endeavored not only to be free from all fault and blame before men, but also to offer to God a sound and sincere heart. Whichever of these senses is adopted, he testifies that it is only when we consider that we have to deal with God, who searcheth the heart, and from whose eyes nothing is hidden, that we will observe his law aright. This concluding clause may also be a form of protestation; as if the Prophet had said, Lord, thou art the best witness of the fidelity with which I have kept thy law, for nothing is hidden from thee. But he seems rather to have intended to intimate that the principle of his holy living, was his having consecrated his life to God, and having kept his thoughts fixed on the diverse presence.

Psalm 119:169-174

169. ☒ Let my cry come near b, to thy presence, O Jehovah! Give me understanding according to thy word. **170.** ☒ Let my prayer come into thy presence: deliver me according to thy word. **171.** ☒ My lips shall speak praise, when thou shalt have taught me thy statutes. **172.** ☒ My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness. **173.** ☒ Let thy hand be to succor me; for I have chosen thy commandments. **174.** ☒ I have longed for thy salvation, O Jehovah and thy law has been my delight. **175.** ☒ Let my soul live, and let it praise thee; and let thy judgments succor me. **176.** ☒ I have wandered like a lost sheep: seek thy servant, for I have not forgotten thy statutes.

169. *Let my cry come*[38] *near into thy presence.* The Psalmist repeats the same sentiment which has already come under our notice — that his chief desire, and what he, most of all pressed after, regarding everything else as of secondary importance, was to make progress in the study of the divine law. By the word *cry* he denotes earnestness. I am anxious, as if he had said, above all things, and am chiefly inflamed with this desire, (even as it is just and reasonable,) that the light of understanding by which we excel the lower animals, and approach very near to God, may be preferred by me to all earthly advantages. The expression, *according to thy word,* may be understood in two ways. It may denote that David besought God to impart to him understanding according to his promise; or, as some explain it, it may intimate that he desired to have his mind framed according to the rule of God's word, so that he might not be wise otherwise than according to the doctrine of the law. This last sense would not be inappropriate, did not these words in the following verse, *Deliver me according to thy word,* present an objection to such an interpretation. Having no doubt that these two sentences have a corresponding meaning — though at first sight it is more specious to understand David as praying to be made wise according to the rule of the law — I rather incline to the other sense, That he beseeches God to endue him with understanding, in fulfillment of his promise. And whilst God liberally promises all blessings to his people, to enlighten them by his Spirit, that they may excel in true and sound wisdom, is justly entitled to be ranked among the chief of his promises. This doctrine is profitable to us in many ways. In the first place we are taught that nothing is more to be desired than to have God guiding us by his light, that we may not be like brute beasts. In the second place we are taught that this is the peculiar gift of the Holy Spirit; for it would have been in vain for David to have besought. God to bestow upon him that which he had naturally in himself, or which he might have attained by his own painstaking. In the third place, what I have said concerning the

38 As has been observed by some critics, the Psalmist's *cry* for deliverance is here personified. He represents it as if an intelligent being, and as sent up by him to heaven, there to plead his cause in the presence of God. The same elegant poetical figure is used in the following verse, and it is of frequent occurrence in the Book of Psalms.

promise is to be attended to, to the end the faithful may not hesitate to offer themselves to God to be enlightened by Him, who declares that he will be the guide of the blind, and who refuses not to be a master and teacher of little ones and of the humble.

170. *Let my prayer come into thy presence.* After having made supplication that the gift of right understanding might be imparted to him, the Psalmist now implores God for deliverance, by which he acknowledges that he was continually involved in multiplied dangers from which he found it impossible to escape, unless God stretched forth his hand from heaven to his aid. We know, indeed, that whenever any distress was pressing hard behind him, he called upon God for succor; but as he does not here specify any particular distress, I have no doubt that, in commending his life in general terms to the protection of God, he thought again and again how he was shut up on every side by innumerable deaths, from which he could not escape if God did not prove his continual deliverer. But this is an inestimable comfort to us, that God assures us that in all dangers he will be ready and prepared to help us.

171. *My lips shall speak praise.* David now shows in another way than in the preceding verse, how high a privilege he accounted it to be admitted by God among the number of His disciples, and to profit aright in His school, by declaring that, if so privileged, he will hasten forward to render thanks to him with fluent tongue. The word ⌧⌧⌧, *naba,* which he employs, is a metaphor taken from the bubbling up of fountains, and accordingly it signifies not simply *to speak,* but to pour forth speech copiously. As therefore he a little before showed the earnestness of his desire by praying, so now he affirms that his rejoicing will bear testimony that he desires nothing more than to be thoroughly imbued with heavenly truth. He again confirms the doctrine, That the way by which we become truly wise is, first by submitting ourselves to the Word of God, and not following our own imaginations; and, secondly, by God's opening our understanding and subduing it to the obedience of his will. He here joins together both these truths — namely, that when God has set before us His law, from which we are to learn what, ever is profitable for our welfare, He, at the same time, teaches us inwardly. It were not enough to have our ears stricken with the outward sound, did not God illuminate our minds by the Spirit of understanding, and correct our obduracy by the Spirit of docility. As the labor of teachers is to no purpose until virtue and efficacy has been given to it, so it is also to be noticed that such as are truly taught of God, are not led away from the law and the Scriptures by secret revelations, like some fanatics, who think that they linger still at their A B C, unless disdainfully trampling under foot the Word of God, they fly away after their own foolish fancies.

172. *My tongue shall speak of thy word.* Here the Psalmist says, that when he shall have profited in God's law he will also employ himself in teaching it to others. This order is undoubtedly to be observed, That divine truth take root in our hearts before we engage in the work of teaching it to others. Yet every man, according to the measure of his faith, ought

to communicate to his brethren what he has received, that the doctrine, whose use and fruit God 'would have to be displayed for the common edification of the Church, may not be buried. There is added the reason which ought to stir up all the godly to declare the law of God — namely, because by this means righteousness is spread abroad through the whole world. When the Prophet honors the commandments of God with the title of *righteousness,* he does not simply express his approbation of them, but he indirectly shows, that, until this rule bear sway in governing mankind, the whole world is one scene of sad and horrible confusion. Yet, let my readers judge whether the word *answer* or *witness,* which the Hebrew verb ענה, *anah,* properly signifies, is not more suitable in this place than *speak;* bringing out this sense — "My tongue shall bear witness or answer to thy word; because the true knowledge of righteousness is to be sought only in the word;" but in that case, it will be necessary to supply the letter ל, *lamed, in* the word אמרתך, *imrathecha,* that it may read — *to thy word.*

173. *Let thy hand be to succor me.* As he had devoted himself to the doctrine of the law, David requests that the hand of God may be stretched forth for his aid. Farther, by these words he declares, that those who yield themselves to God to be governed by His word have continually need of His help. The more sincerely any individual studies to be a good man, so much the more numerous are the ways in which Satan troubles him, and so much the more are the enemies multiplied who molest him on all sides. But when God sees those who once embraced the truth of his word remaining steadfast in their resolution, he is so much the more inclined to aid them. By the word *choose* in the second clause, the Psalmist has expressed that nothing had hindered him from devoting himself to the law of God. No man will apply this mind to the love of the law without a great struggle, since the thoughts of every man are drawn away to a variety of objects, by the depraved affections of the flesh. This choosing then spoken of shows that it is not through ignorance or an inconsiderate zeal that the children of God desire above all things heavenly doctrine; but as they partake of the flexibility or pliancy of mind common to men, and feel the various impulses of the flesh, they purposely subdue their minds to the obedience of God.

174. *I have longed for thy salvation, O Jehovah!* Although all men desire to be in happy circumstances, and no man avowedly repudiates God's favor; yet so confused and uncertain are the ideas which they entertain of that in which a life of happiness or propriety consists, that very few are to be found directing their aspirations to God. Some are carried away by their own ambition, some are wholly possessed with avarice, and others burn with lust, all imagining, that the farther they recede from God, everything will prosper so much the better with them. In short, in proportion as each man is desirous to be safe, in the same proportion does he provoke the anger of God, by seeking the means of his safety in all directions. The construction in the Hebrew text denotes steadfastness, or constancy of desire; for literally it is, that He Had *longed for the salvation of God,* and not that he only at the present time

began to long for it. He next expresses the manner in which we are patiently to long for salvation; which is, by seeking consolation and relief in all our calamities from the word of God; for whoever does not comfort himself by a reliance on the grace promised in the word, will quail at the slightest assault made upon him. The Prophet then wisely kept his thoughts close upon the divine word, that he might not be turned away from hoping for the salvation of God.

175. *Let my soul live and let it praise thee.* As the verbs are in the future tense, *shall live, shall praise,* this sentence may be expounded thus: Lord, when thou shalt have bestowed life upon me, I will endeavor, by celebrating thy praises, to show that I am not ungrateful. If this sense is approved, the sentence will be a kind of rejoicing, in which the Prophet, depending upon the divine promises, confidently proclaims, that his life will continue in safety. And, certainly, although our life is hidden under the shadow of death, we may, nevertheless, boast that it is safe, because God is its faithful guardian; and this assured confidence proceeds from his quickening grace, which is offered to us in his word. Yet, as the majority of Commentators translate these words in the optative mood, let us follow the more generally received interpretation, which is, that David in asking to have his life prolonged, shows, at the same time, that the end for which he desired to live was, that he might exercise himself in singing the praises of God, even as it is said in Psalm 115:18, "We who shall remain in life shall praise Jehovah." In the second clause it would be harsh to understand the word *judgments* of the commandments, to which it does not properly belong to give help. It seems then, that the Prophet, perceiving himself liable to numberless calamities — even as the faithful, by reason of the unbridled license of the wicked, dwell in this world as sheep among wolves, — calls upon God to protect him in the way of restraining, by his secret providence, the wicked from doing him harm. It is a very profitable doctrine, when things in the world are in a state of great confusion, and when our safety is in danger amidst so many and varied storms, to lift up our eyes to the judgments of God, and to seek a remedy in them. As, however, in this Psalm the word *judgments* is commonly referred to God's commandments, we may also fitly interpret it of them in this place, so that the Prophet attributes to the word of God the office and charge of giving succor; for God does not feed us with delusive promises, but, whenever an emergency arises, confirms and ratifies his word by giving some palpable manifestation of the operation of his hand. Thus, when the Prophet calls the divine law to his help, he pronounces a singular encomium upon the efficacy of the divine word. If any would prefer expounding the sentence of the keeping of the law, I offer no objections. In this sense it is as if the Prophet had said, — O Lord, let the uprightness which I have practiced, and the zeal with which I have employed myself in keeping thy commandments, be a defense to me.

176. *I have wandered like a lost sheep.* He is not to be understood as here confessing his sins, — an opinion erroneously held by many, — as if he had been drawn into the trails of

Satan; for this is inconsistent with the second clause, in which he denies that he had forgotten God's law. It is a poor solution of this difficulty to say, that:, previous to the time of his calling, he was a wandering sheep, but that from the time of his calling he was devoted to godliness — or that in straying he was withheld by some godly affection from utterly casting off the fear of God; for the same time is undoubtedly referred to in both clauses. Again it is easy to gather, that the two clauses of this verse ought to be connected together by *although,* or *notwithstanding,* or some other such particle, as the Latins call adversative, [39] as if the Prophet had said, Although I have wandered about like a lost sheep, yet I have not forgotten the law of God. His meaning, I conceive, is, that he wandered, because, being chased by the force and violence of his enemies, he transported himself from place to place in great fear, in quest of retreats in which he might hide himself. We know for certain, that David was so hunted that in his exile he could nowhere find a secure place. This similitude would therefore very properly apply to him, because, although driven away and hunted after by his persecutors, he yet never turned aside from the law of God. Moreover, as the wolves pursued him everywhere, he prays God to bring him back and give him a place of safety and tranquillity, that he may at length cease from any longer wandering hither and thither, and being as a vagabond. [40] He had a very good ground for believing that he would be heard in the fact, that although provoked by manifold wrongs he yet never swerved from the fear of God — a statement which, however, ought to be referred rather to the general course of his life than to particular acts. Although when he fell into adultery he continued for a time in a state of insensibility, yet it cannot be denied that in his adversities he was restrained by a holy patience, so as to persevere in following after righteousness. [41]

39 "En apres, il est facile de recueillir, que les deux membres de ce propos se doyvent lier ensemble par Combien, ou Ja soit, ou quelque autre telle partieule que les Latins appellent adversative." — *Fr.*

40 "A ce qu'a la fin il cesse de plus tracasser ca et la et estre comme vagabond." — *Fr.*

41 Before leaving this divine poem, to the close of which we halve now arrived, there are a few remarks which may be suggested upon a review of the whole. In the first place, it is worthy of observation, that its alphabetical structure has been so completely preserved, that not one of the initial letters in it has been lost, notwithstanding its length and great antiquity, being older by many ages than any of the celebrated writings of Greece and Rome. In the second place, the wonderful perfection and yet connection of its various parts is also deserving of attention. Wherever we begin we seem to be at the commencement, and wherever we stop the sense is complete; and yet the poem does not consist of detached sentences, but is a whole consisting of many parts, all of which seem necessary to its perfection. In the third place, the numerous apparent repetitions which occur in it ought not to excite the prejudice of the reader. Although the frequent recurrence of the same words may not have an effect altogether agreeable upon fastidious ears, yet these words are so connected with others, as to bring out new meanings and to suggest new trains of thought. Hence the intelligent and pious student, instead of finding the sentences tautological, will discover new sentiments welling out to preserve his attention and to keep alive the flame of devotion. Walford, after observing that some readers may think this poem singularly marked by frequent

PSALM 120.

A Song of Degrees.

If we suppose David to have been the author of this Psalm, as is very probable, he declares how diligently he engaged in prayer, when, to escape the cruelty of Saul, he wandered as an exile from place to place. But he especially complains of wicked informers, who unjustly and calumniously charged him with crimes of which he was altogether innocent. If a different supposition is preferred, the language will be a simple and general complaint against false reports. This Psalm, and the immediately subsequent fourteen, are called *Psalms of Degrees;* but for what reason is not agreed upon, even among the Hebrew doctors. Some conceive that there were fifteen steps to that part of the Temple which was allotted for the men, whereas the women remained beneath [42] but this is a silly conjecture, for which there is no

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repetitions, adds — "It is not my intention to write an essay on this theme; and I shall therefore briefly say, that the implicitly of ancient writings is one of their greatest charms. If the repetitions of Psalm 119 create in it a blemish, it is one which the royal author of it shares in common with the most illustrious poet of Pagan antiquity; and that if simplicity and repetition are to be objected against David's Ode, the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey will hardly escape condemnation." In fine, the attentive reader must have observed the striking manner in which this composition exhibits the workings of genuine godliness in the regenerated soul. "I know of no part of the Holy Scriptures," remarks that eminent man, Jonathan Edwards, "where the nature and evidences of true and sincere godliness are so fully and largely insisted on and delineated as in Psalm 119. The Psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the Psalm, keeps his eye on it all along, and pursues it to the end. The excellency of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste and delight. God's law — that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's nature and prescription of holiness to the creature — is all along represented as the great object of the *love,* the complacence, and the rejoicing of the gracious nature, which prizes God's commands 'above gold, yea, the finest gold,' and to which they are 'sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.'" — *Edwards on the Religious Affections,* part 3 section 3.

42 This opinion was held by Rabbi David Kimchi; and he asserts that the Psalms, entitled Songs of Ascents or Steps, were so entitled because the Levites sang one of them upon each of the fifteen steps, which, says *he,* separated the court of the women from that of the men in Solomon's Temple. This Calvin justly characterizes as a "silly conjecture;" and such an explanation is now generally rejected. Jebb, after stating several of the attempted solutions of the title of these Psalms, observes — "On these notions it is unnecessary to dwell, and still less upon that Jewish fable mentioned by Rabbi David, that these Psalms were sung on ascending the fifteen steps, which were imagined to lead from one of the outer courts of the Temple to that of the Levites. No trace in history, or authentic tradition, can be found of these steps, which owe their construction solely to the accommodating fancy of the Rabbins, who, as usual, imagined facts, in order to support their preconceived theories." — *Jebb's Literal Translation of the Psalms, with Dissertations,* volume 2. It is an additional objection to this Rabbinical conceit, that David, whose name several of these Psalms bear — and others of which have evident reference to his time and circumstances — lived in the time of the tabernacle, which had no steps.

foundation; and we know the liberties which the Jews, in obscure and uncertain matters like this, take of giving forth as an explanation whatever comes into their own fancy. Some translate *Psalms of Ascents;* and by *ascent* they understand the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity [43] — an interpretation which is altogether forced; for it is manifest that the greater part of these Psalms were composed, either by David or Solomon; and it is easy to gather from their contents, that such of them as were written by David, were, sung in the Temple, while he was alive and on the throne. Others think that the word *ascents* refers to the tones of music [44] Some also affirm that it was the beginning of a song. This being a matter of small moment, I am not disposed to make it the subject of elaborate investigation; but the probable conjecture is, that this title was given to these Psalms, because they were sung on a higher key than others. The Hebrew word for *degrees* being derived from the verb ⌧⌧⌧, *tsalah, to ascend* or *go up,* I agree with those who are of opinion that it denotes the different musical notes rising in succession. [45]

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43 The Syriac version calls them "Songs of Ascent out of Babylon;" and such is the interpretation of several modern critics, among whom is Calmet, who has given an able analysis of what has been written on this title in his *Dissertation sur les quinze Psaumes Gradue* After stating numerous explanations, and characterizing many of them as "vaines et frivoles conjectures," he adopts it as the most probable supposition, that they were sung during the journey of the returning captives from Babylon to Jerusalem.

44 This is the opinion of Aben Ezra.

45 While Calvin leans to this as the most probable explanation, he has before admitted that it is only a conjecture; and after all that has been said since his time on the subject, it is still involved in obscurity, and perhaps it is now impossible to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. The Psalms, however, which bear this title, have a striking resemblance to each other, and are different in style from the other divine Poems in this book. They are all very short, and in several of them there is a gradation of meaning, and a degree of point towards the dose, which may be called epigrammatic. Hence Gesenius suggests that the title may mark a peculiar species of Hebrew composition. "The construction of the songs" [of degrees,] says Jebb, "is such as to reduce the evidently to a class. They are all short compositions, sententious, eminently fitted for lyrical use, in the highest degree poetical, and, as Calmet justly remarks, epigramrustic; using this term in its highest sense as concinnate, terse, and abounding in turns expressed with the most exquisite brevity. Two remarkable characteristics they possess, which, though found occasionally in other Psalms, seem to enter into the very texture of these — I mean the frequent recurrence of a characteristic word, and that figure which the rhetoricians call *Epanaphora,* or the repetition of the same idea or expression. As to the characteristic words: In Psalm 121 this is the word *keep* (⌧⌧⌧); in Psalm 122 the word *Salem,* and others of a like sound; in Psalm 123 the word *eyes,* ⌧⌧⌧⌧, in Psalm 126 the words *turn* and *captivity,* which in Hebrew are almost the same, ⌧⌧⌧ and ⌧⌧⌧⌧ in Psalm 127 *vain,* ⌧⌧⌧; in Psalm 133 the word *descend,* ⌧⌧⌧; and *bless,* ⌧⌧⌧ in Psalm 134 " — *Jebb's Literal Translation of the Psalms, with Dissertations,* volume 2.

Psalm 120:1-4

1. I cried [46] to Jehovah in my distress, and he answered me. **2.** O Jehovah! deliver my soul from the lips [47] of falsehood, and from the tongue of deceit. [48] **3.** What shall the tongue of deceit [49] give thee, and what shall avail thee? **4.** The arrows of a strong man sharpened, with coals of junipers.

1. *I cried to Jehovah in my distress.* The name of the author of the Psalm is not expressed, but the style of it throughout presents David to our view. Although, therefore, I cannot positively affirm, yet I am rather inclined to think that it was composed by him. Nor will it be improper, in my judgment, to explain it as if his name had been mentioned in the inscription. This, then, being granted, I would observe that although David, when in this verse he affirms that the Lord had heard him, gives thanks to him, yet his chief purpose was to set forth, in the form of complaint, how wickedly and cruelly Saul's flatterers employed all their ingenuity and power to accomplish his destruction. He, however, sets out with an expression of his gratitude to God, telling us that he had not called upon Him in vain; and he does this, that by his own example he might encourage others, especially when oppressed with adversity, to confidence in prayer. Men, it is true, have need of God's help every moment; but there is not a more suitable season for seeking him than when some great danger is immediately menacing us. It is therefore worthy of notice, that he was heard when, constrained and shut up by tribulation, he betook himself to the protection of God.

2. *O Jehovah! deliver my soul from the lip of falsehood.* David now points out the kind of his affliction, declaring that he was loaded with false accusations. In charging his enemies with lying and falsehood, he asserts his own innocence of the crimes which they slanderously imputed to him. His complaint therefore amounts to this, that as he was conscious of having committed no fault, he was assaulted *by* the wicked contrary to all law, human and divine, and that they brought him into hatred without his having given them any occasion for such

46 "□□□□□, *I have called* constantly, attentively, and anxiously, not with violent external gesture, or elevation of voice, but with strong inward emotion " — *Phillips.*

47 "Des leures." — *Fr.* "From the lips." But in the Hebrew text it is in the singular," from a lip of falsehood," that is, "from a false lip."

48 "□□□□ □□□□, *the deceitful* tongue. We have here two norms, both of which are in the absolute state, so that we must suppose the latter to be put emphatically for an abjective, the force of the expression being the same as that of □□□□ □□□□, *tongue of deceit*, i.e., *deceitful tongue*, a more frequent construction. So also we have □□□ □□□, *lip of falsehood*, for *false lip*, in the first member of this verse. The literal rendering of the words □□□□ □□□□, *is tongue*, (which is) *deceit itself*." — *Phillips.*

49 "La langue pleine de fraude." — *Fr.* "The tongue full of deceit."

injurious treatment. Deceitful tongues assault good and simple people in two ways' they either circumvent them by wiles and snares, or wound their reputation by calumnies. It is of the second way that the Prophet here complains. Now if David, who was endued with such eminent virtue, and free from every mark of disgrace, and far removed from every *wicked* action, was yet assailed with contumely, is it to be wondered at if the children of God in the present day labor under false accusations, and that when they have endeavored to conduct themselves uprightly they are yet in reported of? As they have the devil for their enemy, it is indeed impossible for them to escape being loaded with his lies. Yea, we see that slanderous tongues did not spare even the Son of God — a consideration which should induce us to bear the more patiently our condition, when the wicked traduce us undeservedly; since it is certain that we have here described the common lot of the whole Church.

3. *What shall the tongue of deceit give thee?* [50] The Prophet aggravates the malice of his enemies by asserting that they were so wickedly inclined as to be driven to evil speaking when they saw no prospect of deriving any advantage from such a course of conduct. He however seems to express more than this, — he seems farther to intimate, that after they have poured forth all the venom of their calumnies, their attempts will nevertheless be vain and ineffectual. As God is the maintainer of the innocence of his servants, David, inspired with hope from this truth, rises up against them with heroic courage, as if about to triumph over the whole crowd of his calumniators, [51] reproaching them for doing nothing else than betraying an impotent passion for evil speaking, which God at length would cause to recoil upon their own heads. It is a consideration well fitted to assuage the grief of all the godly, when their good name is unrighteously wounded by calumniators, that such malicious characters will gain nothing thereby in the end, because God will disappoint their expectation.

4. *The arrows of a strong man sharpened, with coals of juniper.* Here the Psalmist amplifies in another way the malice of such as distress the simple and innocent by their calumnies, affirming that they throw out their injurious reports just like a man who should draw an arrow, and with it pierce through the body of his neighbor; and that their calumnies were like *coals of juniper,* [52] which penetrate more effectually, and burn more intensely the sub-

50 The Psalmist here addresses himself in particular to his traducers.

51 "Comme s'il avoit desia le triomphe contre toute la bande de scs ennemis." — *Fr.* "As if he had already triumphed over the whole host of his enemies."

52 The Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠, *rothem,* here rendered "*juniper,*" occurs also in I Kings 19:4, 5, and Job 30:4, in both which places it is translated in our English Bible by "juniper-tree." It would appear that this shrub was remarkable for the intense flame with which it burned, and for the length of time during which its embers retained their heat. Several critics, however, think that the Hebrew *rothem* means the genista or Spanish broom; and in support of this opinion it is said that the genista is much used as fuel by the Arabs, among whom the Psalmist describes himself as then living; and that, as Geierus asserts, it" sparkles, burns, and crackles more vehemently than any other wood." (See Parkhurst on ⊠⊠⊠.) It is somewhat difficult to decide in this matter. As more than

stances with which they come in contact than the coals of any other kind of wood. The amount is, that the tongues of these slanderers were inflamed with the burning heat of fire, and, as it were, dipped in deadly poison; and that such persons were the less excusable, from the fact that, without deriving any advantage from it, they were impelled by an unbridled passion to inflict upon others deadly mischief. As the Prophet records nothing here which he did not experience in his own person, it may be inferred that if it behoved him and men of a similar character to be assailed by their enemies with lies, which were to them as arrows to pierce them, or coals to burn them, we need not be surprised at seeing the most eminent servants of God exercised with similar assaults.

thirty different trees are mentioned in the Bible, and as we are but imperfectly acquainted with the natural history of these remote countries, it is no wonder though we find it impossible to identify all these trees. It may be observed that Calvin in his translation brings out that beautiful gradation of sense, terminating in a point of severity, for which the Hebrew text is remarkable, but which does not appear in our English version. Slanderous words are first compared to "arrows," secondly, to "arrows discharged from the bow by a strong man," and in proportion to the strength of a man will be the force with which his weapon strikes; next to "sharp arrows;" and lastly, to "coals of juniper," or some wood used in those days celebrated for burning fiercely and long, (for the particle ⌧, *im* translated *with,* is sometimes one of similitude, as in Psalm 106:6, "We have sinned *like as* our fathers,") intimating not only that malignant slanders deeply penetrate, but that they inflame and burn for a long time. Hence the Apostle James (James 3:5, 6) compares the tongue of slander to a fire enkindled from hell, and inflaming the course of nature. Some interpreters think that this verse is not to be understood as a description of calumny, but rather as the punishment which God will inflict on the calumniator. They therefore regard it as an answer to the question in the preceding verse, "What shall be given unto thee," etc.; observing that calumny and falsehood being frequently represented by the images of arrows and fire, the same images suitably express the requital which awaits them at the hand of God — the swift and terrible retributive vengeance of the Almighty, which will overtake all who practice falsehood and slander. See Psalm 57:4; Psalm 64:3, 7, 9; and Job 20:26. "Sharp arrows of the Mighty One, with coals of juniper," await them. This opinion is adopted by Street, Mant, Morison, Paxton, Fry, French and Skinner. Calvin's exposition is embraced by Walford and Phillips. The former, to elicit this meaning the more clearly, uses a supplement: *"Sharp arrows of a warrior,*
And burning coals of juniper, thou resemblest." He, however, in a footnote requests the reader "to observe, that this is given as what seems to be the most probable interpretation of the passage, though it cannot be regarded as absolutely certain."

Psalm 120:5-7
5. Alas for me! that I have been a sojourner [53] in Mesech, and have dwelt among the tents of Kedar. **6.** My soul hath long dwelt with him who hateth peace. **7.** I am for peace; and when I speak they are for war. [54]

5. *Alas for me! that I have been a sojourner in Mesech.* David complains that he was doomed to linger for a long time among a perverse people; his condition resembling that of some wretched individual who is compelled to live till he grows old in sorrowful exile. The Mesechites and Kedarenes, as is well known, were Eastern tribes; the former of which derived their original from Japhet, as Moses informs us in Genesis 10:2; and the latter from a son of Ishmael. (Genesis 25:13.) To take the latter for a people of Italy, who were anciently called Hetrurians, is altogether absurd, and without the least color of probability, Some 'would have the word Mesech to be an appellative noun; and because ⌧ *mashak,* signifies *to draw, to protract,* they think that the Prophet bewails his protracted banishment, of the termination of which he saw no prospect. [55] But as immediately after he adds *Kedar,* by which term the Ishmaelites are unquestionably intended, I have no doubt that *Mesech* is to be understood of the Arabians who were their neighbors. If any one is of opinion that the Mesechites obtained this name from their dexterity in shooting with the bow, I will make no objections, provided it is admitted that the Prophet — as if he had been confined within a country of robbers — expresses the irksomeness of an uncomfortable and an annoying

53 "C'est, en exile;" —"That is, in exile." — Fr-. *Marg.*

54 Literally it is, "I peace; and when I speak, they for war."

55 This is the sense in which the word is rendered in most of the ancient versions. Thus the Septuagint has ἡ παροικία μρυ ἐμακρύνθη, "my sojourning is protracted;" and it is followed by the Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic versions. Aquila has προσηλύτευσα ἐν μακρυσμῷ I was a stranger for a long time;" and Symmachus, παροικῶν παρίλκυσα "I have protracted sojourning." Bishop Patrick and Dr. Hammond, following these authorities, render ⌧⌧⌧, *mesech,* adverbially. But though this is a meaning which the word will bear, yet as Calvin observes, there is little room for doubting that it is here a proper name. The parallelism which enables us in many instances to determine the accurate interpretation of a word in Hebrew poetry when other helps entirely fail, decidedly favors this interpretation. The term corresponding to ⌧⌧⌧ *mesech,* in the next hemistich, is ⌧⌧⌧ *kedar*; and as it is universally admitted that this is the name of a place, it cannot be justly questioned that such is also the case with respect to ⌧⌧⌧ *mesech.* To render it otherwise is destructive of the poetical structure of the passage. "If," says Phillips, "the adverbial sense be intended, then the expression should not have been ⌧⌧⌧ ⌧⌧⌧⌧, but something analogous to ⌧⌧⌧⌧ ⌧⌧⌧ in the next verse. Many localities have been mentioned for the geography of Mesech, as Tuscany, Cappadocia, Armenia, etc., which proves that the particular district called by this name is uncertain." It is however obvious that some barbarous and brutal tribes of Arabs are intended.

place of residence. Although he names the Arabians, yet under the terms employed he speaks metaphorically of his own countrymen, just as he elsewhere applies the appellation of Gentiles to the corrupt and degenerate Jews. [56] But here, with the view of putting still more dishonor upon his enemies, he has purposely selected the name by which to designate them from some of the savage and barbarous nations whose horrible cruelty was well known to the Jews. From these words we are taught, that scarcely a more distressing evil can befall the people of God, than for them to be placed in circumstances which, notwithstanding their living a holy and an inoffensive life, they yet cannot escape the calumnies of venomous tongues. It is to be observed, that although David was living in his own country, he yet was a stranger in it, nothing being more grievous to him than to be in the company of wicked men. Hence we learn that no sin is more detestable to God, by whose Spirit David spake, than the false accusations which shamefully deface the beauty of God's Church, and lay it waste, causing it to differ little from the dens of robbers, or other places rendered infamous from the barbarous cruelty of which they are the scene. Now if the place where the uprightness of good men is overwhelmed by the criminations of lying lips is to the children of God converted into a region of miserable exile, how could they have pleasure, or rather, how could they fail to feel the bitterest sorrow, in abiding in a part of the world where the sacred name of God is shamefully profaned by horrible blasphemies, and his truth obscured by detestable lies? David exclaims, *Alas for me!* because, dwelling among false brethren and a bastard race of Abraham, he was wrongfully molested and tormented by them, although he had behaved himself towards them in good conscience. [57] Since, then, at the present day, in the Church of Rome, religion is dishonored by all manner of disgraceful imputations, faith torn in pieces, light turned into darkness, and the majesty of God exposed to the grossest mockeries, it will certainly be impossible for those who have any feeling of true piety within them to lie in the midst of such pollutions without great anguish of spirit.

6. *My soul* [58] *hath long dwelt with him who hateth peace.* The Psalmist now shows, without figure, and, so to speak, points with the finger to those [59] whom he had before indirectly marked out by the terms *Mesech* and *kedar,* namely, the perfidious Israelites, who had degenerated from the holy fathers, and who rather wore the mask of Israelites than were

56 A similar mode of speaking is not uncommon in our own day. Thus we are accustomed to call gross and ignorant people Turks and Hottentots.

57 "D'autant que dcmeurant entre des faux freres et une race bastardc d'Abraham, a tort il est par eux molest4 et tourment(cornroe ainsi soit th'envers eux il se porte en bonne conscience." — Fr.

58 *My soul,* for *I.*

59 "Et (par maniere de dire) monstre au doigt ceux," etc — *Fr.*

the true seed of Israel. [60] He calls them *haters of peace,* [61] because they wilfully, and with deliberate malice, set themselves to make war upon the good and unoffending. To the same purpose he adds immediately after, that his heart was strongly inclined to seek after peace, or rather, that he was wholly devoted to it, and had tried every means in order to win their favor, but that the implacable cruelty of their disposition invariably impelled them to do him mischief. When he says, *I peace,* it is an abrupt, yet not an obscure expression, implying that he had not done them any injury or wrong which could give occasion for their hatred there having been always peace on his part. He even proceeds farther, asserting, that when he saw them inflamed with resentment against him, he endcavourcd to pacify them, and to bring them to a good understanding; for *to speak,* is here equivalent to offering conditions of peace in an amicable spirit, or to treating of reconciliation. From this it is still more apparent, how savage and brutal was the pride of David's enemies, since they disdained even to speak with him — to speak with a man who had deserved well at their hands, and who had never in any respect injured them. We are taught by his example, that it is not enough for the faithful to abstain from hurting others: they must, moreover, study to allure them by gentleness, and to bend them to good will. Should their moderation and kindness be rejected, let them wait in patience, until God at length show himself from heaven as their protector. Let us, however, remember, that if God does not immediately stretch forth his hand in our behalf, it is our duty to bear the wearisomeness occasioned by delay, like David, whom we find in this Psalm giving, thanks to God for his deliverance, while, at the same time, as if worn out with the weariness of waiting for it, he bewails the long oppression to which he had been subjected by his enemies.

60 "Aseavoir les Israelites desloyaux qui avoyent forligne' des saincts Peres, et qui estoyent plustost des masques d'Israclites, que non pas une vraye semence d'Israel." — *Fr.*

61 In describing those among whom he was now living as *haters of peace,* and, in the next verse, as bent on war, the inspired writer probably still alludes to the Arab tribes he had specified in the 5th verse, who have, from their origin to the present hour, been eminently characterized by their hatred of peace and propensity to war. Dr. Shaw thus writes concerning these barbarous tribes as they are to be found in our own day, and their character and habits were the same at the time when this Psalm was written: "The Arabs are naturally thievish and treacherous; and it sometimes happens, that those very persons are overtaken and pillaged in the morning who were entertained the night before with all the instances of friendship and hospitality. Neither are they to be accused for plundering strangers only, and attacking almost every person whom they find unarmed and defenceless, but for those many implacable and hereditary animosities which continually subsist among them: literally fulfilling the prophecy to Hagar, that 'Ishmael should be a wild man; his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him.'"

PSALM 121

The Psalmist, to encourage true believers confidently to trust in the aid of God, and to teach them to betake themselves to his protection, first, affirms that, to whatever quarter we turn our eyes it is impossible to find salvation anywhere else; and, in the second place, extols in lofty terms the fatherly care of God in defending his faithful ones.

Song of Degrees.

Psalm 121:1-2
1. I will lift up my eyes to the mountains, whence my help will come [62] **2.** My help is from Jehovah, who made heaven and earth.

1 *I will lift up my eyes to the mountains.* The inspired writer, whoever he was, seems, in the opening of the Psalm, to speak in the person of an unbelieving man. As God prevents his believing people with his blessings, and meets them of his own accord, so they, on their part, immediately cast their eyes directly upon him. What then is the meaning of this unsettled looking of the Prophet, who casts his eyes now on this side and now on that, as if faith directed him not to God? I answer, that the thoughts of the godly are never so stayed upon the word of God as not to be carried away at the first impulse to some allurements; and especially when dangers disquiet us, or when we are assailed with sore temptations, it is scarcely possible for us, from our being so inclined to the earth, not to be moved by the enticements presented to us, until our minds put a bridle upon themselves, and turn them back to God. The sentence, however, may be explained as if expressed in a conditional form. Whatever we may think, would the Prophet say, all the hopes which draw us away from God are vain and delusive. If we take it in this sense, he is not to be understood as relating how he reasoned with himself, or what he intended to do, but only as declaring, that those lose their pains who, disregarding God, gaze to a distance all around them, and make long and devious circuits in quest of remedies to their troubles. It is indeed certain, that in thus speaking of himself, he exhibits to us a malady with which all mankind are afflicted; but still, it will not be unsuitable to suppose, that he was prompted to speak in this manner from his own experience; for such is the inconstancy natural to us, that so soon as we are smitten with any fear, we turn our eyes in every direction, until faith, drawing us back from all these erratic wanderings, direct us exclusively to God. All the difference between believers and unbelievers in this respect is, that although all are prone to be deceived, and easily cheated by impostures, yet Satan bewitches unbelievers by his enchantments; whereas, in regard to believers, God corrects the vice of their nature, and does not permit them to persevere in going astray. The meaning of the Prophet is abundantly obvious, which is, that although all the helps of the world, even the mightiest, should offer themselves to us, yet we ought not

62 Phillips, who thinks it "probable that that Psalm was written just as the Israelites were about to commence their journey to their native land," gives this explanation of the verse: "*I will l lift up eyes to the mountains,* viz., Zion, Tabor, Carmel, etc.; but especially to the first, as being the place of the ark, and consequently the place to which the Israelites directed their eyes, as to a fountain of all good. There they looked for help as often as circumstances rendered expected assistance requisite, as we learn from several passages in the Psalms. See Psalm 14:7; Psalm 20:3." In returning from Babylon, how many a longing and anxious look would the Jews cast to the hills of Palestine, and with how many stirring and sacred emotions would the sight of them fill their minds!

to seek safety anywhere but in God; yea, rather, that when men shall have long wearied themselves in hunting after remedies, now in one quarter and now in another, they will at length find from experience, that there is no assured help but in God alone. By the *mountains,* the Prophet means whatever is great or excellent in the world; and the lesson he teaches is, that we ought to account all such favor as nothing.

Farther, these two verses ought to be read connectedly, bringing out this sense: When I shall have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, then I will at length experience that I have fallen into a rash and unprofitable mistake, until I direct them to God alone, and keep them fixed upon him. It is at the same time to be observed, that God in this place is not in vain honored with the title of *Creator of heaven and earth;* it being intended hereby tacitly to rebuke the ingratitude of men, when they cannot rest contented with his power. Did they in good earnest acknowledge him as Creator, they would also be persuaded, that as he holds the whole world in his hand, and governs it as seemeth good in his sight, he is possessed of infinite power. But when, hurried away by the blind impetuosity of their passions, they have recourse to other objects besides him, they defraud him of his right and empire. In this way ought we to apply this title of God to the case in hand. The amount is, that whilst we are naturally more anxious than is needful in seeking alleviation and redress to our calamities, especially when any imminent danger threatens us, yet we act a foolish and mistaken part in running up and down through tortuous mazes: and that therefore we ought to impose a restraint upon our understandings, that they may not apply themselves to any other but God alone. Nor is the opinion of those unsuitable, who think that the Hebrew word ⌧⌧, *el,* which we translate *to,* namely, *to the mountains,* is put for ⌧⌧, *al,* which signifies *above,* giving this sense, That men, however high they may look, will find no true salvation except in God.

Psalm 121:3-5
3. He will not suffer thy foot to stumble: he who keepeth thee will not slumber. **4.** Behold! he who keepeth Israel will not slumber nor sleep. **5.** Jehovah is thy keeper; Jehovah is thy defence [63] on thy right hand.

3 *He will not suffer thy foot to stumble.* Here the Prophet, in order to recall the faithful to the right path, and to defeat the influence of all the allurements which are wont to distract their minds, affirms that whatever advantages worldly men are accustomed to desire or hope for from the world, true believers will find abundantly and at hand in God alone. He not only attributes power to God, but also teaches that He is so affectioned towards us, that he will preserve us in all respects in perfect safety. As often as the power of God is extolled, there are many who immediately reply, It is very true that he can do such and such things if he is so inclined, but we do not certainly know what is his intention. In this passage, therefore, God is exhibited to the faithful as their guardian, that they may rest with assured confidence on his providence. As the Epicureans, in imagining that God has no care whatever about the world, extinguish all piety, so those who think that the world is governed by God only in a general and confused manner, and believe not that he cherishes with special care each of his believing people, leave men's minds in suspense, and are themselves kept in a state of constant fluctuation and anxiety. In short, never will the hearts of men be led in good earnest to call upon God, until a persuasion of the truth of this guardianship is deeply fixed in their minds. The Psalmist declares that the purpose for which God is our keeper, is, that he may hold us up. The Hebrew word, ⌧⌧⌧, *mot,* which is here used, signifies both *a sliding* or *falling,* and *a trembling* or *staggering.* Now, although it often happens that the faithful stagger, yea, are even ready to fall altogether, yet as God sustains them by his power, they are said to stand upright. And as amidst the many dangers which every moment threaten us, it is difficult for us to get rid of all anxiety and fear, the Prophet at the same time testifies, that God keeps watch unceasingly over our safety.

4. *Behold! he who keepeth Israel will not slumber nor sleep.* [64] To recall each individual to the consideration of the common covenant, he represents the Divine providence as ex-

63 The Hebrew word is ⌧⌧, *tsel,* "a shadow;" and hence it has been supposed that the words, "thy shadow at thy right hand.," are a figurative expression, referring to the protection afforded by the shade of a tree against the scorching rays of the sun, or to the custom which prevails in tropical climates especially, of keeping off the intense heat of the sun by a portable screen, such as an umbrella or parasol. The word is often put for *defense* in general. Compare Numbers 14:9; Isaiah 30:2; Jeremiah 48:45

64 A notion was prevalent among the heathen, that their gods sometimes slept, and were not then conscious of the wants of their worshippers. Elijah thus addressed in irony the followers of Baal, 1 Kings 18:27: "Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing,

tending to the whole body of the Church. In order that each of us for himself may be assured that God will be gracious to him, it behoves us always to begin with the general promise made to all God's people,. This form of expression, *he will not slumber nor sleep,* would be improper in other languages, according to the idiom of which it should rather be, *He will not sleep, yea, he will not slumber:* but when the Hebrews invert this order, they argue from the greater to the less. The sense then is, that as God never slumbers even in the smallest degree, we need not be afraid of any harm befalling us while he is asleep. The design of the Prophet is now obvious. To persuade true believers that God has a special care of each of them in particular, he brings forward the promise which God made to the whole people, and declares God to be the guardian of his Church, that from this general principle, as from a fountain, each might convey streams to himself. Accordingly immediately after, (Psalm 121:5,) addressing himself to each in particular, he repeats, *Jehovah is thy keeper,* that no person might hesitate to apply to himself that which belonged to the whole community of Israel. Besides, God is called *a defense at the right hand,* to teach us that it is not necessary for us to go far in seeking him, but that he is at hand, or rather stands at our side to defend us.

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or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth,

and must be waked." Very different was the character of the guardian of Israel. He relaxed not his watchful care over his people by indulging in light slumbers during the day, nor even by sleeping in the night, when the tired frame of man seeks and demands repose.

Psalm 121:6-8
6. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. [65] **7.** Jehovah shall keep thee from all evil; he will keep thy soul. **8.** Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in, henceforth and for ever.

6. *The sun shall not smite thee by day.* By these forms of expression the Psalmist magnifies the advantages which result to us from our having God present with us; and, by the figure synecdoche, under one particular, he declares in general that the faithful shall be safe from all adversities, defended as they are by Divine power. The language is metaphorical, the cold of night and the heat of day denoting all kind of inconveniences. The sense then is, that although God's people may be subject in common with others to the miseries of human life, yet his shadow is always at their side to shield them from thereby receiving any harm. The Prophet does not, however, promise the faithful a condition of such felicity and comfort as implies an exemption from all trouble; he only, for the purpose of assuaging their sorrows, sets before them this consolation — that being interested in the Divine layout, they shall be secure from all deadly harm; a point which he unfolds more distinctly in the following verses, where he tells us that God will so keep his own people from all evils, as to maintain their life in safety. The statement in the text before us is indeed general, but he afterwards specifies the chief parts of human life.

8. *Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in.* The sense is, Whatever thou shalt undertake or engage in during thy life shall come to a happy and successful termination. God no doubt directs by his Holy Spirit the, deliberations of his servants; but it appears to me, that this passage is rather to be referred to prosperous issues. If, however, any one would give it a more extended meaning I have no objection. It is enough for me to embrace that sense which is indisputably certain and solid, That God will be the continual guide of his people, so that stretching out his hand to them he will conduct them according to their hearts' desire from the beginning even to the end. Farther, it is of importance to mark the

65 There seems to be an allusion in the first member to sun-strokes, which are very fatal in hot countries, sometimes inflicting instant death, or being soon followed by death, while at other times, when the person lives, he continues through the remainder of his days in a state of idiocy. Comparatively few survive and perfectly recover the effects of such a visitation. What the Psalmist means by the *smiting of the moon* is at first sight not so obvious. Some suppose that he speaks in conformity with a popular belief, which it is supposed prevailed in the East in his time, just as it does in the present day, respecting the deleterious influence of the moonbeams on the human body, although there is no ground for such a belief, the moon no doubt getting the blame of the injury done by the cold and dampness of the night. But the probability is, that by the striking of the moon he simply alludes to the cold of the night, which has very baneful effects on the human frame, particularly in such oriental countries as Palestine, where there is a sudden change from extreme heat in the day to extreme cold in the night.

reason why the Prophet repeats so often what he had briefly and in one word expressed with sufficient plainness. Such repetition seems at first sight superfluous; but when we consider how difficult it is to correct our distrust, it will be easily perceived that he does not improperly dwell upon the commendation of the divine providence. How few are to be found who yield to God the honor of being a keeper, in order to their being thence assured of their safety, and led to call upon him in the midst of their perils! On the contrary, even when we seem to have largely experienced what this protection of God implies, we yet instantly tremble at the noise of a leaf falling from a tree, as if God had quite forgotten us. Being then entangled in so many unholy misgivings, and so much inclined to distrust, we are taught from the passage that if a sentence couched in a few words does not suffice us, we should gather together whatever may be found throughout the whole Scriptures concerning the providence of God, until this doctrine-" That God always keeps watch for us" — is deeply rooted in our hearts; so that depending upon his guardianship alone we may bid adieu to all the vain confidences of the world.

PSALM 122

In this Psalm David congratulates himself and the whole Church upon the fact, that a seat had at length been appointed for the ark of the covenant, and that God had chosen a place where his name should be continually called upon. Afterwards, to incite and encourage the faithful to engage in the worship of the sanctuary, he briefly declares, that the prosperous condition of the people depended upon God's having chosen the seat of royalty to be at Jerusalem, from whence it was his purpose to defend, maintain, and assist his people.

A Song of Degrees of David. [66]

66 "The burden of the Psalm," says Jebb, "is ⊠⊠⊠⊠ 'peace.' The play upon the words is very remarkable: ⊠⊠, 'there,' and ⊠⊠, 'the name,' lines 5 and 6; ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, 'tribes,' line 5 ⊠⊠⊠⊠, line 7. Then in line 9, and those which follow: ⊠⊠⊠⊠, 'pray;' ⊠⊠⊠⊠, 'peace;' ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, 'Jerusalem;' ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, 'shall prosper;' ⊠⊠⊠⊠ 'prosperity.'" — *Jebb's Literal Translation of the Psalters, with Dissertations,* volume 1. Speaking in reference to the author of the Psalm, and to the opinion held by some critics, that it was composed about the time or' the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, he says —"The extraordinary play upon words already noticed might argue a later period of composition: [than the time of David]. Still I cannot but think that the title assigning the Psalm to him is borne out by internal evidence of a stronger kind. The fond mention of Jerusalem, David's beloved city; the thrones of the house of David; and the recurrence of peace, which was so emphatically promised to David, as the blessing about to be conferred on his son Solomon, are all circumstances, which, taken in connection, stamp this song with a character evidently belonging to the reign of the royal Psalmist " — *Ibid.,* volume 2.

Psalm 122:1-3

1. I was glad when they said to me, We will go into the house of Jehovah. **2.** Our feet shall be [67] standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem! **3.** Jerusalem is built as a city, compact in itself together. [68]

1 *I was glad when they said to me.* God had often told Moses, that his Sanctuary would one day have a certain and fixed place of abode; yet from the time of Moses, for the space of more than a thousand years, the Ark of the Covenant had been carried about from place to place, as if it had been in a state of pilgrimage. At length it was revealed to David, that mount Zion was the spot where God would have his ark to be settled, and his temple built. Now, as David himself received this revelation with exceeding great joy, so he affirms that he was glad to find the whole people with one consent agreeing thereto. This circumstance has not been duly considered, and the consequence is, that interpreters have given the unhappy translation—*I was glad with those that said to me.* Such a rendering, however, only renders the sense a little obscure; but the translation of the Septuagint and the Vulgate, which puts upon the second verb of the verse a neuter signification, entirely vitiates the meaning, *I was glad in the things which, were said to me.* I indeed admit that literally the reading is—*I was glad in those who said to me;* but it is no uncommon thing for the letter ב, *beth,* which commonly signifies *in,* to be resolved into the adverb of time *when;* and here the scope of the text requires such a rendering. David testifies that he felt in his heart a double joy on observing that the whole people concurred in yielding obedience to the oracle which declared mount Zion to be the place which God had chosen for his solemn worship. By this example we are taught, that our joy, in like manner, should be doubled, when God by his Holy Spirit not only frames each of us to the obedience of his word, but also produces the same effect upon others, that we may be united together in the same faith. So stubborn and rebellious is human nature, that the great majority of mankind invariably murmur against God whenever he speaks. We have, therefore, no small ground for rejoicing when all harmoniously rank themselves with us on the side of God. Such as translate, *with those who said to me,* deduce this meaning: I take delight in the company of those who allure me to the service of God, and offer themselves to me as companions, that we may go to the

67 "Ou, ont este. — *Fr. marg.* "Or, have been."

68 Literally, Jerusalem built as a city, that is joined to itself together', i.e. the several parts of which are connected with each other, so as to form one compact whole. Before David's time, Zion was not a part of Jerusalem, neither it seems was Millo: but he added them to the city, and enclosed them within its wall. (2 Samuel 5:7, 9; 1 Chronicles 11:7, 8.) Solomon afterwards added the hill of Moria, on which his temple was built, to Jerusalem." — *Cresswell.*

sanctuary together. But from the second verse it will be still more obvious, that the joy of which David speaks proceeded from his seeing the people, with the ready obedience of faith, giving their consent to the utterance of the heavenly oracle, respecting the spot chosen to be the lawful and permanent scat of the ark of the covenant. For it immediately follows —

2. *Our feet shall be standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem!* In the Hebrew text the verb is indeed in the past tense, which it would not be unsuitable to retain; but as it makes little *difference* as to the meaning whether the one reading or the other is adopted, I have no difficulty in leaving my readers to their own *choice.* David rehearses the language in which all the godly in common expressed themselves — that they should at length stand with sure footing in Jerusalem, because it was the will of God there to establish his Sanctuary, which hitherto had often changed its lodgings, and had been carried from place to place. By such a pilgrimage state of the ark, God reminded the people that he had not without cause spoken by Moses what I have a little ago adverted to. Thus, whenever the ark of the covenant was conveyed from one place to another, God thereby stirred up the hearts of his servants to desire and pray that a certain settled place might be appointed to it. Moreover, this fixing of its seat was not a matter of small moment. As while it was frequently changing its abode, the faith of the people hung in suspense, so after God had chosen for it a permanent residence, he by this testified more unequivocally that he would be the ever, lasting and unchangeable protector of his people. It is, therefore, not surprising to find the faithful gratefully acknowledging that their feet, which had hitherto been wont to run from place to place, should henceforth stand steadfast within the gates of Jerusalem. The ark, it is true, dwelt a long time in Shiloh, (1 Samuel 1:3,) but God having made no promise concerning that place, it could not be the permanent abode of that symbol of the divine presence. On the contrary, since, as we shall see on Psalm 132:14, it was said of mount Zion — "This is my rest for ever," the faithful, depending upon that promise, confidently boast that their feet shall hereafter be at rest and stand firm. Farther, as Christ,

"in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," (Colossians 2:9,)

and who is our true Immanuel, (Isaiah 7:14,) now resides amongst us, he has furnished us with matter of more abundant joy. We are, therefore, ungrateful and stupid, if that promise —

"Lo, I am wit you always, even unto the end of the world,"
(Matthew 28:20,)

does not ravish us with exceeding joy, and especially if we see it in any place received publicly and with common consent. What I have just now quoted concerning the rest or repose of the Lord, has been at length accomplished in the person of Christ, as is evident from Isaiah 11:10 — "His rest shall be glorious;" where the Prophet does not speak of the burial of Christ, as some interpreters erroneously suppose, but of the future distinction of the Church.

3. *Jerusalem is built as a city.* Here David begins to celebrate the praises of Jerusalem; and he does this with the design of encouraging the people to persevere with uniform steadfastness in their obedience. It was of great importance for the minds of the godly, instead of being drawn hither and thither, to be kept constantly fixed on that city, which was the bond of a holy unity. When the people came to be divided into two bodies, that was the commencement of melancholy devastation. It is not surprising, then, to find David commending with such earnestness the place which God had chosen, knowing, as he did, that the prosperity of the Church depended upon the children of Abraham worshipping God there in purity, according to the appointed observances of the law; and next, upon their acknowledging the royal seat which the same God had erected there by his own authority, and had taken under his own protection When it is said that *Jerusalem is built as a city,* it is not to be understood as referring only to the walls, or towers, or ditches of that city, but chiefly to the good order and holy polity by which it was distinguished, although I allow that there is some allusion to its ancient state. Salem, indeed, had been a noted town even from the beginning; but when God selected it to be the head of the kingdom, it changed its appearance, and in a manner its nature, so that then it began to deserve the name of a well-regulated city. At first sight it may seem a poor commendation to call Jerusalem a city; but it is to be observed that it is here exhibited as it were standing alone in the whole world — taking the precedence of all other cities, which will in vain attempt to equal it. David, certainly, in thus speaking, does not intend to divest other cities of the rank to which they may be entitled, but he raises Jerusalem higher, that it may appear conspicuous above them all, even as we find Isaiah, (Isaiah 2:2,) when speaking of mount Zion, asserting that it "shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills." In that passage the Prophet, to magnify this little hill, brings down the loftiest mountains of the world, that they may not obscure its glory. In like manner David here affirms that Jerusalem is compacted as a city, to induce the faithful, instead of gazing in all directions around them, to rest contented with the city which God had chosen, since they would nowhere find its equal. After having humbled all other cities, he shows, in a few words, the excellence of Jerusalem, representing it as regularly built, or fitly and neatly joined together in all its parts. Some take these words as expressing literally and without figure, that its citizens live together in peace and unity; but I see no impropriety in supposing that they describe, metaphorically, the peaceable state of a city. Thus the mutual concord which reigns among the citizens of a city, and by which they are united to each other, is compared to buildings, compacted together by a skillful and elegant workmanship, so that there is nothing imperfect, in joined together, or rent, but throughout a beautiful harmony'. By this David teaches us, that the Church can only remain in a state of safety when unanimity prevails in her, and when, being joined together by faith and charity, she cultivates a holy unity.

Psalm 122:4-5
4. Thither the tribes ascended, the tribes of God, for a testimony to Israel, [69] to praise the name of Jehovah. **5.** For there were set thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

4. *Thither the tribes ascended.* David here invests Jerusalem with two titles of honor, calling it the sacred and regularly appointed place for calling upon the name of God; and next, the royal sea, to which the whole people were to have recourse for obtaining justice. All our salvation depends upon these two points; first, that Christ has been given to us to be our priest; and, secondly, that he has been established king to govern us. This God showed to his ancient people under figures. The sanctuary erected on mount Zion was intended to keep their faith fixed upon the spiritual priesthood of Christ; and in like manner, by the kingdom of David, there was presented to their view an image of the kingdom of Christ. The Psalmist, therefore, says in the first place, that the tribes or families of God shall come to Jerusalem; and then he immediately adds, that there the seat of judgment is erected, on which he and his posterity will sit. The reason why it was the will of God that there should be only one temple and one altar was, that the people might not fall away to various superstitions. David therefore here declares that this place was appointed by God's own mouth, that all the families of God, or the twelve tribes, might there assemble from all quarters. To express more plainly how important it was, for this form of God's worship to be preserved pure and complete, he says that it *was for a testimony* The noun employed comes from the verb ⌧⌧⌧, *ud,* which signifies *to bear witness,* or *to covenant.* Now by the word in this place is denoted a mutual declaration or agreement between God and the people. When the tribes shall come thither, says the Prophet substantially, it will not be at random, because their fancy thus leads them, but because God by his own mouth invites them. The amount therefore is, that the holy assemblies which shall be kept at Jerusalem will not be vain and unprofitable, since God has made a covenant with his people, determining and appointing that place for his service. Whence we learn, that in judging of the true temple of God, it is

69 Walford translates —"According to the institution of Israel." Phillips adopts a similar rendering, which he supports by the following: note: — "⌧⌧⌧⌧, *testimony,* and thence *a statute* or *law.* Amyraldus says — 'Quacunque re Deus voluntatem suam significet, id Dei testimonium solet appellari.' The particle ⌧ should be understood as prefixed to this word. The statute spoken of here is that which is found in Exodus 23:17, and Deuteronomy 16:16, enjoining the tribes of Israel to assemble together before the Lord at the three great feasts. The place of their assembling was that which God chose for the residence of the ark, which was first at Shiloh, and afterwards at Jerusalem." Bishop Horne, and French and Skinner read — "According to the testimony given unto Israel," which brings out exactly the same meaning — testimony denoting, as they explain it, the injunction given to the Israelites in that passage in Deuteronomy quoted above.

necessary to take into account the doctrine taught. With respect to the time in which David lived, as God had adopted the Jewish people, and as it was his will that they should be employed in the external worship of his name, he prescribed to them a rule from which it was unlawful for them to deviate. Thus when the faithful assembled on mount Zion, it was not foolishness or inconsiderate zeal, or the impulse of their own minds, which brought them thither, as if they resembled those men whom we daily see inventing for themselves, out of their own heads, numberless kinds of divine worship; but they were led thither by the command of God, that they might worship him on mount Zion, by which word the Prophet intimates, that all other temples are unholy, and all other religions perverse and corrupt, because they do not correspond with the rule laid down in God's word. He next subjoins the end of this contract or covenant, which was *that the name of God might be praised.* And, indeed, as to yield to God the glory of all good things is the end of our adoption, so it is the end of all our actions.

5. *For there were set thrones for judgment.* He means, that the throne of the kingdom was fixed or established at Jerusalem, or that there it had its permanent seat. Among that people some order of judgments had always existed; these, however, had formerly been in an unsettled state, and frequently changed, but God at length ordained, in the person of David, a new government which should flow in a continual course; for it was his will that the children of David should succeed their father in this royal dignity from age to age until the coming of Christ. The Prophet has a little before spoken of the Temple and the priesthood; and now he affirms, that this kingdom, which God had erected, will be firm and stable; in order to distinguish it from all the other kingdoms of the world, which are not only temporary, but also frail and subject to a variety of changes. This everlastingness of the kingdom has been expressly confirmed by other Prophets in various parts of their' writings, and not without cause; for the object was, to teach the faithful that God would be the guardian of their welfare only upon the supposition of their remaining under the protection and defense of David, and that, therefore, if they desired to continue in safety and to prosper, they should not make for themselves new kings at their own pleasure, but should live quietly under that kind of government which God had set up among them. The repetition of the word *throne* is emphatic. There, says the Psalmist, the throne of judgment and equity is erected. Then he adds, *the throne of the house of David;* for it was the will of God that the right and prerogative of reigning should continue in David's posterity, until the true everlastingness of this kingdom should be manifested in the person of Christ.

Psalm 122:6-9

6. Pray ye for the peace of Jerusalem: may those who love thee prosper **7.** Peace be within thy bulwarks [70] prosperity [71] within thy towers! **8.** For the sake of my brethren and neighbors, I will now say, Peace be within thee! **9.** Because of the house of Jehovah our God, I will seek thy good.

6. *Pray ye for the peace of Jerusalem.* David now exhorts all the devout worshippers of God to make supplication for the prosperity of the holy city. The more effectually to stir them up to such exercise, he promises that, in this way the divine blessing will descend upon them. The reason why he was so deeply concerned about the prosperity of Jerusalem was, as we have formerly stated — and he again repeats the same thing at the end of the Psalm—because the welfare of the whole Church was inseparably connected with that kingdom and priesthood. Now as each of us in particular, were the whole Church to be involved in ruin, must *necessarily* perish miserably, it is not surprising to find David *recommending to* all the children of God to cultivate this anxious concern about the Church. If we would order our prayers aright, let us always begin with pleading that the Lord would be pleased to preserve this sacred community. Whoever, confining his attention to his own personal advantage, is indifferent about the common weal, he not only gives evidence that he is destitute of all true feeling of godliness, but in vain desires his own prosperity, and will profit nothing by his prayers, since he does not observe the due order. [72] Similar is the drift of the promise which is added immediately after: *They shall prosper that love thee;* which, however, may be read in the form of a wish, *May those who love thee prosper* But the sense in either case is almost the same. Farther, although the Hebrew verb ⌧⌧⌧, *shalah,* which the Prophet here uses, signifies *to live in quietness* or *peace,* yet as the Hebrew noun for *peace,* from which it is derived, is employed by him generally for a joyful and happy condition, I have no doubt that he here announces in general to all the godly who have the well being of the Church near their heart, that they shall enjoy the blessing of God and a prosperous life. This sentence frequently occurs in the Prophecies of Isaiah, from the 54th chapter to the end of the book (Isaiah 54-66). Hence we learn that the curse of God rests upon all such as afflict the Church, or plot and endeavor by any kind of mischief to accomplish its destruction.

70 "*Within thy walls.* Josephus tells us, that there were at Jerusalem *three* ranges of walls surrounding the city. The sense of the passage is, 'May no enemy approach even to thy out-works to disturb thy prosperity'" — *Warner.*

71 "Ou, abondance." — *Fr marg.* "Or, abundance."

72 "Et ne proufiter arien par ses prieres, d'autant qu'il n'observe point l'ordre legitime " — *Fr.*

7. *Peace be within thy bulwarks,* etc. The two clauses express the same sentiment, and, therefore, the meaning of the first is gathered from the second. The term *peace* signifies nothing else than prosperity. The noun ⊠⊠⊠, *shalvah,* in the second clause, sometimes signifies *rest,* but it is more frequently taken for *abundance* or *prosperity* On this account I have translated the noun ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *bechelech, within thy bulwark* [73] I do not find fault with others who have translated it *a ditch* or *outward wall;* but the word *bulwark* agrees better with the word *towers,* which occurs at the close of the verse. The amount is, that David prays for the prosperity of the Church through its whole extent. Moreover, it is to be noticed, that when he offers supplication for its external prosperity, it is not to be understood as implying that he was unconcerned about its internal state or spiritual well being; but under the similitude of *walls,* [74] he wishes that on all sides the blessing of God may environ and fortify the holy city.

8. *For the sake of my brethren and neighbors.* He specifies two causes on account of which he felt a care about the Church, for the purpose of stirring up, by his example, all the faithful to exercise the same care. These words, however, seem to contain a tacit contrast. Among the wicked and malicious he might be the object of suspicion, or, at least, he was in danger of being slandered; as if, in commending Jerusalem, he had rather an eye to his own particular advantage than to the public welfare. In order, therefore, to remove all ground for objecting, that in thus speaking he was craftily endeavoring to establish his own kingdom, he protests, that he is not influenced by personal considerations, but by a concern for the whole Church, which he embraced with a sincere affection of heart. I will speak, says he, O Jerusalem! of thy peace, not because it will be profitable for me or mine, but because thy prosperity shall extend itself to all the children of God; for under the term *brethren* he doubtless comprehends all believers that he did so, because the worship of God so far from remaining entire would go to ruin unless Jerusalem continued standing. If then the salvation of our brethren is regarded by us as an object of importance, if religion is with us a matter of heart-work, we ought, at the same time, as much as in us lies, to *take* an interest in the prosperity of the Church. Whence it follows, that such as are indifferent about her condition, are no less cruel than impious; for if she is "the pillar and foundation of truth," the inevitable consequence of her destruction must be the extinction of true piety. And if the body is destroyed, how can each of the members fail to be involved in destruction? Farther, this passage teaches us, that the Church is not an empty title, but must be sought for where the true religion prevails. Whence it appears, how foolish the Papists are, who, notwithstanding their

73 Calvin's meaning is, that as the nouns *peace* and *prosperity* have a corresponding signification, he was of opinion, that there existed a similar correspondence between the other two nouns.

74 The Latin copy here reads, "sed ad mores alludens;" but *mores* is evidently a typographical error for *muros* The French version has "mais sous ceste similitude *des murs* "

having rejected and overthrown the doctrine of the Gospel, yet mightily boast of the name of the Church.

9. *Because of the house of Jehovah our God, etc*. In this verse he adds a second reason why he cared for the Church — that he did so, because the worship of God so far from remaining entire would go to ruin unless Jerusalem continued standing. If then the salvation of our brethren is regarded by us as an object of importance, if religion is with us a matter of heart-work, we ought, at the same time, as much as in us lies, to take an interest in the prosperity of the Church. Whence it follows, that such are indifferent about her condition, are no less cruel than impious; for if she is "the pillar and foundation of truth," the inevitable consequence of her destruction must be the extinction of true piety. And if the body is destroyed, how can each of the members fail to be involved in destruction? Farther, this passage teaches us that the Church is not an empty title, but must be sought for where the true religion prevails. Whence it appears, how foolish the Papists are, who, notwithstanding their having rejected and overthrown the doctrine of the Gospel, yet mightily boast of the name of the Church.

PSALM 123

In this Psalm, the faithful oppressed with the cruel tyranny of their enemies, beseech God to deliver them, there being no other source of hope left for them except in his protection.

A Song of Degrees.

Psalm 123:1-4

1. I lift up my eyes to thee, who dwellest in the heavens. **2.** Behold! as the eyes of servants look [75] to the hand of their roadsters; as the eyes of a handmaid look to the hand of her mistress, so do our eyes to Jehovah our God, until he have mercy upon us. **3.** Have mercy upon us O Jehovah have mercy upon us; for we are greatly cloyed with reproach. **4.** Our soul is in itself greatly cloyed with the mockery of men who are rich, and with the contempt of the proud.

1. *I lift my eyes to thee, who dwellest in the heavens.* It is uncertain at what time, or even by what Prophet, this Psalm was composed. I do not think it probable that David was its author; because, when he bewails the persecutions which he suffered in the time of Saul, it is usual with him to inter-pose some particular references to himself. My opinion, then, rather is, that this form of prayer was composed for all the godly by some Prophet, either when the Jews were captives in Babylon, or when Antiochus Epiphanes exercised towards them the most relentless cruelty. Be this as it may, the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration the Prophet delivered it to the people, calls upon us to have recourse to God, when — ever wicked men unrighteously and proudly persecute, not one or two of the faithful only, but the whole body of the Church. Moreover, God is here expressly called *the God who dwelleth in the heavens,* not simply to teach his people to estimate the divine power as it deserves, but also that, when no hope of aid is left for them on earth, yea rather, when their condition is desperate, just as if they were laid in the grave, or as if they were lost in a labyrinth, they should then remember that the power of God remains in heaven in unimpaired and infinite perfection. Thus these words seem to contain a tacit contrast between the troubled and confused state of this world and God's heavenly kingdom, from whence he so manages and governs all things, that whenever it pleases him, he calms all the agitations of the world, comes to the rescue of the desperate and the despairing, restores light by dispelling darkness, and raises up such as were cast down and laid prostrate on the ground. This the Prophet confirms by the verb *lift up;* which intimates, that although all worldly resources fail us, we must raise our eyes upward to heaven, where God remains unchangeably the same, despite the mad impetuosity of men in turning all things here below upside down.

2. *Behold as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters.* This similitude is very suitable to the present case. It implies that without the protection of God true believers have no comfort, are completely disarmed and exposed to all manner of wrongs, have neither strength nor courage to resist; in short, that their safety depends entirely upon aid derived from another. We know how shamefully servants were treated in ancient times, and what reproaches might be cast upon them, whilst yet they durst not move a finger to repel the

75 "Look" is a supplement taken from the French version.

outrage. Being therefore deprived of all means of defending themselves, the only thing which remained for them to do was, what is here stated, to crave the protection of their masters. The same explanation is equally applicable to the case of *handmaids* Their condition was indeed shameful and degrading; but there is no reason why we should be ashamed of, or offended at being compared to slaves, provided God is our defender, and takes our life under his guardianship; God, I say, who purposely disarms us and strips us of all worldly aid, that we may learn to rely upon his grace, and to be contented 'with it alone. It having been anciently a capital crime for bond-men to carry a sword or any other weapon about them, and as they were exposed to injuries of every description, their masters were wont to defend them with so much the more spirit, when any one causelessly did them violence. Nor can it be doubted that God, when he sees us placing an exclusive dependence upon his protection, and renouncing all confidence in our own resources, will as our defender encounter, and shield us from all the molestation that shall be offered to us. It is, however, certain that we have here properly the description of a period in which the people of God were reduced to a state of extreme necessity, and brought even to the brink of despair. As to the word *hand,* it is very well known to be put for *help.* [76]

3. *Have mercy upon us, O Jehovah! etc.* The Psalmist prosecutes and confirms the preceding doctrine. He had said that the godly, finding themselves utterly broken in spirit and cast down, intently directed their eyes to the hand of God: now he adds that they are filled with reproach. From this we learn that the wicked not only assaulted them by such ways of violence as suggested themselves to their minds, but that by their mockery they as it were trampled under foot the children of God. The repetition of the prayer, *Have mercy upon us,* which is a sign of vehement and ardent desire, indicates that they were reduced to the last degree of misery. When insult is added to wrongs, there is nothing which inflicts a deeper wound upon well constituted minds. The Prophet therefore complains chiefly of that, as if it were the consummation of all calamities. He says that *rich and proud men* treated the Church with insolent triumph; for it commonly happens that those who are elevated hi the world, look down with contempt upon the people of God. The lustre of their he. hour and power dazzles their eyes, so that they make no account of God's spiritual kingdom: yea, the more the wicked prosper and are smiled on by fortune, to the greater extent does their pride

76 "Unto *the hand of their masters* — if we retain the word *hand,* it must be taken in the well-known sense which it sometimes bears of *side* or *quarter:* and the original word is used (Exodus 2:5) in the same sense. The phrase will then simply mean, that the eyes of servants look towards their masters, and this agrees with — so *our eyes wait upon the Lord.* But the Hebrew word also signifies *power,* (as in Deuteronomy 32:36,) which may very well be substituted for. *hand* in this place, the notion being that servants when they are in danger or in distress look to the power of their masters for assistance; and in general expect from them subsistence and *defense.*" — *Cresswell.*

swell, and the more violently does it throw off its foam. This passage teaches us, that it is no new thing for the Church to be held in contempt by the children of this world who abound in riches. The epithet *proud* is justly applied to the same persons who are described as *rich;* for wealth engenders pride of heart. Farther, as we see that in old time the Church of God was covered with reproaches, and pointed at with the finger of scorn, we ought not to be discouraged if the world despise us, nor should we allow our faith to be shaken by the wicked when they assault us with their scoffs, yea, even defame us with their injurious and insulting language. We must always bear in mind what is here recorded, that the heart not of one man only, or of a few, but of the whole Church, was filled not merely with the violence, cruelty, craft, and other evil doings of the wicked, but also with reproaches and mockery. It is also to be remembered, that all the loftiness and pride existing in the world are here represented as in opposition to the Church, so that she is accounted as nothing better than "the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things," as the Apostle Paul declares in 1 Corinthians. 4:13. When the same thing happens to us at the present day, let us leave the wicked to swell with their pride until they burst; and let it suffice us to know, that we are notwithstanding precious in the sight of God. By the verb *cloy*, especially as it is emphatically repeated, the Prophet intended to express a long continued oppression, which filled the hearts of the godly with weariness and sorrow. How necessary the lesson taught in this text is in our own day, it requires no lengthened discussion to demonstrate. We see the Church destitute of all worldly protection, and lying under the feet of her enemies, who abound in riches, and are armed with dreadful power. We see the Papists boldly rising up, and with all their might pouring forth their mockeries against us and the whole service of God. On the other hand, there are mingled amongst us, and flying about everywhere, Epicureans, who deride our simplicity. There are also many giants, who overwhelm us with reproaches; and this baseness has lasted from the time that the Gospel began to emerge from the corruption's of Popery even to the present day. What then remains to be done, but that, finding ourselves environed with darkness on all sides, we seek the light of life in heaven? and that our soul, although it may be filled to satiety with all kinds of reproaches, breathe forth prayers to God for deliverance with the importunity of the famished?

PSALM 124

The Church having been providentially delivered from extreme peril, David exhorts true believers to thanksgiving, and teaches them by this memorable example, that their safety depends solely upon the grace and power of God.

A Song of Degrees of David.

Psalm 124:1-5

1. But for Jehovah, who was on our side, may Israel now say; **2.** But for Jehovah who was on our side, when men rose up against us; **3.** They had then swallowed us up alive, when their wrath was kindled against us; **4.** The waters had then overwhelmed us, the torrent had gone over our soul: **5.** The proud waters [77] had then gone over our soul.

1. *But for Jehovah, who was on our side.* Some expositors think that this Psalm describes the very sad and calamitous condition of the Church when the, residue of the people were carried away into Babylon. This opinion is, however, without any good foundation for the complaints made, apply with equal propriety to the persecutions which the Church suffered under the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is another objection to this interpretation, that the Psalm bears in its inscription the name of David, and historically recounts the deliverance which the people had obtained from extreme danger by the power of God. To get quit of this difficulty they observe, that what had not yet come to pass is described prophetically; but this is a forced conjecture, for the Prophets usually speak of things to come in a different manner. It is more probable that David here sets forth a known history, and exhorts the faithful to reflect upon the divine succor which they had already actually experienced. I dare not, however, limit what is here spoken to David's time. It is indeed true that the heathen nations often waged war against the people of God, armed with such power as to come rushing upon them with the impetuosity of a deluge; but as David does not specify any particular instance, he is not, I conceive, to be understood as celebrating only some one deliverance, but in general all the instances in which God had succoured his Church. The heathen at many different times, as is well known, rose up against the Church, with such mighty hosts, that she was brought almost to the verge of destruction. David then represents as in a mirror the uncertain and changeable condition of the Church, just such as it had been from the beginning, to teach the faithful that its stability had not been owing to its own intrinsic strength, but that it had been preserved by the wonderful grace of God; and to habituate them to call upon God in the midst of dangers.

2. *But for Jehovah who was on our side.* It is not without cause that he twice repeats the same sentence. So long as we are in danger our fear is immoderate; but no sooner are we delivered than we lessen the greatness of our calamity, and Satan, deceiving us by this artifice, leads us to obscure the grace of God. Since then, after having been wonderfully preserved by the Lord, we for the most part devise all sorts of imaginary circumstances, in order to efface from our minds the remembrance of his grace, David, by introducing the people as struck with amazement, purposely dwells upon the amplification of the danger. In these

77 "Alors les eaux enfiees et impetueuses fussent," etc. — *Fr.* "*The* swollen and impetuous waters had then," etc. The epithet *proud* is applied to the waves of the sea in Job 38:11.

words a bridle is put upon us, to keep us meditating upon our dangers, lest the sense of God's grace should vanish from our minds. The common translation, *Had not the Lord been on our side,* does not sufficiently express David's meaning; for he affirms that the deliverance and the salvation of the people proceeded from nothing else than God's succor, and at the same time shows that this succor was both certain and evident. Two things then are here to be distinctly noticed; first, that the Lord had been at hand to afford aid to his servants, and had taken their part; and secondly, that being already in a desperate condition, they could not by help from any other quarter, or in another manner, have escaped from danger. Thus we are taught, that men then only ascribe the glory of their preservation to God, when they are persuaded of his being so favourably inclined towards them as to defend them and maintain them safe. In the second clause there is extolled in high terms the infinite power of God, of which he had given abundant proof in delivering the people, to teach us that such a manner of preserving does not belong to man. By the noun ⊠⊠⊠, *adam,* which when it is collective signifies men in general, David seems to denote a vast number of enemies. The people of God, as if he had said, had not to contend merely against a few men, or against one nation, but were assailed by almost the whole world; it being abundantly manifest that all mankind were the enemies of the Jews.

When he says, (Psalm 124:3,) *They had swallowed us up alive,* [78] he not only expresses barbarous cruelty, but also disproportion of strength. He describes then in the first place how violent was the onset of the enemy, and secondly, how feeble and inadequate the Jews were to withstand them, since these cruel beasts had no need of swords for slaughter, but without a battle or an effort of strength, could easily devour that unwarlike and defenceless flock.

4. *The waters had then overwhelmed us.* He embellishes by an elegant metaphor the preceding sentiment, comparing the dreadful impetuosity of the enemies of the Jews to an inundation, which swallows up whatever it meets with in its overflowing course. And he continues to preserve the character of a man affrighted. He names *the waters,* next *the torrent,* thirdly, *the proud* or *impetuous waters.* He says, *over us,* and *over our soul,* as if, by presenting the thing to the eye, he intended to strike terror into the people. And certainly this impassioned language ought to have all the effect of a graphic representation, that the faithful might the better feel from what a profound gulf they had been rescued by the hand of God. He only truly attributes his deliverance to God, who acknowledges himself to have been lost

78 "The metaphor may be taken from famished wild beasts attacking and devouring men, (Comp. 5:5,) or the reference may 'be to the case of a man shut up alive in a sepulcher, (Proverbs 1:12,) and left there to perish, or (Numbers 16:30) swallowed up by an earthquake " — *Cresswell.* "A figurative expression to intimate the savageness of the adversaries, alluding to the practice of many predatory animals of swallowing their victims alive. Such is the well-known habit of many of the predatory kinds of fish." — *Phillips.*

before he was delivered. The adverb *them* is here either demonstrative, as if the Psalmist had pointed to the thing with the finger, or it is taken for *long ago.* The former signification is, however, more suitable to the present passage.

Psalm 124:6-8
6. Blessed be Jehovah! who gave us not for a prey to their teeth [79] **7.** Our soul has been rescued as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare has been broken, and we have been delivered [80] **8.** Our help is in the name of Jehovah, who made heaven and earth.

6. *Blessed be Jehovah!* The Psalmist now exhorts the godly to a grateful acknowledgment of the divine goodness, and as it were puts words into their mouth. Here also he shows by another similitude, that it would have been all over with them had not God succoured them; affirming that they were delivered not otherwise than if some one had plucked *the prey from the teeth* of a wild and cruel beast. Of the same import is the third similitude, That they were on all sides entrapped and entangled in the snares of their enemies, even as *little birds* caught in the net he stretched under the hand of the fowler; and that when they were delivered, it was just as if one should set at liberty birds which had been taken. The amount is, that the people of God, feeble, without counsel, and destitute of aid, had not only to deal with blood-thirsty and furious beasts, but were also ensnared by bird-nets and stratagems, so that being greatly inferior to their enemies as well in policy as in open force, they were besieged by many deaths. From this it may be easily gathered that they were miraculously preserved.

8. *Our help is in the name of Jehovah.* David here extends to the state of the Church in all ages that which the faithful had already experienced. As I interpret the verse, he not only gives thanks to God for one benefit, but affirms that the Church cannot continue safe except in so far as she is protected by the hand of God. His object is to animate the children of God with the assured hope, that their life is in perfect safety under the divine guardianship. The contrast between the help of God, and other resources in which the world vainly confides, as we have seen in Psalm 20:7,

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God,"

is to be noticed, that the faithful, purged from all false confidence, may betake themselves exclusively to his succor, and depending upon it, may fearlessly despise whatever Satan and the world may plot against them. The *name of God* is nothing else than God himself; yet it tacitly conveys a significant idea, implying that as he has disclosed to us his grace by his word, we have ready access to him, so that in seeking him we need not go to a distance, or

79 The Church's escape, be it observed, as appears from verse third, is likened to a rescue from the jaws of a ferocious animal, *which swallows its prey quick,* or *alive.*

80 The reader will perceive, that as the imagery goes on it becomes the more beautiful. Pleasing and tender ideas are associated with the escape of an innocent bird from the snares which the art and cruelty of man had contrived, to deprive it of life, or rob it of liberty.

follow long circuitous paths. Nor is it without cause that the Psalmist again honors God with the title of Creator. We know with what disquietude our minds are agitated till they have raised the power of God to its appropriate elevation, that, the whole world being put under, it alone may be pre-eminent; which cannot be the case unless we are persuaded that all things are subject to his will. He did not show once and in a moment his power in the creation of the world and then withdraw it, but he continually demonstrates it in the government of the world. Moreover, although all men freely and loudly confess that God is the Creator of heaven and of earth, so that even the most wicked are ashamed to withhold from him the honor of this title, yet no sooner does any terror present itself to us than we are convicted of unbelief in hardly setting any value whatever upon the help which he has to bestow.

PSALM 125

As the faithful being mingled in this world with the ungodly seem to be exposed to all the ills of life in the same manner as other people, the Prophet, comparing them to Jerusalem, shows that they are defended by an invincible bulwark. And if God at any time suffer them to be plagued by the malice of the wicked, he exhorts them to be of good hope. He however at the same time distinguishes between true and false Israelites, that hypocrites may not apply to themselves what is here said concerning the safety of the righteous.

A Song of Degrees.

Psalm 125:1-2

1. They who confide in Jehovah "are" as mount Zion, "which" shall not be removed, "but" shall abide for ever. [81] **2.** As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Jehovah round about his people, henceforth and for ever.

1. *They who confide in Jehovah are as mount Zion.* The present Psalm differs from the preceding in this — that while in the other it was said that the Church *had been preserved* by the power of God, without any human means, the Holy Spirit, in the one before us, teaches that *in the time to come* she shall always continue in *perfect* safety, because she is defended by the invincible power of God. When the Church is emblematically described by the situation of the city of Jerusalem, the design of the Prophet is to encourage each of the faithful to believe, that the safety promised in common to all the chosen people belongs to him. But in exhibiting to the eyes a visible image of the Church, he accommodates himself to the rudeness of those who, detained by the dulness of the flesh, still continue settled down in the earth. It ought then, in the first place, to be noticed, that to those who may not sufficiently apprehend by faith the secret protection of God, the mountains which environ Jerusalem are exhibited as a mirror, in which they may see, beyond all doubt, that the Church is as well defended from all perils, as if it were surrounded on all sides with like walls and bulwarks. Moreover, it is profitable to know what I have just now touched upon — that whenever God speaks to all his people in a body, he addresses himself also to each of them in particular. As not a few of the promises are extended generally to the whole body of the Church, so many contemplate them as at a distance, as far removed from them, and will not presume to appropriate them to themselves. The rule here prescribed must therefore be observed, which is, that each apply to himself whatever God promises to his Church in common. Nor does the Psalmist without cause make Jerusalem a representation of the Church, for the sanctuary of God and the ark of the covenant were there.

With respect to the explanation of the words, it is to be observed that the last two verbs of the first verse may be understood in two ways. They may both be governed by Jerusalem as the nominative. But some understand the first verb, □□□□ □□ al, *lo yimmot, shall not be removed,* only as spoken of Jerusalem and the latter verb, □□□, *yesheb, shall abide,* as referring to the faithful, so that according to this view there is a change of number, which is very common among the Hebrews — the singular number, □□□, *yesheb,* being used instead of the plural, □□□□, *yeshbu.* And certainly the sentence might not improperly be translated thus: *They who trust in Jehovah, as mount Zion shall not be removed, shall dwell for ever,* or *continue steadfast,* for the verb translated *to abide* is taken in this sense. We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet, which is, that although the world is subject to so many and so

81 The supplementary words in this verse marked by inverted commas are taken from the French version.

sudden changes as almost to put on a new face every moment, and although the faithful are mingled with and placed in the same external condition as others, yet their safety continues steadfast under the invincible protection of God. Not that they are permitted to dwell undisturbed and at ease; but because their safety being under the guardianship of God is assaulted in vain; at least they can never altogether fall, although they may stumble. But let us notice that the word ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, *habbtechim,* which signifies, *those who hope* or *wait for,* conveys an implicit injunction to steadfastness of faith. Whoever, then, desires to be sustained by the hand of God, let him constantly lean upon it; and whoever would be defended by it, let him patiently repose himself under it. When God suffers us to be often carried hither and thither, or driven about like chaff by the wind, this comes to pass through our own inconstancy — because we prefer fluttering in the air to fixing our minds on the rock of his help. The similitude employed in the second verse is abundantly plain, teaching us, that as the continuous chain of mountains round about Jerusalem exhibits the appearance of walls, so God encompasses the faithful by his power, to ward off from them all harm. [82] Similar forms of expression are frequently to be met with in the Scriptures' God often promises to be a wall and a fore-wall to his people. But David, or whoever was the author of the psalm, proceeds still farther, showing under the figure of mountains the secret protection with which God defends his own people, to the end that the ignorant and feeble-minded who are still held down to the earth by their own dulness of understanding, aided by the sight of the mountains, may raise their minds upwards to the conception and contemplation of heavenly things.

82 From the mountains or hills which surrounded Jerusalem, the Prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 11:3) represents it under the image of a "cauldron."

Psalm 125:3-5
3. For the scepter [83] of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the just, lest the just should put faith their hands to iniquity. **4.** Do good, O Jehovah to the good, and to those who are upright in their hearts. **5.** But those who turn aside into their crooked paths, [84] Jehovah will make them walk with the workers of iniquity. But there shall be peace upon Israel.

3. *For the scepter of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the just.* This is, as it were, a correction of the preceding sentence. The Psalmist had said that the hand of God was extended on all sides to defend his Church. But as we are disposed to draw the divine promises to our own advantage, in the way of interpreting them as securing our exemption from all trouble, we are here warned that the guardianship of God does not secure us from being sometimes exercised with the cross and afflictions, and that therefore the faithful ought not to promise themselves a delicate and easy life in this world, it being enough for them not to be abandoned of God when they stand in need of his help. Their heavenly Father, it is true, loves them most tenderly, but he will have them awakened by the cross, lest they should give themselves too much to the pleasures of the flesh. If, therefore, we embrace this doctrine, although we may happen to be oppressed by the tyranny of the wicked, we will wait patiently till God either break their scepter, or shake it out of their hands. It is a sore temptation, I admit, to see the wicked exercising cruelty in the heritage of the Lord, and the faithful lying extended beneath their feet; but as God does not without just reason thus humble his people, they should comfort themselves from the consideration suggested in the text.

The reason is added why God will not suffer the wicked always to triumph over the righteous — namely, lest the just, overcome by temptation, abandon themselves wholly to sinning, a reason which ought to be carefully marked. Hence we gather that God, from his willingness to bear with our weakness, moderates our adversities. Although, then, we may not possess in ourselves a sufficient amount of fortitude and constancy to enable us to persevere in our duty for a single moment, yet let this sentiment be present to our minds, That God will take care that, broken as we may be by afflictions, we shall not forsake his service. Were he even to afflict us without intermission during the whole course of our life, the cross

83 ⊠⊠⊠ If this word be translated *rod,* then we understand the Psalmist to speak of *the assaults* of the wicked upon the righteous; but as *the lot of the righteous* evidently denotes their estates, possessions, etc., ⊠⊠⊠ consequently seems employed as the emblem of dominion, i.e. scepter. This notion of ⊠⊠⊠ comports better with that of ⊠⊠⊠⊠[the word for *the lot of*]; and so the sense of the whole expression is, that the wicked shall not exercise dominion permanently over the righteous; the scepter of the wicked *shall not rest,*" etc. — *Phillips.*

84 "Ou, se fourvoyent en leurs chemins obliques, ou, font fourvoyer." — *Fr. marg.* "Or, go astray in their crooked paths, or cause to go astray."

is doubtless always profitable to us; for we see how indomitable is the rebellion of our flesh, and with what vehement impetuosity it is continually boiling up; yea, rather how it ceases not to kick amidst the very afflictions by which it ought to be reduced to obedience. So much the more necessary then is this lesson of instruction — that the Lord seasonably sets limits to our temptations, because he knows that we are too feeble to withstand them. Nor does the Prophet merely say, that the weak are in danger of failing, but that even the just, who serve God in truth and from the heart, and who are devoted to the cultivation of a holy life, are in danger of sinking under the load. However vigorous, then, the fear of God may be in our hearts, let us remember that we are not endowed with adequate strength for enduring to the end, unless the Lord have a regard to our infirmity. If the Holy Spirit makes this declaration concerning the best champions, what will be the case as to tyroes, who are as yet but imperfectly trained for the combat? It is also proper to mark the form of speech employed — *lest they stretch forth their hands;* by which it is intimated that the assaults of temptations are so violent, that the hands of the just, which were before, as we may say, bound, and whose motions were also framed and regulated according to the will of God, being now, as it were, let loose, apply themselves to the commission of sin without restraint.

4. *Do good, O Jehovah to the good.* The Prophet has already promised to all the faithful the seasonable help of God; but still he has recourse to prayer, and that not without cause; for although faith may sustain us, yet, as our carnal sense and reason are wavering, we ought to mingle prayers for our confirmation. Let us then follow this rule of the Prophet, who, having exhorted all the faithful to cherish confidence, teaches them at the same time, that instead of sitting in listless inactivity, they should betake themselves to God, earnestly beseeching him by prayer, for what he has bidden them hope for by his word. And assuredly the importance of using this remedy is apparent from the consideration, that amidst the darkness of afflictions, the aid of God is not discerned, but that he rather seems to make no difference between the righteous and the wicked. Nor does the Psalmist simply pray that God would deal graciously with the good, he also defines the goodness by which they are characterized, as what proceeds from sincere affection of heart. It would not be enough for the children of God to abstain from all wrong-doing, were they not distinguished by corresponding integrity of heart, or rather did it not govern their whole life.

5. *But those who turn aside into their crooked paths, etc.* As the participle ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *hammattim,* is in the conjugation *Hiphil,* it should, according to the rules of grammar, be rather translated in an active sense — *those who cause to turn aside;* but it being no uncommon thing for verbs in that conjugation to be taken in a neuter sense, the, version which I have followed is probably the correct one. Still, as the active signification is not less appropriate, I would leave the reader freely to exercise his own judgment. The meaning is, that God does not always connive at the wickedness of those who, while boasting of a hollow and counterfeit profession, wander hither and thither according to their own lust, or even corrupt the simple,

and draw them into the same excess of sinning with themselves. I have no doubt that the Psalmist here speaks of hypocrites, who are so hardened by temporary impunity, as to claim to themselves a place among the holiest of men, because God exercises forbearance towards them. Not only do we see the good mingled with the bad in the world, but we also behold on the barn-floor of the Lord the wheat lying hidden under the chaff and refuse. In this dubious and confused state of matters, the bad are elated with pride, as if they were among the best of God's servants. We ought therefore to pray that God would drag them into the light, and, with the workers of iniquity, thrust them down into the punishment which they have deserved. The consequence is that *peace,* which the Prophet desires may be the privilege of Israel. He does not speak generally of all the race of Abraham, according to the flesh; he rather wishes that the Church of God may be purged of hypocrites, who occupy a place in her, until God lift up his hand to judgment. On this account I have said, that the peace of the Church springs from this — that; God, while executing his just vengeance upon reigned and counterfeit Israelites, who rend and tear in pieces her bowels, gathers together the upright in heart, and openly shows by his blessing the fatherly love which he bears towards them.

PSALM 126

This Psalm consists of three parts. First, the Prophet exhorts the faithful, who had returned from the captivity, to gratitude, and highly extols the grace displayed in their deliverance, to show them, beyond all doubt, that they were brought back to their own country by the hand of God, and not by a fortuitous conjuncture of circumstances, or by the favor of men. In the second part a prayer is added, that God would perfect his own work which he had begun. Finally, although there was no immediate prospect of a full restoration, yet he mitigates the feeling of weariness which delay might occasion, and assures them, that though at present the seed was watered with tears, the harvest would be joyous.

A Song of Degrees.

Psalm 126:1-3

1. When Jehovah brought back the captivity [85] of Zion, we were like those that dream. **2.** Now shall our mouth be filled [86] with laughter, and our tongue with rejoicing: now shall they say [87] among the heathen, Jehovah hath done great things for them. **3.** Jehovah hath done great things for us, whereof we have been made glad.

1. *When Jehovah brought back the captivity of Zion, etc.* It is unnatural and forced to suppose, with some expositors, that this is a prediction of what was to come. For my part I have no doubt that the Psalm was composed upon the return of the Jewish people from the Babylonish captivity; and for this reason I have translated the verb ⌧⌧⌧, *beshub,* in the past tense. Now, whoever was the author of it, [88] whether one of the Levites or one of the Prophets, he affirms that the manner of their deliverance was too wonderful to be attributed to fortune, in order to lead the faithful to the conclusion that the prophecy of Jeremiah, which had assigned seventy years as the term of the captivity, was truly fulfilled. (Jeremiah 25:12, and Jeremiah 29:10.) By the verb *dream,* which expresses the astonishing character of the event, he teaches us that there is no room left for ingratitude. As often as God works by ordinary means, men, through the malignity of their natures, usually exercise their ingenuity in devising various causes of the deliverance wrought, in order to darken the grace of God. But the return of the Jewish people from the Babylonish captivity, having been a miracle of such splendor as was sufficient to swallow up and confound all the thoughts of men, it compels us to own that it was a signal work of God. This is the reason why the Prophet compares this deliverance to a dream. "So far," he materially says, "is any mind from comprehending this unparalleled benefit of God, that the bare thinking upon it transports us with amazement, as if it were a dream, and not an event which had already taken place. What impiety, then, will it be, not to acknowledge the author of it." Moreover, he does not mean that the faithful were so dull of understanding as not to perceive that they were delivered by the hand of God, but only that, judging according to carnal sense and reason, they were struck with astonishment; and he was apprehensive lest, in reasoning with themselves about that redemption, as about an ordinary thing, they should make less account

85 The abstract noun is put for the concrete, "the captivity of Zion" for "the captives of Zion" — those who were led away captive from Zion. Accordingly, in the French version, Calvin uses the concrete —"Les captifs;" —"The captives."

86 "Ou, alors nostre bouche a este remplie." — Fr. *marg.* "Or, then our mouth was filled."

87 "Ou, alors on disoit." — Fr. *marg.* "Or, then they said."

88 Grotius and Amyraldus suppose that it was compiled by Ezra, after the Jews had begun to return from Babylon.

of the power of God than it became them to do. The noun ⊠⊠⊠, *shibath,* translated *captivity,* might be rendered *bringing back,* as some do, which would give greater elegance to the expression of the Psalmist, as in that case ⊠⊠⊠ would be a noun of the same verb which is used in the beginning of the verse. [89] As, however, this makes little difference in regard to the sense, it is enough to have noticed it to my readers in passing.

2. *Now shall our mouth be filled with laughter.* The adverb of time, ⊠, *az,* is commonly translated *then;* but as the verbs are in the future tense, I have thought that it might not be improper to translate tires — grow *shall our mouth be filled,* and *now shall they say.* If, however, we admit what some Hebrew Doctors affirm, that the force of this particle is to change the future tense into the past, the adverb *then* will be the appropriate word. The design of the Prophet is not at all obscure. He would have the people so to rejoice on account of their return, as not to bury in forgetfulness the grace of God. He therefore describes no ordinary rejoicing, but such as so fills their minds as to constrain them to break forth into extravagance of gesture and of voice. At the same time he intimates that there was good ground for this joy, in which it became the children of God to indulge, on account of their return to their own land. As there was at that period nothing more wretched than for them to live in captivity, in which they were in a manner dispossessed of the inheritance God had promised them; so there was nothing which ought to have been more desirable to them than to be restored. Their restoration to their own country having been therefore a proof of their renewed adoption by God, it is not surprising to find the Prophet asserting that their mouth was filled with laughter, and their tongue with exultation. With a similar joy does it become us at the present day to exult when God gathers together his Church and it is an undoubted evidence that we are steel-hearted, if her miserable dispersion does not produce in our minds grief and lamentation. The Prophet proceeds farther, declaring that this miracle was seen even by the blind; for in that age of the world, as is well known, the heathen were wandering in darkness like blind men, no knowledge of God having shone upon them; and yet God's power and operation were so conspicuous in that event, that they burst forth into the open acknowledgment *that God had done great things for his people.* So much the more shame-fill then was the indifference of the Jews to be accounted, if they did not freely and loudly celebrate God's grace, which had acquired so much renown among the unbelieving. The form of speech employed is also to be marked, which forcibly expresses

89 That is, it would be derived from ⊠⊠, *shrub, he returned;* whereas if it is rendered *captivity,* it is derived from ⊠⊠, *shabah, he led captive.* The English Bible translators seem to have been uncertain whether ⊠⊠⊠, *shibath,* is to be considered as derived from the first of these verbs or from the second, their reading in the text being, "turned back our captivity," and their marginal rendering being, "returned the returning." There is a play upon the words, ⊠⊠, "turn," and ⊠⊠⊠, "captivity." It is to be observed that the concluding part of the above sentence in the text is from Calvin's French Commentary. There is nothing to represent it in the Latin Version.

the idea intended to be conveyed, that the mighty power of God in this deliverance was known by the Gentiles. In the following verse the Prophet repeats in his own person, and in that of the Church, the words uttered by the heathen in the last member of the preceding verse. Let us at least, as if he had said, put forth a confession corresponding to that which God has extorted from the unbelieving Gentiles. When he adds *that they were glad,* there is an implied antithesis between this fresh joy and the long continued sorrow with which they were afflicted in their captivity, he expressly declares that joy was restored to them, to enable them the better to estimate the dismal condition from which they had been extricated.

Psalm 126:4-6
4. O Jehovah! bring back our captivity, [90] as rivers in the south. [91] **5.** They who sow in tears shall reap in joy. **6.** Going forth, he shall go and weep, carrying the price of the seed: coming, he shall return with rejoicing, carrying his sheaves with him.

4. *O Jehovah! bring back our captivity.* The second part of the Psalm, as I have said, contains a prayer that God would gather together the residue of the captives. The Holy Spirit endited this form of prayer for the Jews who were already come home to their own country, that they might not forget their poor brethren who were still in exile. All the Jews, no doubt, had a door opened to them, and perfect liberty granted them, to come out of the land of their captivity, but the number of those who partook of this benefit was small when compared with the vast multitude of the people. Some were kept from returning by fear, and others by sloth and want of courage, on seeing such perils at hand as they apprehended they had not power to overcome, choosing rather to lie torpid in their own filthiness, than to undertake the hardship of the journey. It is probable also that many of them preferred their present ease and comfort to eternal salvation. What the Prophet Isaiah had foretold was no doubt fulfilled, (Isaiah 10:22,). That although the people were in number as the sand of the sea, yet only a remnant of them should be saved. Since, then, many openly refused the benefit when it was offered them, and as there were not; wanting many difficulties and impediments to be encountered by those who availed themselves of this liberty granted them by the good pleasure of the king, [92] so that it was only a few of sounder judgment and of a more intrepid heart, who dared to move a foot — and even they with reluctance, — it is no wonder that the Prophet requires the Church still to make supplication to God for the bringing back of the captivity. Along with this, the state of those who had already returned is also to be noted; for their land being in the possession of strangers, who were all their in-

90 Walford reads, "Bring back all our captives, O Jehovah!" "The word *all,*" says he, "is not in the Hebrew text, but is necessary to the sense; for some had returned, and others were returning or about to return." Some of the captive Jews came back to their own land in the reign of Cyrus, others in the reign of Darius, and the rest in the reign of Xerxes. Such therefore as had been the first to return, may be supposed to pray in these words for the restoration of their brethren.

91 Phillips translates *in the dry place.* "The noun ⊠⊠⊠," says he, "in its usual acceptation, signifies *south;* but its primary sense is that *of dryness,* in which it is used in Joshua 15:19; Judges 1:15; where ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠ is opposed to ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠, *springs of water.*" In the Septuagint the reading is, like the torrents m the parched land.' Street has — *"Jehovah hath restored us from our captivity,*

As he restoreth *the torrents in the dry country."* French and Skinner in like manner read "in a thirsty land."

92 "Precaria libertas." — *Lat.* "Ceste liberte obtenue d'eux par le bon plaisir du Roy." — Fr.

veterate and sworn enemies, they were no less captives in their own country than among the Babylonians. It was therefore necessary, on a twofold account, that the Church should earnestly beseech God to gather together such as were dispersed; first, that he would give courage to the timid, awaken the torpid, cause the besotted to forget their pleasures, and stretch forth his hand to be a guide to all; and, secondly, that he would settle the body of the people who had returned in liberty and ease.

As to the similitude which follows, many think the sense to be, that the bringing back of their captivity prayed for would be as grateful to them as if water should flow through a desert. [93] We know how grievous and painful a thing it is to travel in a hot country through and sands. The *south,* is taken for the wilderness, because the region on the south of Judea was waste and almost uninhabitable. Yet it seems to me more just to say, that the grace of God is here magnified, and still more enlarged by the Prophet's comparing it to a miracle. "Although it is a difficult matter," he substantially says, "for the dispersed remnant to be again united into one body, yet God, if he please, can do this, just as he can cause rivers of water to flow through a parched desert." He, at the same time, alludes to the road intervening between Judea and Babylon, as appears from the situation of the two countries. Thus the words will not require any supplement, the meaning being simply this, that the bringing back of their captivity would be as if a river should run through a barren and and country. And, certainly, to open up a way for the people who, so to speak, were swallowed up in a deep gulf, was as if a course had been opened up for irrigating waters to flow through a desert.

5. *They who sow in tears shall reap in joy.* This sentence, in my opinion, ought not less to be extended to the future than understood of the past. The carrying away of the Jews into Babylon was to them as a seed-time; [94] God having, by the prophecy of Jeremiah, encouraged them to hope for the harvest. Still, it was not without very great heaviness and anguish of heart that they were dragged into such long continued captivity. It was, as if in the time of dearth the poor husbandman, who already experiences the gnawings of hunger, were compelled to abridge himself of his ordinary food in order to provide for the coming year; and although this is a hard and distressing case, he is yet moved to sow from the hope of the harvest. The Jews then, when led into captivity, were, doubtless, no less sorrowful than he who, in the time of scarcity, casts the precious seed into the ground; but afterwards a joyful

93 Walford reads, "like the streams of the south." — "In the southern districts of Palestine and Arabia," says he, "the heat is so vehement during some seasons as to dry up the rivers completely, and parch the soil. When rains come, the torrents again flow, and the soil is refreshed and verdant; — a delightful image of the joy experienced by captives on returning to their native land."

94 "Fuit Judteis sun migratio sationis instar." — *Lat.* "Le tranaport des Juifs en Babvlone leur a este comme un temps de semence " — Fr

harvest followed, when they were delivered; for the Lord restored to them gladness, like that which is experienced in a most abundant increase. [95] I, however, also conceive that the Prophet exhorts the faithful to patience in reference to the future. The restoration of the Church was not yet completed, and even, for the two reasons which I have a little before specified, that period was evidently the time of sowing. Although the edict of the king frankly invited the Jews to return, yet only a few of many returned, gradually and fearfully, in small companies. Moreover, those who did so were unkindly and harshly welcomed by their neighbors, and to so much trouble were they subjected that their former bondage appeared equally tolerable. Whence we gather, that they had still to suffer — the full time of harvest, not having yet arrived; and, therefore, the Prophet, not without cause, exhorts them strenuously to labor, and to persevere in the midst of continual difficulties without fainting, until they found themselves placed in more favorable circumstances. With respect to the words, some translate. ⌧⌧⌧, *meshech, a price;* and others, *a basket* or *seed vessel.* [96] For the latter translation there is no foundation. Those who translate *price* quote in support of their version that passage in the book of Job 28:18 "The price of wisdom is above rubies." But as the verb ⌧⌧⌧, *mashach,* from which this noun is derived, signifies *to extend* or *to draw out,* it may perhaps, both here and in that other place, be more fitly taken in its proper signification. In the text quoted from Job it is profound wisdom, and not intellectual acuteness, which is commended, and thus the extending of wisdom, that is to say, a continual course of wisdom, is, from its being deeply grounded, better than pearls. In like manner, in the passage before us, the drawing out of the seed is applied to the husbandmen themselves,

95 The word *then* may be prefixed to this verse: then, ie., when thou hast brought back the captives, they that sowed in tears shall reap in joy." — *Cresswell.*

96 "⌧⌧⌧. This word has been variously interpreted; for as it is found only here and in Job 28:18, its signification is uncertain. In the Syriac we have it rendered by a word which signifies *a skin* and hence J. D. Michaelis proposes to take ⌧⌧⌧ for *a sack* made of skin. So Aben Ezra thinks 'that it is the name of a measure in which there is seed.' The author of Mendlessohn's Beor, approves of this comment, and observes, that ⌧⌧⌧ was a small cup made of skin.' The root is ⌧⌧⌧, to draw out.' We should, however, adhere as strictly to the meaning of the root if we render the expression as Gesenius has done, by the *drawing of the seed,* i.e., the strewing or sowing of the seed. I think, however, Michaelis's rendering is the best, as fitting with the preceding word ⌧⌧⌧; and so we have *carrying* the *sack of seed,* at the end of the first hemistich, which corresponds with *carrying his sheaves* at the end of the second." — *Phillips.* On the margin of our English Bible it is "seed-basket." Street reads, "Bearing the vessel with the seed;" Horsley, "He that goeth, and weeping beareth the seed to be drawn forth; French and Skinner, "Bearing seed for his sowing;" Fry, "Sowing his seed," observing, that ⌧⌧⌧ expresses the action of casting the seed into the ground; and Walford, "Carrying seed for sowing." "Literally it is," says Cresswell, "a *drawing forth of seed, i.e.,* as much as the sower, putting his hand into whatever contained the seed, could take out at once. Amos 9:13."

implying, that they extend and prolong their life when they sow. If, however, the word *price* is preferred, the sense will be, that when corn is scarce, seed is committed to the ground with tears, because it is precious and costly. This doctrine extends still farther. Our life is, in other parts of Scripture, compared to the seed-time, and as it will often happen that we must sow in tears, it becomes us, lest sorrow should weaken or slacken our diligence, to raise our minds to the hope of the harvest. Besides, let us remember that all the Jews who were carried captives into Babylon did not sow; for as really among them, who had hardened themselves against God and the Prophets, had despised all threatenings, so they lost all hope of returning. Those in whom such despair brooded were consumed in their miseries; but those who were sustained by the promise of God, cherished in their hearts the hope of harvest, although in a time, of extreme scarcity they cast their seed into the ground, as it were, at venture. In order then that joy may succeed our present sorrow, let us learn to apply our minds to the contemplation of the issue which God promises. Thus we shall experience that all true believers have a common interest in this prophecy, That God not only will wipe away tears from their eyes, but that he will also diffuse inconceivable joy through their hearts.

PSALM 127

This Psalm shows that the order of society, both political and domestic, is maintained solely by the blessing of God, and not by the policy, diligence, or wisdom of men; and that the procreating of children is his peculiar gift.

A Song of Degrees of Solomon.

Psalm 127:1-2

1. [97] Except Jehovah build the house, those who build it labor in vain except Jehovah keep the city the watchman watcheth in vain. **2.** It is in vain for you in hastening to rise early, to go late to rest, to eat the bread of sorrows: for [98] thus will he give sleep to his beloved.

1. *Except Jehovah build the house.* There is no reason why the Jews should deny that this Psalm was composed by Solomon. They think that the letter ל, *lamed,* which we translate of, is equivalent to, *in behalf of Solomon;* which is at variance with common usage, for such a title in all cases designates the author. Accordingly, they absurdly devise a new sense, for which there is no necessity, it being very suitable for Solomon, who was endued with the spirit of wisdom in the affairs of government, to discourse of things which he knew and had experience about. In affirming that God governs the world and the life of man, he does so for two reasons: First, whatever prosperous event may fall out to men, their ingratitude is instantly manifested by their ascribing it wholly to themselves; and thus God is defrauded of the honor which is his due. Solomon, to correct such a perverse error, declares, that nothing happens prosperously to us except in so far as God blesses our proceedings. Secondly, his purpose was to beat down the foolish presumption of men, who, setting God aside, are not afraid to undertake to do anything, whatever it may be, in exclusive reliance upon their own wisdom and strength. Stripping them, therefore, of that which they groundlessly arrogate to themselves, he exhorts them to modesty and the invocation of God. He does not, however, reject either the labor, the enterprises, or the counsels of men; for it is a praiseworthy virtue diligently to discharge the duties of our office. It is not the will of the Lord that we should be like blocks of wood, or that we should keep our arms folded without doing anything; [99] but that we should apply to use all the talents and advantages which he has conferred upon us. It is indeed true that the greatest part of our labors proceeds from the curse of God; and yet although men had still retained the integrity of their primitive state, God would have had us to be employed, even as we see how Adam was placed in the garden of Eden to dress it. (Genesis 2:15.) Solomon, therefore, does not condemn watchfulness, a thing which God approves; nor yet men's labor, by which when they undertake it willingly, according to the commandment of God, they offer to him all acceptable sacrifice; but lest, blinded by presumption, they should forcibly appropriate to themselves that which belongs to God, he admonishes them that their being busily occupied will profit them nothing, except in so far

97 "Augustine beautifully applies the language of this Psalm to Christian ministers and pastors, as God's builders and watchmen of his Church. How vain their labors without the grace and power of God!" — Fry.

98 *For* is supplied from the French version.

99 "Ou que nous demeurions les bras eroisez sans rien faire." — Fr.

as God blesses their exertions. By the word *house* he means not only a building of wood or stone, but he comprehends the whole domestic order and government of a family, even as a little after by the word *city* he denotes not only the buildings or enclosure of the walls, but also the general state of the whole commonwealth. There is likewise a synecdoche in the words *builder* and *keeper;* for he intends to say in general that whatever labor, foresight, and skill men may employ in maintaining a family, or in preserving a city, will be to no purpose unless God grant from heaven a prosperous issue to the whole.

It behoves us to remember what I have just now touched upon, that since the minds of men are commonly possessed with such headstrong arrogance as leads them to despise God, and to magnify beyond measure their own means and advantages, nothing is of more importance than to humble them, in order to their being made to perceive that whatever they undertake it shall dissolve into smoke, unless God in the exercise of pure grace cause it to prosper. When philosophers argue concerning the political affairs of a state they ingeniously gather together whatever seems to them to answer their purpose — they acutely point out the means of erecting a commonwealth, and on the other hand the vices by which a well-regulated state is commonly corrupted; in short, they discourse with consummate skill upon everything that is necessary to be known on this subject, except that they omit the principal point — which is, that men, however much they may excel in wisdom and virtue, and whatever may be the undertakings in which they may engage, can effect nothing, unless in so far as God stretches forth his hand to them, or rather makes use of them as his instruments. Which of the philosophers ever acknowledged that a politician is nothing else but an instrument guided by the hand of God? Yea, rather they held that good management on the part of man constituted the chief cause of the happiness of the social body. Now, since mortal men thus rise up with profane boldness to build cities, and to order the state of the whole world, the Holy Spirit justly reproves such madness. Let us then so occupy ourselves, each according to the measure of his ability and the nature of his office, as that at the same time the praise of the success attending our exertions may remain exclusively with God. The partition which many devise — that he who has behaved himself valiantly, while he leaves the half of the praise to God, may take the other half to himself, is deserving of all condemnation. The blessing of God should have the whole share and exclusively hold the throne.

Now, if our terrestrial condition depends entirely upon the good pleasure of God, with what wings shall we fly up into heaven? When a house is planned, or a certain manner of life is chosen — yea, even when laws are enacted and justice administered, all this is nothing else than to creep upon the earth; and yet the Holy Spirit declares, that all our endeavors in this way are fruitless and of no value. So much the less to be borne with, then, is the folly of those who strive to penetrate even into heaven by their own power. Farther, we may gather from this doctrine, that it is not wonderful to find in the present day the state of the world so troubled and confused as it actually is — justice put to flight in cities, the husband and

the wife mutually accusing each other, fathers and mothers complaining of their children — in short, all bewailing their own condition. For how few are to be found who, in their vocation, turn to God, and who, being rather inflated with arrogance, do not wickedly exalt themselves? God then justly renders this sad reward to ungrateful men when he is defrauded of his honor. But were all men humbly to submit themselves to the providence of God, there is no doubt that this blessing which Solomon here commends would shed its lustre on all parts of our life, both public and private.

The verb ⊠⊠⊠, *amal,* which we have translated *to labor,* signifies not only to employ one's self in something or other, but also to busy one's self even to lassitude and distress. I have said that by the word *keepers* is to be understood not only those who are appointed to keep watch, but all magistrates and judges. If they are characterized by vigilance, it is the gift of God. There is, however, need of another vigilance — that of God; for unless he keep watch out of heaven no perspicacity of men will be sufficient to guard against dangers.

2. *It is vain for you in hastening to rise early.* Solomon now expresses more plainly that men in vain wear themselves out with toiling, and waste themselves by fasting to acquire riches, since these also are a benefit bestowed only by God. The more effectually to move them, he addresses himself to every man in particular. *It is,* says he, *in vain for you* He particularizes two means which are thought to contribute in an eminent degree to the amassing of riches. It is not surprising to find those growing rich in a short time who spare no exertion, but consume night and day in plying their occupations, and allow themselves only scanty fare from the product of their labor. Solomon, however, affirms that neither living at a small expense, nor diligence in business will by themselves profit anything at all. Not that he forbids us to practice temperance in our diet and to rise early to engage in our worldly business; but to stir us up to prayer, and to calling upon God, and also to recommend gratitude for the divine blessings, he brings to nought whatever would obscure the grace of God. Consequently, we shall then enter upon our worldly avocations in a right way when our hope depends exclusively upon God, and our success in that case will correspond to our wishes. But if a man, taking no account of God, eagerly makes haste, he will bring ruin upon himself by his too precipitate course. It is not, therefore, the design of the Prophet to encourage men *to* give way to sloth, so that they should think upon nothing all their life long, but fall asleep and abandon themselves to idleness- his meaning rather is, that, in executing what God has enjoined upon them, they should always begin with prayer and calling upon his name, offering to him their labors that he may bless them. The expression, *the bread of sorrows,* may be explained in two ways, either as denoting what is acquired by hard and anxious toil, or what is eaten with disquietude of mind; just as we see parsimonious and close-handed persons, when they have scarcely tasted a bit of bread, pulling back their hand from their mouth. It is of no great importance which of these senses is adopted; for we are

simply taught that parsimonious men profit nothing — no not even when through their own niggardliness they grudge to eat as much as nature requires.

For thus will he give sleep to his beloved. The inspired writer intimates that the blessing of God, of which he has spoken, is actually seen in his children and servants. It will not suffice to believe this doctrine — that whatever, men attempt is to no purpose; it is necessary that the promise be added, in order to their being led with assured hope to perform their duty. The sentence may be read either — *he will give sleep to his beloved,* or, *he will give in sleeping;* that is, he will give them those things which unbelievers labor to acquire by their own industry. The particle, ⌧⌧, *ken, thus,* is put to express certainty; [100] for with the view of producing a more undoubted persuasion of the truth — that God gives food to his people without any great care on their part — which seems incredible, and a fiction, Solomon points to the thing as it were with the finger. He indeed speaks as if God nourished the slothfulness of his servants by his gentle treatment; but as we know that men are created with the design of their being occupied, and as in the subsequent Psalm we shall find that the servants of God are accounted happy when they eat the labor of their hands, it is certain that the word *sleep* is not to be understood as implying slothfulness, but a placid labor, to which true believers subject themselves by the obedience of faith. Whence proceeds this so great ardor in the unbelieving, that they move not a finger without a tumult or bustle, in other words, without tormenting themselves with superfluous cares, but because they attribute nothing to the providence of God! The faithful, on the other hand, although they lead a laborious life, yet follow their vocations with composed and tranquil minds. Thus their hands are not idle, but their minds repose in the stillness of faith, as if they were asleep. If it is again objected, that God's people are often agitated with distressing cares, and that, oppressed with pinching poverty, and destitute of all resources, they are anxiously concerned about the morrow, I answer, that if faith and love to God were perfect in his servants, his blessing, of which the Prophet makes mention, would be manifest. Whenever they are tormented above measure, this happens through their own default, in not resting entirely upon the providence of God. I farther add, that God punishes them more severely than unbelievers, because it is profitable for them to be agitated by disquietude for a season, that at length they may attain to this peaceful sleep. In the meantime, however, God's grace prevails, and always shines forth in the midst of darkness, in respect of his cherishing his children as it were by sleep.

100 Walford reads — "He truly granteth sleep to his beloved;" and observes that the sentence is enfeebled by the word "so" in the vulgar translation. "It most likely means," he adds, "'in truth,' *i.e.,* truly; and the sense will be, though all exertion is vain without God, yet he truly bestows refreshing sleep, free from anxiety and excessive exertion, upon those who are the objects of his love, inasmuch as they combine all their endeavours with due regard to him." Cresswell adopts the rendering of the Septuagint, which is "since he giveth his beloved sleep."

Psalm 127:3-5

3. Lo! children are the heritage of Jehovah: the fruit of the womb is the reward which he bestows. [101] **4.** As arrows in, the hand of a strong man so are the children of youth. [102] **5.** Blessed is the man who shall have filled his quiver with them; for [103] they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

3. *Lo! children are the heritage of Jehovah.* Solomon here adduces one instance in which, in a particular manner, he would have us to recognize the truth which he has hitherto asserted generally — that the life of men is governed by God. Nothing seems more natural than for men to be produced of men. The majority of mankind dream, that after God had once ordained this at the beginning, children were thenceforth begotten solely by a secret instinct of nature, God ceasing to interfere in the matter; and even those who are endued with some sense of piety, although they may not deny that He is the Father and Creator of the human race, yet do not acknowledge that his providential care descends to this particular case, but rather think that men are created by a certain universal motion. With the view of correcting this preposterous error, Solomon calls children *the heritage of God,* and the fruit of the womb *his gift;* for the Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠, *sachar,* translated *reward,* signifies whatever benefits God bestows upon men, as is plainly manifest from many passages of Scripture. The meaning then is, that, children are not the fruit of chance, but that God, as it seems good to him, distributes to every man his share of them. Moreover, as the Prophet repeats the same thing twice, *heritage* and *reward* are to be understood as equivalent; for both these terms are set in opposition to fortune, or the strength of men. The stronger a man is he seems so much the better fitted for procreation. Solomon declares on the contrary, that those become fathers to whom God vouchsafes that honor.

As the majority of children are not always a source of joy to their parents, a second favor of God is added, which is his forming the minds of children, and adorning them with an excellent disposition, and all kinds of virtues. Aristotle in his Politics very properly discusses the question whether πολυτεκνια, that is, the having of many children, ought to be accounted

101 "*Fructus.* Merces, fructus ventris " — *Lat.* "Le fruict du ventre *est* loyer *qu'il donne* " — *Fr.*

102 ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠, *sons of youth,* words which may signify children begotten by the father in his youth, as -⊠ ⊠⊠⊠⊠, is a son begotten by a parent in his old age, (Genesis 37:3;) or the expression may denote youths, as ⊠⊠ ⊠⊠ mean *strangers,* (Psalm 18:45.) Either rendering, I apprehend, will be suitable on this occasion; for the object of the verse is doubtless to show, that a numerous progeny is a great blessing to a man, and an important addition to his strength and safety; that they will be a defence to him in a time of danger, and serve him to repel an enemy, as arrows do in the hand of a mighty man." — *Phillips.*

103 "*Car* " — *Fr.*

among good things or no; and he decides it in the negative, unless there is added εὐγενεια, that is, generosity or goodness of nature in the children themselves. And assuredly it would be a far happier lot for many to be without children, or barren, than to have a numerous offspring, proving to them only the cause of tears and groans. In order, then, to set forth this blessing of God — the having offspring — in a clear light, Solomon commends a virtuous and generous disposition in children. The similitude introduced for this purpose is, that as an archer is armed 'with a well-furnished bow, so men are defended by their children, as it were with a bow and all arrow. This similitude might seem, at first sight, a little too harsh; but if it is examined somewhat more closely, its elegance will be readily admitted. The Prophet means that those who are without children are in a manner unarmed; for what else is it to be childless but to be solitary? It is no small gift of God for a man to be renewed in his posterity; for God then gives him new strength, that he who otherwise would straightway decay, may begin as it were to live a second time.

The knowledge of this doctrine is highly useful. The fruitfulness even of the lower animals is expressly ascribed to God alone; and if He would have it to be *accounted* his benefit that kine, and sheep, and mares *conceive,* how inexcusable will be the impiety of men, if when he adorns them with the honorable title of fathers, they account this favor as nothing. It is also to be added, that unless men regard their children as the gift of God, they are careless and reluctant in providing for their support, just as on the other hand this knowledge contributes in a very eminent degree to encourage them in bringing up their offspring. Farther, he who thus reflects upon the goodness of God in giving him children, will readily and with a settled mind look for the continuance of God's grace; and although he may have but a small inheritance to leave them, he will not be unduly careful on that account.

5. *They shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.* Here Solomon describes such children as, distinguished by uprightness and integrity, have no hesitation in rendering an account of their life, that they may shut the mouths of the malevolent and of calumniators. In ancient times, as is well known, judicial assemblies [104] were held at the gates of cities. He therefore here speaks of the gate, as if in the present day one should speak of the bench, or the courts, or the senate. Let it be observed that what is chiefly praised in children is innocence, that fathers may estimate this grace at its true value. In the preceding clause he had compared children endued with virtue and excellence of nature to arrows. Now, that no man may put a violent construction upon this comparison, as if it were intended to give children leave, like robbers, to rush upon doing mischief to such as come in their way, reckless of right and wrong, he expressly represents virtue and moral integrity as constituting the protection which they ought to afford to their fathers. He teaches us, then, that the children which we ought to wish for, are not such as may violently oppress the wretched

104 "Legitimos conventus." — *Lat.* "Les assemblees Judiciales." — *Fr.*

and suffering, or overreach others by craft and deceit, or accumulate great riches by unlawful means, or acquire for themselves tyrannical authority, but such as will practice uprightness, and be willing to live in obedience to the laws, and prepared to render an account of their life. Farther, although fathers ought diligently to form their children under a system of holy discipline, yet let them remember that they will never succeed in attaining the object aimed at, save by the pure and special grace of God. Solomon also tacitly intimates that however zealously we may be devoted to the practice of integrity, we shall never be without detractors and slanderers; for if integrity of life were exempt from all calumny, we would have no quarrel with our enemies.

PSALM 128

This Psalm is akin to the preceding, and, so to speak, a kind of appendage to it; for it declares that the divine blessing, to the diffusion of which among the whole human race Solomon testified, is to be seen most conspicuously in the ease of God's true and sincere servants.

A Song of Degrees.

Psalm 128:1-3

1. Blessed is the man who feareth Jehovah, and walketh in his ways. **2.** For when thou shalt eat the labor of thy hands, thou shalt be blessed, and it shall be well with thee. **3.** Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine on the sides of thy house, and thy children as olive plants around thy table. [105]

1 *Blessed is the man who feareth Jehovah.* In the preceding Psalm it was stated that prosperity in all human affairs, and in the whole course of our life, is to be hoped for exclusively from the grace of God; and now the Prophet admonishes us that those who desire to be partakers of the blessing of God must with sincerity of heart devote themselves wholly to him; for he will never disappoint those who serve him. The first verse contains a summary of the subject-matter of the Psalm; the remaining portion being added only by way of exposition. The maxim "that those are blessed who fear God, especially in the present life," is so much with variance with the common opinion of men, that very few will give it their assent. Everywhere are to be found fluttering about many Epicureans, similar to Dionysius, who, having once had a favorable wind upon the sea and a prosperous voyage, after having plundered a temple, [106] boasted that the gods favored church robbers. Also the weak are troubled and shaken by the prosperity of evil men, and they next faint under the load of their own miseries. The despisers of God may not indeed enjoy prosperity, and the condition of good men may be tolerable, but still the greater part of men are blind in considering the providence of God, or seem not in any degree to perceive it. The adage, "That it is best not to be born at all, or to die as soon as possible," has certainly been long since received by the common consent of almost all men. Finally, carnal reason judges either that all mankind without exception are miserable, or that fortune is more favorable to ungodly and wicked men than to the good. To the sentiment that those are blessed who fear the Lord, it has an

105 "The tables of the Jews, as we may hence (and from 1 Samuel 16:11) infer, were round: they had sobs (Ezekiel 23:41) placed about them, on which (Genesis 27:19; Judges 10:6; 1 Samuel 2:5, 24, 25; 1 Kings 13:20) they sat, excepting at the Paschal feast." — *Cresswell.* In the Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible, the writer on this passage objects to the common reading — *Fruitful vine by the sides of thine house. olive-plants round about thy table.* "We do not remember," says he, "to have met with a single instance in the East of vines trained against the walls of a house, or of olives near or about a house. Neither have we read of such instances. The passage doubtless derives its figures from the fertility of the vine, and from the appearance of the olive, or the order in which olive-trees are planted." He accordingly proposes the following construction — "Thy wife, on the sides (interior apartments) of thy house, shall be as the fruitful vine; and thy children, round about thy table, like olive-plants."

106 "Lequel true fois ayant bon vent sur mer, et la navigation prospore apres avoir pille une temple." — *Fr.*

entire aversion, as I have declared at length on Psalm 37. So much the more requisite then is it to dwell upon the consideration of this truth. Farther, as this blessedness is not apparent to the eye, it is of importance, in order to our being able to apprehend it., first to attend to the definition which will be given of it by and bye, and secondly, to know that it depends chiefly upon the protection of God. Although we collect together all the circumstances which seem to contribute to a happy life, surely nothing will be found more desirable than to be kept hidden under the guardianship of God. If this blessing is, in our estimation, to be preferred, as it deserves, to all other good things, whoever is persuaded that the care of God is exercised about the world and human affairs, will at the same time unquestionably acknowledge that what is here laid down is the chief point of happiness.

But before I proceed farther, it is to be noticed that in the second part of the verse there is with good reason added a mark by which the servants of God are distinguished from those who despise him. We see how the most depraved, with no less pride than audacity and mockery, boast of fearing God. The Prophet therefore requires the attestation of the life as to this; for these two things, the fear of God and the keeping of his law, are inseparable; and the root must necessarily produce its corresponding fruit. Farther, we learn from this passage that our life does not meet with the divine approbation, except it be framed according to the divine law. There is unquestionably no religion without the fear of God, and from this fear the Prophet represents our living according to the commandment and ordinance of God as proceeding.

2. *For when thou shalt eat the labor of thy hands thou shalt be blessed.* Some divide this sentence into two members, reading these words, *For thou shalt eat the labor of thy hands,* as a distinct sentence, and then what follows, *Thou shalt be blessed,* as the beginning of a new sentence. I indeed grant that it is true, as they assert, that the grace of God, manifested in the faithful enjoying the fruits of their labor is set in opposition to the curse to which all mankind have been subjected. But it is more natural to read the words as one sentence, bringing out this meaning — That God's children are happy in eating the fruits of their labor; for if we make them two sentences, these words, *thou, shalt be blessed, and it shall be well with thee,* would contain a cold and even an insipid repetition. Here the Prophet, confirming the doctrine stated in the first verse, teaches us that we ought to form a different estimate of what happiness consists hi from that formed by the world, which makes a happy life to consist in ease, honors, and great wealth. He recalls God's servants to the practice of moderation, which almost all men refuse to exercise. How few are to be found who, were it left to their own choice, would desire to live by their own labor; yea, who would account it a singular benefit to do so! No sooner is the name of happiness pronounced, than instantly every man breaks forth into the most extravagant ideas of what is necessary to it, so insatiable a gulf is the covetousness of the human heart. The Prophet therefore bids the fearers of God be content with this one thing — with the assurance that having God for their foster-father,

they shall be suitably maintained by the labor of their own hands; just as it is said in Psalm 34:10,

"The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

We must remember that the Prophet does not speak of the highest blessedness, which consists not in meat and drink, nor is confined within the narrow bounds of this transitory life; but he assures God's believing people that even in this pilgrimage or earthly place of sojourn they shall enjoy a happy life, in so far as the state of the world will permit; even as Paul declares that God promises both these to such as fear him, in other words, that God will take care of us during the whole course of our life, until he has at last brought us to eternal glory. (1 Timothy 4:8.) The change of person serves also to give greater emphasis to the language; for after having),' spoken in the third person, the Prophet comes to address his discourse to. *each* individual in particular, to this effect: — Not only does immortal felicity await thee in heaven, but during thy pilgrimage in this world God will not cease to perform the office of the father of a family in maintaining thee, so that thy daily food will be administered to thee by his hand, provided thou art contented with a lowly condition.

3 *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine on the sides of thy house.* Here again it is promised, as in the preceding Psalm, that God will make those who honor him fruitful in a numerous offspring. The majority of mankind indeed desire to have issue, and this desire may be said to be implanted in them by nature; but many, when they have obtained children, soon become cloyed therewith. Again it is often more grateful to want children than to leave a number of them in circumstances of destitution. But although the world is carried away by irregular desires after various objects, between which it is perpetually fluctuating in its choice, God gives this his own blessing, the preference to all riches, and therefore we ought to hold it in high estimation. If a man has a wife of amiable manners as the companion of his life, let him set no less value upon this blessing than Solomon did, who, in Proverbs 19:14, affirms that it is God alone who gives a good wife. In like manner, if a man be a father of a numerous offspring, let him receive that goodly boon with a thankful heart. If it is objected that the Prophet in speaking thus, detains the faithful on the earth by the allurements of the flesh, and hinders them from aspiring towards heaven with free and unencumbered minds, I answer, that it is not surprising to find him offering to the Jews under the law a taste of God's grace and paternal favor, when we consider that they were like children. He has, however, so tempered, or mixed it, as that by it; they might rise in their contemplations to the heavenly life. Even at the present day God, though in a more sparing manner, testifies his favor by temporal benefits, agreeably to that passage in Paul's first Epistle to Timothy just now quoted, (1 Timothy 4:8,)

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

But by this he does not cast any hindrance or impediment in our way to keep us from elevating our minds to heaven, but ladders are by this means rather erected to enable us to mount up thither step by step. The Prophet, therefore, very properly reminds the faithful that they already receive some fruit of their integrity, when God gives them their food, makes them happy in their wives and children, and condescends to take care of their life. But his design in commending the present goodness of God is to animate them to hasten forward with alacrity on the path which leads to their eternal inheritance. If the earthly felicity described in this Psalm may not always be the lot of the godly, but should it sometimes happen that their wife is a termagant, or proud, or of depraved morals, or that their children are dissolute and vagabonds, and even bring disgrace upon their father's house, let them know that their being deprived of God's blessing is owing to their having repulsed it by their own fault. And surely if each duly considers his own vices he will acknowledge that God's earthly benefits have been justly withheld from him.

Psalm 128:4-6

4. Lo! surely, thus blessed shall be the man who feareth Jehovah. **5.** Jehovah shall bless thee from Zion; and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life: **6.** And thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

4. *Lo! surely, thus blessed shall be the man who feareth Jehovah.* The preceding doctrine, that even in the outward condition of God's servants while in this transitory state there is afforded such evidence of the divine favor and goodness as demonstrates that we do not lose our labor in serving him, is here confirmed by the Prophet. Yet as the reward of godliness does not appear eminently conspicuous, he, in the first place, uses the demonstrative particle, *Lo!* [107] and then adds *surely;* for so I interpret the particle ⌧⌧, *ki.* We must, however, always remember, as I have previously noticed, that the divine blessing is promised to us upon earth in such a way as that it may not engross our thoughts and keep them grovelling in the dust; for it is not meet that our hope of the life to come should be stifled. This is the reason why we do not at all times equally enjoy the benefits of God.

5. *Jehovah shall bless thee from Zion.* Some, would have this sentence to be a prayer, and therefore they resolve the future tense into the optative mood. But it seems rather to be a continued statement of the same doctrine previously dwelt on, the Prophet now expressing more plainly that the benefits which he has recounted are to be ascribed to God as their author. Although the gifts of God often present themselves before our eyes, yet through the obscurity which false imaginations throw around them our perception of them is dim and imperfect. Hence this repetition of the sentiment, That whenever true believers meet with any prosperous events in the course of their life, it is the effect of the divine blessing, is not to be deemed superfluous. The persons described are said to be blessed *from Zion,* to lead them to call to remembrance the covenant into which God had entered with them, for he had graciously promised to be favorable to the observers of his law; and these principles of godliness they had imbibed from their infancy. The Prophet, therefore, declares that it is no novel doctrine or something before unheard of which he adduces, the law having long ago taught them that it is made manifest even by the temporary benefits conferred on those who serve God, that the pains taken in serving him are not thrown away; and he affirms that of this they shall actually have the experience. What is added concerning *the good of Jerusalem* is to be regarded as en-joining upon the godly the duty not only of seeking their own individual welfare, or of being devoted to their own peculiar interests, but rather of having it as chief desire to see the Church of God in a flourishing condition. It would be a

107 Il use en premier lieu d'un mot qui est commoe pour demonstrer la chose au doigt ou a l'oeil, *voyla* — *Fr.* "He, in the first place, uses a word, which is, as it were, to point to the thing with the finger, or show it to the eye, *Lo!*"

very unreasonable thing for each member to desire what may be profitable for itself, while in the meantime the body was neglected. From our extreme proneness to err in that respect, the Prophet, with good reason, recommends solicitude about the public welfare; and he mingles together domestic blessings and the common benefits of the Church in such a way as to show us that they are things joined together, and which it is unlawful to put asunder.

PSALM 129

This Psalm teaches, in the first place, that God subjects his Church to divers troubles and affections, to the end he may the better prove himself her deliverer and defender. The Psalmist, therefore, recalls to the memory of the faithful how sadly God's people had been persecuted in all ages, and how wonderfully they had been preserved, in order by such examples to fortify their hope in reference to the future. In the second part, under the form of an imprecation, he shows that the divine vengeance is ready to fall upon all the ungodly, who without cause distress the people of God.

A Song of Degrees.

Psalm 129:1-4

1. They have often afflicted me from my youth, let Israel now say: **2.** They have often afflicted me from my youth; but they have not prevailed against me. **3.** The ploughers have plouched upon my back, and made long their furrows. [108] **4.** But Jehovah who is righteous, hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

1. *They have often afflicted me from my youth.* This Psalm was probably composed at a time when the Church of God, reduced to a state of extreme distress, or dismayed by some great danger, or oppressed with tyranny, was on the verge of total destruction. This conjecture, I conceive, is supported by the adverb of time, *now,* which appears to me to be emphatic. It is as if the Prophet; had said, When God's faithful ones are with difficulty drawing their breath under the burden of temptations, it is a seasonable time for them to reflect on the manner in which he has exercised his people from the beginning, and from age to age. As soon as God has given loose reins to our enemies to do as they please we are distressed with sorrow, and our thoughts are wholly engrossed with the evils which presently harass us. Hence proceeds despair; for we do not remember that the patience of the fathers was subjected to the like trial, and that nothing happens to us which they did not experience. It is then an exercise eminently fitted to comfort true believers to look back to the conflicts of the Church in the days of old, in order thereby to know that she has always labored under the cross, and has been severely afflicted by the unrighteous violence of her enemies. The most probable conjecture which occurs to me at present is, that this Psalm was written after the Jews had returned from the Babylonish captivity, and when, having suffered many grievous and cruel injuries at the hands of their neighbors, they hadn't length almost fainted under the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes. In this dark and troublous state of matters, the Prophet encourages the faithful to fortitude, nor does he address himself to a few of them only, but to the whole body without exception; and in order to their sustaining such fierce assaults, he would have them to oppose to them a hope inspired by the encouraging consideration, that the Church, by patient endurance, has uniformly proved victorious. Almost every word is emphatic. *Let Israel now say*, that is, let him consider the trials of the Church in ancient times, from which it may be gathered, that the people of God have never been exempted from bearing the cross, and yet that the various afflictions by which they have been tried have always had a happy issue. In speaking of the enemies of Israel simply by the pronoun *they,* without being more specific, the Psalmist aggravates the greatness of the evil more than if he had expressly named the Assyrians or the Egyptians. By not specifying any particular class of foes, he tacitly intimates that the world is fraught with innumerable bands

108 "Targ. *lengthened out their ploughing, i.e.,* gave us no rest from their slavery, for the longer the furrows the more tedious is the labor of the oxen." — *Bythner.*

of enemies, whom Satan easily arms for the destruction of good men, his object being that new wars may arise continually on every side. History certainly bears ample testimony that the people of God had not to deal with a few enemies, but that they were assaulted by almost the whole world; and farther, that *they* were molested not only by external foes, but also by those of an internal kind, by such as professed to belong to the Church.

The term *youth* here denotes their first beginnings, [109] and refers not only to the time when God brought the people out of Egypt, but also to the time when he wearied Abraham and the patriarchs during almost their whole life, by keeping them in a condition of painful warfare. If these patriarchs were strangely driven about in the land of Canaan, the lot of their descendants was still worse during the time of their sojourning in Egypt, when they were not only oppressed as slaves, but loaded with every kind of reproach and ignominy. At their departure from that land we know what difficulties they had to encounter. If in tracing their history from that period we find seasons in which some respite was granted them, *yet* they were not in a state of repose for any length of time, until the reign of David. And although during his reign they appeared to be in a prosperous condition, yet soon after troubles and even defeats arose, which threatened the people of God with total destruction. In the Babylonish captivity, all hope being well-nigh extinguished, they seemed as if hidden in the grave and undergoing the process of putrefaction. After their return they obtained, with difficulty, some brief intermission to take their breath. They were certainly often put; to the sword, until the race of them was almost wholly destroyed. To prevent it, therefore, from being supposed that they had received only some slight hurt, they are justly said *to have been afflicted;* as if the Prophet placed them before our eyes as it were half-dead, through the treatment of their enemies, who, seeing them prostrated under their feet, scrupled not to tread upon them. If we come to ourselves, it will be proper to add the horrible persecutions, by which the Church would have been consumed a thousand times, had not God, by hidden and mysterious means, preserved her, raising her as it were from the dead. Unless we have become stupid under our calamities, the distressing circumstances of this unhappy age will compel us to meditate on the same doctrine.

When the Prophet says twice, *they have afflicted me, they have afflicted me*, the repetition is not superfluous, it being intended to teach us that the people of God had not merely once or twice to enter the conflict, but that their patience had been tried by continual exercises. He had said that they had commenced this conflict *from their youth,* intimating that they had been inured to it from their first origin, in order to their being accustomed to bear the cross. He now adds, that their being subjected to this rigorous training was not without

109 Hence it is said in Hosea 11:1 — "When Israel was a *child,* then I loved him,
and called my son out of Egypt." Youth is in like manner ascribed to a people, in Isaiah 47:12, 15; Jeremiah 48:11; and Ezekiel 16:43.

good reason, inasmuch as God had not ceased, by a continued course, to make use of these calamities for subduing them to himself. If the exercises of the Church, during her state of childhood, were so severe, our effeminacy will be very shameful indeed, if in the present day, when the Church, by the coming of Christ, has reached the age of manhood, we are found wanting in firmness for enduring trials. Matter of consolation is laid down in the last clause, which informs us that the enemies of Israel, after having tried all methods, never succeeded in realizing their wishes, God having always disappointed their hopes, and baffled their attempts.

3. *The ploughers have ploughed upon my back.* [110] Here the Prophet, by an apparent similitude, embellishes his preceding statement respecting the grievous afflictions of the Church. He compares the people of God to a field through which a plough is drawn. He says that the furrows were made long, so that no corner was exempted from being cut up by the ploughshare. These words vividly express the fact — that the cross has always been planted on the back of the Church, to make long and wide furrows.

In the subsequent verse a ground of consolation under the same figure is subjoined, which is, that *the righteous Lord hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked* The allusion is to a plough, which, as we all know, is tied with cords to the necks of the oxen. The language very aptly conveys the idea, that the wicked, — since they would never have become tired or satiated in exercising their cruelty, and also in consequence of their being well armed, — were prepared to proceed farther, but that the Lord, in a way altogether unexpected, repressed their fury, just as if a man should unyoke oxen from the plough by cutting in pieces the cords and thongs which tied them to it. Hence we perceive what is the true condition of the Church. As God would have us contentedly to take his yoke upon us, the Holy Spirit not unfitly compares us to an arable field, which cannot make any resistance to its being cut, and cleaved, and turned up by the ploughshare. Should any one be disposed to indulge in greater refinement of speculation, he might say that the field is ploughed to prepare it for receiving the seed, and that it may at length bring forth fruit. But in my opinion the subject to which the Prophet limits his attention is the afflictions of the Church. The epithet *righteous,*

110 According to Archbishop Seeker, this refers to severe scourging; and those who have witnessed this cruel infliction tell us that the allusion is most expressive, the long weals or wounds left by the scourges at each stroke being most aptly compared either to furrows, or (as the original admits) to the ridges between the furrows. With respect to the alleged incongruity of ploughing, and making long furrows on the back, the Archbishop observes, "*Lacerare et secare tercum* are Latin phrases, and ploughing is not much stronger, to express a severe scourging." The language of the Psalmist may, however, without allusion to any particular species of persecuting violence, be, as Calvin understands it, simply a strong image of cruel oppression. "The persecutors of Israel," says Walford, "are compared to ploughmen; because as they cut up, and as it were torture the surface of the earth, so did the adversaries greatly and grievously distress these afflicted people."

with which he honors God, must, in a suitableness to the scope of the passage, be explained as implying that, although God may seem to dissemble for a time, yet he never forgets his righteousness, so as to withhold relief from his afflicted people. Paul in like manner adduces the same reason why God will not always suffer them to be persecuted,

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
and to you who are troubled rest with us." (2 Thessalonians 1:6, 7,)

It is a point worthy of special notice, that the welfare of the Church is inseparably connected with the righteousness of God. The Prophet, also, wisely teaches us that the reason why the enemies of the Church did not prevail, was because God brought to nothing their enterprises, and did not suffer them to go beyond what he had determined in his own mind.

Psalm 129:5-8

5. All who hate Zion shall be confounded, and turned backward. **6.** They shall be as the grass [111] of the housetops', which is withered before it comes forth: **7.** With which the mower hath not filled his hand, nor the gleaner his bosom. [112] **8.** Neither have they who pass by said, The blessing of Jehovah be upon you: we bless you in the name of Jehovah. [113]

5. *All who hate Zion shall be confounded, and tutored backward.* Whether we take this as a prayer or a promise, the Prophet has a respect to the time to come. Since all the verbs are in the future tense, it is certainly a very appropriate interpretation to understand him as deriving from times past instruction as to what is to be hoped for in future, even to the end. In whichever way we understand the passage, he declares that the faithful have no reason to be discouraged when they behold their enemies raised on high. The grass which grows upon the house-tops is not, on account of its higher situation, more valuable than the blade of corn which in the low ground is trampled under foot; for although it stands elevated above men's heads, it is, in the first place, unprofitable; and secondly, it quickly withers away. [114] The verb, ⊠⊠⊠, *shalaph,* [115] which we have translate *comes forth,* is by some

111 Fry reads "corn," "⊠⊠⊠⊠," says he, "evidently includes corn as well as grass."

112 In the French version it is "son aisselle;" — "his arm-pit."

113 "Here is an allusion to the custom of blessing; the reapers at their work; as in that instance recorded in the book of Ruth 2:4, 'And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you; and they answered him, The Lord bless thee.'" — *Warner.* "Precisely the same customs of salutation which are here indicated still prevail in Mohammedan Asia. Nearly the same form of words, implying the blessing and peace of God, is retained, and the neglect to give the salutation is still an indignity and an insult " — *Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible.*

114 "In Judea, the roofs of the houses are flat, and covered with cement. On this the grass would not uncommonly grow: but, being thin and weak, and its situation hot and exposed, it was speedily 'dried up and withered.' The same sort of architecture, and the same appearances, are common in the East at this day." — *Warner.*

115 ⊠⊠⊠ differently interpreted. By the greater number of persons it is translated, *to extract, to pull out;* and thus it is used in Ruth 4:7, 8, and John 20:25, 'Before any one extracts the grass it withereth.' The Septuagint has πρὸ τοῦ εκσπασθῶναι, and the Vulgate, 'priusquam evellatur.' Our translators have rendered ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠⊠, 'afore it groweth up,' in which they are supported by Aquila and Symmachus. Theodoret observes that many MSS. of the Septuagint have ἐξανθῶναι for ἐκσπασθῶναι. In either case the sense is, that the haters of Zion shall be exterminated by the just and wonderful judgments of God, before they have time to accomplish their wicked *intentions.*" — *Phillips.* "Parkhurst adopts Harmer's opinion, that the Hebrew verb in this place signifies, 'to push out, unsheath, as corn its ear.' It appears nowhere else but in the sense of 'unsheathing a sword,' or drawing off

rendered, *is plucked up.* According to this translation the sense is, that without the hand or labor of man the grass on the house-tops is dried up. But as the verb properly signifies *to be brought forth,* or *to come forth,* the meaning, in my opinion, is that the grass on the housetops, so far from continuing long in a state of freshness, withers and perishes at its first springing up, because it has no root under it, nor earth to supply it with sap or moisture for its nourishment. Whenever, then, the splendor or greatness of our enemies strikes us with fear, let us bring to our recollection this comparison, that as the grass which grows upon the house-tops, though high, is yet without root, and consequently of brief duration, so these enemies, the nearer they approach the sun by the height of their pride, shall be the sooner consumed by the burning heat, since they have no root, it being humility alone which draws life and vigor from God.

7 *With which the mower hath not filled his hand.* [116] We have here an additional confirmation of the truth, that although the wicked mount high or elevate themselves, and form an extravagant opinion of their own importance, yet they continue mere grass, not bringing forth any good fruit, nor reaching a state of ripeness, but swelling only with fresh appearance. To make this obvious, the Psalmist sets them in opposition to fruit-bearing herbs, which in valleys and low grounds produce fruit for men. In fine, he affirms that they deserve to be hated or despised of all, whereas commonly every one in passing by the corn fields blesses them and prays for the harvest? [117] Farther, he has borrowed this illustration of his doctrine from the affairs of ordinary life, we are taught that whenever there is a hopeful prospect of a good harvest, we ought to beseech God, whose peculiar province it is to impart fertility to the earth, that he would give full effect to his blessing. And considering that the fruits of the earth are exposed to so many hazards, it is certainly strange that we are not stirred ‘up to engage in the exercise of prayer from the absolute necessity of these to man and beast. Nor does the Psalmist, in speaking of passers by blessing the reapers, speak exclusively of rite children of God, who are truly taught by his word that the fruitfulness of the earth is owing to his goodness; but he also comprehends worldly men in whom the same knowledge is implanted naturally. In conclusion, provided we not only dwell in the Church of the Lord,

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a shoe.’ The proper translation seems to be, ‘Which withereth before it unsheaths its ear.’ See Parkhurst on ⊠⊠⊠.” — *Mant.*

116 “*Whereof the mower hath not filled his hand,* etc. — i.e., It is too scanty to afford employment for a labourer to gather it by the hand, or for a reaper, who uses a sickle, depositing what he cuts in the fold of his garment, or as Le Clerc understands it, under his left arm. The Psalmist in effect prays, that the enemies of Israel may be reduced to such poverty, that none could become richer by despoiling them: in a word, that they might be altogether despicable. For *binding up the sheaves,* Hammond suggests, *gathereth the handfuls,* with reference to the gleaner, Ruth 2:2 ” — *Cresswell.*

117 “Au lieu que chacun communement en passant par les bleds les benit, et prie pour la moisson.” — Fr.

but also labor to have place among the number of her genuine citizens, we will be able fearlessly to despise all fire might of our enemies; for although they may flourish and have a great outward show for a time, yet they are but barren grass, on which the curse of heaven rests.

PSALM 130

Whether the Prophet in this Psalm prays in his own name in particular, or represents the whole Church, it is manifest, that finding himself overwhelmed with adversities, he supplicates deliverance with passionate ardor. And while acknowledging that he is justly chastised by the hand of God, he encourages himself and all genuine believers to cherish good hope, since God is the everlasting deliverer of his people, and has always in readiness the means of effecting their rescue from death.

A Song of Degrees.

Psalm 130:1-4

1. Out of the deep places have I cried to thee, O Jehovah **2.** O Lord hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my prayers **3.** If thou, O God shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand? **4.** But with thee there is forgiveness that thou mayest be feared.

1. *Out of the deep places have I cried to thee, O Jehovah!* It is to be noticed that the Prophet speaks of himself as sending forth his voice, as it were from out of a deep gulf, [118] feeling himself overwhelmed with calamities. As the miseries to which there is no prospect of a termination commonly bring despair in their train, nothing is more difficult than for persons, when involved in grievous and deep sorrow, to stir up their minds to the exercise of prayer. And it is wonderful, considering that whilst we enjoy peace and prosperity we are cold in prayer, because then our hearts are in a state of infatuated security, how in adversities, which ought to quicken us, we are still more stupefied. But the Prophet derives confidence in coming to the throne of grace from the very troubles, cares, dangers and sorrow into which he was plunged. He expresses his perplexity and the earnestness of his desire both by the word cry, and by the repetition continued in the second verse. So much the more detestable then is the barbarous ignorance of the Papist's, in shamefully profaning this Psalm by wresting it to a purpose wholly foreign to its genuine application. To what intent do they mumble it over for the dead, if it is not that, in consequence of Satan having bewitched them, they may by their profanity extinguish a doctrine of singular utility? From the time that this Psalm was, by a forced interpretation, applied to the souls of the dead, it is very generally believed to be of no use whatever to the living, and thus the world has lost an inestimable treasure.

3. *If thou, O God! shoudst mark iniquities* [119] Here the Prophet acknowledges that although grievously afflicted, he had justly deserved such punishment, as had been inflicted upon him. As by his own example he gives a rule which the whole Church ought to observe, let no man presume to intrude himself into the presence of *God,* but in the way of humbly deprecating his wrath; and especially when God exercises severity in his dealings towards

118 The depths or deep gulfs are used in Scripture as an emblem of extreme danger or calamity, whether of body or of mind. See Psalm 69:2, 15. "The Papists, taking the deep as a type of purgatory, recite this Psalm in the persons of those who have died in their communion." — *Cresswell.* To this Calvin afterwards adverts.

119 The allusion is to judicial proceedings. It is as if the Psalmist had said, If thou wert, like an earthly judge, to note down every minute circumstance of guilt, who would be able to stand such a trial, or leave thy court unconvicted, or uncondemned? The verb, "⊠⊠, denotes not only *to mark,* or *observe,* but to observe diligently, so as to retain a perpetual memory of what is done amiss a rigid and judicial observation of faults: see Job 10:14; Job 14:16, 17 " *Phillips.*

us, let us know that we are required to make the same confession which is here uttered. Whoever either flatters himself or buries his sins by inattention to them, deserves to pine away in his miseries; at least he is unworthy of obtaining from God the smallest alleviation. Whenever God then exhibits the tokens of his wrath, let even the man who seems to others to be the holiest of all his fellows, descend to make this confession, that should God determine to deal with us according to the strict demands of his law, and to summon us before his tribunal, not one of the whole human race would be able to stand. We grant that it is one man only who here prays, but he at once pronounces sentence upon the whole human race. "All the children of Adam," he substantially says, "from the first to the last, are lost and condemned, should God require them to render up an account of their life." It is therefore necessary that even the holiest of men should pass under this condemnation, that they may betake themselves to the mercy of God as their only refuge. The Prophet does not however mean to extenuate his own fault by thus involving others with himself, as we see hypocrites do, who when they dare not altogether justify themselves, resort to this subterfuge, "Am I the first or the only man who has offended?" and thus, mingling themselves with a multitude of others, they think themselves half absolved from their guilt. But the Prophet, instead of seeking to shelter himself under such a subterfuge, rather confesses, after having thoroughly examined himself, that if of the whole human race not even one can escape eternal perdition, this instead of lessening rather increased his obnoxiousness to punishment. Whoever, as if he had said, shall come into the presence of God, whatever may be his eminence for sanctity, he must succumb and stand confounded, [120] what then will be the case as to me, who am not one of the best? The right application of this doctrine is, for every man to examine in good earnest his own life by the perfection which is enjoined upon us in the law. In this way he will be forced to confess that all men without exception have deserved everlasting damnation; and each will acknowledge in respect to himself that he is a thousand times undone. Farther, this passage teaches us that, since no man can stand by his own works, all such as are accounted righteous before God, are righteous in consequence of the pardon and remission of their sins. In no other manner can any man be righteous in the sight of God. Very differently do the Papists think. They indeed confess that the deficiencies of our works are supplied by the lenity which God exercises towards us; but at the same time they dream of a partial righteousness, on the ground of which men may stand before God. In entertaining such an idea they go very far astray from the sense of the Prophet, as will appear more plainly from the sequel.

4. *But with thee there is forgiveness.* This verse leads us farther. Though all men confess with the mouth that there is no human being in the world whom God may not justly adjudge to everlasting death, should it so please him, yet how few are persuaded of the truth which

120 "Et demeure confus." Fr.

the Prophet now adds, that the grace of which they stand in need shall not be denied them? They either sleep in their sins through stupidity, or fluctuate amidst a variety of doubts, and, at length, are overwhelmed with despair. This maxim, "that no man is free from sin," is, as I have said, received among all men without dispute, and yet the majority shut their eyes to their own faults, and settle securely in hiding places to which, in their ignorance, they have betaken themselves, if they are not forcibly roused out of them, and then, when pursued close by the judgments of God, they are overwhelmed with alarm, or so greatly tormented as to fall into despair. The consequence of this want of hope in men, that God will be favorable to them, is an indifference about coming into the Divine presence to supplicate for pardon. When a man is awakened with a lively sense of the judgment of God, he cannot fail to be humbled with shame and fear. Such self-dissatisfaction would not however suffice, unless at the same time there were added faith, whose office it is to raise up the hearts which were cast down with fear, and to encourage them to pray for forgiveness. David then acted as he ought to have done when, in order to his attaining genuine repentance, he first summons himself before God's judgment seat; but, to preserve his confidence from failing under the overpowering influence of fear, he presently adds the hope which there was of obtaining pardon. It is, indeed, a matter which comes under our daily observation, that those who proceed not beyond the step of thinking themselves deserving of endless death, rush, like frenzied men, with great impetuosity against God. The better, therefore, to confirm himself and others, the Prophet declares that God's mercy cannot be separated or torn away from himself. "As soon as I think upon thee," he says in amount, "thy clemency also presents itself to my mind, so that I have no doubt that thou wilt be merciful to me, it being impossible for thee to divest thyself of thy own nature: the very fact that thou art God is to me a sure guarantee that thou wilt be merciful " At the same time let it be understood, that he does not here speak of a confused knowledge of the grace of God, but of such a knowledge of it as enables the sinner to conclude with certainty, that as soon as he seeks God he shall find him ready to be reconciled towards him. It is not therefore surprising that among the Papists there is no steady calling upon God, when we consider that, in consequence of their mingling their own merits, satisfactions, and worthy preparation as they term it with the grace of God, they continue always in suspense and doubt respecting their reconciliation with God. Thus it comes to pass, that by praying they only augment their own sorrows and torments, just as if a man should lay wood upon a fire already kindled. Whoever would reap profit from the exercise of prayer, must necessarily begin with free remission of sins. It is also proper to mark the final cause as we say for which God is inclined to forgive, and never comes forward without showing himself easy to be pacified towards those who serve him; which is the absolute necessity of this hope of obtaining forgiveness, to the existence of piety, and the worship of God in the world. This is another principle of which the Papists are ig-

norant. They, indeed, make long sermons [121] about the fear of God, but, by keeping poor souls in perplexity and doubt, they build without a foundation. The first step to the right serving of God unquestionably is, to submit ourselves to him willingly and with a free heart. The doctrine which Paul teaches concerning alms-deeds, 2 Corinthians 9:7, that "God loveth a cheerful giver," is to be extended to all parts of the life. How is it possible for any man to offer himself cheerfully to God unless he rely upon his grace, and be certainly persuaded that the obedience he yields is pleasing to him? When this is not the case all men will rather shun God, and be afraid to appear in his presence, and if they do not altogether turn their back upon him, they will catch at subterfuges. In short, the sense of God's judgment, unless conjoined with the hope of forgiveness, strikes men with terror, which must necessarily engender hatred. It is no doubt true, that the sinner, who, alarmed at the Divine threatenings, is tormented in himself, does not despise God, but yet he shuns him; and this shunning of him is downright apostasy and rebellion. Whence it follows, that men never serve God aright unless they know that he is a gracious and merciful being. The other reason to which I have adverted must also be remembered, which is, that unless we are assured that what we offer to God is acceptable to him, we will be seized with indolence and stupidity which will keep us from doing our duty. Although unbelievers often show a great deal of earnestness, just as we see the Papists laboriously occupied with their superstitions, yet, from their not being persuaded that God is reconciled to them, they do not all the while render to him any voluntary obedience. Were they not held back by a slavish fear, the horrible rebellion of their heart, which this fear keeps hidden and suppressed, would soon manifest itself externally.

121 "Concionantur." — *Lat.* "Ils tiendront long propos." — *Fr.*

Psalm 130:5-6

5. I have waited for Jehovah, my soul hath waited; and I have hoped in his word. **6.** My soul hath waited for the Lord before the watchers of the morning, idea, before the watchers of the mourning.

5. *I have waited for Jehovah.* After having testified in general that God is ready to show mercy to poor sinners who betake themselves to him, the Psalmist concludes that he is thereby encouraged to entertain good hope. The past tense in the verbs *wait* and *trust* is put for the present. *I have waited* for *I wait; I have hoped* for *I hope.* The repetition occurring in the first part of the verse is emphatic; and the word *soul* gives additional emphasis, implying, as it does, that the Prophet trusted in God even with the deepest affections of his heart. From this we also gather that he was not only patient and constant in the sight of men, but that even in the inward feelings of his heart he had maintained quietness and patience before God, which is a very evident proof of faith. Many, no doubt, are restrained by vain glory from openly murmuring against God or betraying their distrust, but there is hardly one in ten who, when removed from the inspection of his fellow-men, and in his own heart, waits for God with a quiet mind. The Psalmist adds, in the concluding clause, that what supported his patience was the confidence which he reposed in the divine promises. Were these promises taken away, the grace of God would necessarily vanish from our sight, and thus our hearts would fail and be overwhelmed with despair. Besides, he teaches us, that our being contented with the word of God alone affords a genuine proof of our hope. When a man, embracing the word, becomes assured of having his welfare attended to by God, this assurance will be the mother of waiting or patience. Although the Prophet here speaks to himself for the purpose of confirming his faith, yet there is no doubt that he suggests to all the children of God like matter of confidence in reference to themselves. In the first place he sets before them the word, that they may depend entirely upon it; and next he warns them that faith is vain and ineffectual unless it frame us to patience.

6. *My soul hath waited for the Lord before the watchers of the morning.* In this verse he expresses both the ardor and the perseverance of his desire. In saying that he anticipated the watchmen, he shows by this similitude with what diligence and alacrity he breathed after God. And the repetition is a proof of his perseverance; for there is no doubt that thereby he intended to express an uninterrnitted continuance of the same course, and consequently perseverance. Both these qualities in his exercise, are worthy of attention; for it is too manifest how slow and cold we are in elevating our minds to God, and also how easily we are shaken and even fall at every little blast of wind. Farther, as the watches of the night were in ancient times usually divided into four parts, this passage may be explained as implying that as the watchmen of the night, who keep watch by turns, are careful in looking when

the morning will dawn, so the Prophet looked to God with the greatest attention of mind. But the more natural sense seems to be, that as in the morning the warders of the gates are more wakeful than all other people, and are the earliest in rising, that they may appear at the posts assigned them, so the mind of the Prophet hastened with all speed to seek God. The repetition, as I have already observed, shows that he stood keeping his gaze perseveringly fixed upon its object. We must always beware of allowing our fervor to languish through the weariness of delay, should the Lord for any length of time keep us in suspense. [122]

122 Some, as Street, Mant, Dr. Adam Clarke, French and Skinner, and Phillips, suppose that the allusion in this verse is to the watchings which the Priests and Levites in their turns exercised during the night in the Temple, (see Psalm 34:1,) and especially to those officers of theirs who were appointed to watch for the first dawn of day, in order that the morning sacrifice might be offered. "In the Talmudical Tract Tamid it is related, 'The prefect said to them, Go and see if the time of slaying; have arrived; if it had arrived, the watcher calls out, ⊠⊠⊠⊠, Co-ruscations.' Agreeably to this explanation of the verse is the rendering of the Chaldee, which is as follows: "My soul waits for the Lord, more than the keepers of the morning vigils, which they observe for offering of the morning oblation." *Phillips.* "The custom alluded to by the Targumist," [or Chaldee,] says Street, "is mentioned in Exodus 30:7. 'And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps he shall burn incense upon it.'" "The similitude," observes Mant, "*is* beautifully expressive of the eager impatience of the Psalmist; which is still further augmented by the repetition."

Psalm 130:7-8
7. But let Israel hope in Jehovah; for with Jehovah there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption. **8.** And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. [123]

7. *But let Israel hope in Jehovah.* After having spoken of himself, and exhibited in his own person an example for all to follow, he now applies the doctrine to the whole body of the Church. It is to be noticed that the foundation upon which he would have the hope of all the godly to rest is the mercy of God, the source from which redemption springs. In the first clause he reminds them that although they bring with them no worth or merits of their own, it ought to suffice them that God is merciful. This mutual relation between the faith of the Church and the free goodness of God is to be attentively marked, to the end we may know that all those who, depending upon their own merits, persuade themselves that God will be their rewarder, have not their hope regulated according to the rule of Scripture. From this mercy, as from a fountain, the Prophet derives redemption; for there is no other cause which moves God to manifest himself as the redeemer of his people but his mercy. He describes this redemption as *plenteous,* that the faithful, even when reduced to the last extremity, may sustain themselves from the consideration that there are in the hand of God many and incredible means by which to save them. This Psalm may have been composed at a time when the Church was in so very afflicted a condition as might have discouraged one and all, had not the infinite greatness of the power of God served as a buckler to defend them. The true use of the present doctrine is, first, that the faithful, even when plunged in the deepest gulfs, should not doubt of their deliverance being in the hand of God, who, whenever necessity shall require, will be able to find means, which are now hidden and unknown to us; and, secondly, that they should hold it as certain, that as often as the Church shall be afflicted he will manifest himself to be her deliverer. To this truth the sentence immediately following refers.

8. *And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.* Here the Psalmist applies more closely to the Church what he has said in the preceding verse. He concludes that it is not to be doubted that God, who has it in his power to save by multiplied means, will prove himself the deliverer of the people whom he has chosen. By these words he teaches us, that when we have evidence of our being adopted by God, we ought also to regard our salvation as certain. His meaning might be explained more familiarly in this way: As to redeem is the continual office of God, and as he is not the redeemer of all men indiscriminately, but only of his chosen people, there is no reason for apprehending that the faithful will not emerge from all calamities; for were it otherwise, God would cease to execute the office which he claims to himself. He repeats the sentiment of the preceding verse, that, provided Israel with

123 "Ou, punitions." — *Fr.* "Or, punishments."

all humility draw near to God to plead for pardon, his sins will not be an obstacle in the way of God's showing himself his redeemer. Although the Hebrew word, ⌧⌧⌧, *avon,* is often put for the punishment of sin, yet it also contains a tacit reference to the fault. Whenever, then, God promises a mitigation of the punishment, he at the same time gives assurance that he will pardon the sins; or rather in offering to sinners a gratuitious reconciliation, he promises them forgiveness. According to this exposition it is here said that he will redeem his Church, not from the captivity of Babylon, or from the tyranny and oppression of enemies, or from penury, or, in short, from any other disasters but from sin; for until God pardon the sins of the men whom he afflicts, deliverance is not to be hoped for. Let us then learn from this passage in what way we are to expect deliverance from all calamities, or the order which it becomes us to observe in seeking it. Remission of sins always goes first, without which nothing will come to a favorable issue. Those who only desire to shake off the punishment are like silly invalids, who are careless about the disease itself with which they are afflicted, provided the symptoms which occasion them trouble for a time are removed. In order, then, that God may deliver us from our miseries, we must chiefly endeavor to be brought to a state of favor with him by obtaining the remission of our sins. If this is not obtained, it will avail us little to have the temporal punishment remitted; for that often happens even to the reprobate themselves. This is true and substantial deliverance, when God, by blotting out our sins, shows himself merciful towards us. Whence, also, we gather, that having once obtained forgiveness, we have no reason to be afraid of our being excluded from free access to, and from enjoying the ready exercise of, the lovingkindness and mercy of God; for *to redeem from iniquity* is equivalent to moderating punishments or chastisements. This serves as an argument to disprove the preposterous invention of the Papists respecting satisfactions and purgatory, as if God, in forgiving the fault, still reserved for a future time the execution of the punishment upon the sinner. If it is objected that the Lord sometimes punishes those whom he has already pardoned; in reply, I grant that he does not always, at the very moment in which he reconciles men to himself, show them the tokens of his favor, for he chastises them to render them circumspect for the future, but while he does this, he in the meantime fails not to moderate his rigour. This, however, forms no part of the satisfactions by which the Papists imagine that they present to God the half of the price of their redemption. In innumerable passages of Scripture, where God promises to his people outward blessings, he always begins with a promise of the pardon of sin. It is therefore the grossest ignorance to say, that God does not remit the punishment till they have pacified him by their works. Moreover, while God's intention in inflicting some punishments or chastisements upon the faithful, is to bring them to yield a more perfect obedience to his law, the Papists are mistaken in extending these punishments beyond death. But it is not wonderful to find them heaping together so many heathenish dreams, seeing they adhere not to the true and only way of reconciliation, which is, that God is merciful only to such as seek the expiation of their sins

in the sacrifice of Christ. It is to be noticed that it is said *from all iniquities,* that poor sinners, although they feel themselves to be guilty in many ways, may not cease to cherish the hope that God will be merciful to them.

PSALM 131

David, having it as his object in this Psalm to encourage the people to fight strenuously under his banner, and to exhort and excite the godly to acknowledge him as entitled to their obedience, declares that he had always submitted himself to the guidance of God, and had done nothing without his call and commission.

A Song of Degrees of David.

Psalm 131:1
1. O Jehovah! My heart has not been elated, nor have mine eyes been lifted up, neither have I walked in great matters, or in things shut up from me.

1. *O Jehovah! My heart has not been elated* David had been made head over God's people, and in order to prove that he was their lawful prince, entitled to the allegiance of the faithful, he is desirous to show that he had not been influenced, in anything which he had attempted, by ambition or pride, but had submitted himself with a quiet and humble spirit to the divine disposal. In this he teaches us a very useful lesson, and one by which we should be ruled in life — to be contented with the lot which God has marked out for us, to consider what he calls us to, and not to aim at fashioning our own lot, to be moderate in our desires, to avoid entering upon rash undertakings, and to confine ourselves cheerfully within our own sphere, instead of attempting great things. He denies that *his heart had been lifted up,* for this is the true cause of all unwarranted rashness and presumption in conduct. Is not pride what leads men, under the instigation of their passions, to dare such presumptuous flights, to hurry on recklessly in their course, and throw the whole world into confusion? Were this loftiness of spirit checked, the consequence would be, that all men would study moderation of conduct. His eyes were not lifted up; there were no symptoms of pride in his looks or gestures, as elsewhere (Psalm 18:28) we find proud looks condemned. Something more than this, however, may be intended: That while he put a restraint upon the risings of ambition in his heart, he was careful that his eyes should not lend their assistance to the heart in any covetous aspirations after greatness. All the senses, in short, as well as his heart, were subjected to the restraints of humility. In denying that *he walked in,* or *was conversant with, great things,* he must be supposed to refer to the disposition or temper of his soul. For, to hold as he did the office of a Prophet, to be invested with regal dignity, nay, to sit upon the sacred throne of the only-begotten Son of God, not to speak of other distinctions with which he was honored above the generality of men, were great things. But the expression was applicable, in so far as he strictly confined himself to the one object of being serviceable to God and to the Church. Should any still be inclined to lay an undue stress upon the word which is here employed, I would observe that the words *from* or *above me,* at the close of the verse, are to be considered as connected with what David here says of great things, as well as of the things *shut up,* or *hidden,* so that we may read I have *not walked in great things which are above me.* The question, therefore, was not whether the lot of David was mean or exalted; it is enough that he was careful not to pass beyond the proper bounds of his calling. He did not think himself at liberty to move one step unless called to it by God.

His submission in such matters stands contrasted with the presumption of those who, without any call from God, hurry themselves into unwarrantable undertakings, and involve

themselves in duties which properly belong to others. For so long as we have a clear call from God, things cannot be said to be shut up or hidden from us, or too great for us, provided we stand ready for all obedience; and, on the other hand, those who yield themselves up to the influence of ambition will soon lose themselves in a labyrinth of perplexity. We see how God confounds the proud and boasted enterprises of the children of this world. They run the full course of their wild career, they turn the earth upside down at their pleasure, and put forth their hand in every direction; they are filled with complacency at the thought of their own talents and industry, and, in a moment, when all their plans have been fully formed, they are entirely overthrown, because there is no solidity in them. There are two different forms which the presumption of those takes who will not submit to be humble followers of God, but must needs run before him. Some rush forward with a reckless precipitancy, and seem as if they would build to the skies; others do not so openly exhibit the inordinateness of their desires, are slower in their movements, and cautiously calculate upon the future, and yet their presumption appears no less from the very fact, that, with a total oversight of God, as if heaven and earth were subject to them, they pass their decree as to what shall be done by them some ten or twenty years hereafter. These build, as it were, in the deep sea. But never shall it come to the surface, however extended may be the term of their lives; while those who, like David, submit themselves to God, keeping in their own sphere, moderate in their desires, will enjoy a life of tranquillity and assurance.

Psalm 131:2-3
2. If I have not set and quieted my soul like one that is weaned from his mother, my soul is over me as a weaned child. **3.** Israel shall hope in Jehovah from henceforth, and for ever.

2. *If I have not set,* etc. He here employs a figure which appropriately explains what he meant, and likens himself to a weaned child; by which is intended, that he dismissed all the anxieties which disquiet the man of ambition, and was willing to be satisfied with small things. This assertion, which some might be inclined to disbelieve, he makes with an oath, expressed in that particular form of which I have elsewhere taken notice, in which the imprecation is not directly brought forward, but left to be understood, to teach us caution in the use of God's name. [124] As to the words, *to set his soul like a child,* is as if he had said, that he would frame it into such a likeness. And this with the view, as *he declares,* of composing himself to silence. For ⊠⊠⊠⊠ *domaintee,* is formed from ⊠⊠ *dum,* and has the active sense of *reducing to silence.* The *quiet* of soul he alludes to is opposed to those tumultuous desires by which many cause disquietude to themselves, and are the means of throwing the world into agitation. The figure of childhood is elsewhere used in another sense, to convey reprehension. (Isaiah 28:9.)

"Whom shall I teach knowledge? them that are weaned from the milk? and drawn from the breasts?"

where the Prophet censures the people for their slowness of apprehension, and being as incapable of profiting by instruction as infants. In the passage now before us, what is recommended is that simplicity of which Christ spake,

"Unless ye become like this little child, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." [125] (Matthew 18:3)

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124 "⊠-⊠, A formula of swearing which may be translated *surely* or *indeed.* I have surely so disposed and disciplined my soul as to remove it from any longing after great things, from any ambitious tendencies." — *Phillips.*

125 Of all explanations the best is that of considering the comparison to consist between the humbleness and simplicity of the Psalmist's mind, and that of a little child, in whom there does not exist a sufficient consciousness to create an ambition for any worldly object. The comparison is not with ⊠⊠⊠, a suckling; for it has a longing after the mother's breast, and, therefore, such a comparison would not be appropriate. The same, indeed, may be said of a child who has only just been weaned; for, in that stage, how often does it cry and mourn after that of which it has been deprived, and the possession of which was just before its chief pleasure? We therefore conclude, that the comparison is intended to be with a child who has been weaned a sufficient time to have forgotten its infantile nutriment, and who is not conscious of any particular desires or cravings, and quietly resigns itself to its mother's care and training. — *Phillips.*

The vain desires with which men are carried away originate in their seeking to be wise and careful above what is necessary. David adds accordingly, *my soul over me is quieted,* not as expressing the language of self-confidence, but speaking as if his soul lay sweetly and peacefully on his bosom, undisturbed by inordinate desires. He contrasts the wayward and tumultuous agitation which prevails in those of a discontented spirit, with the peace which reigns in the man who abides in the calling of the Lord. From the verse with which the Psalm closes, we see the reason why David asserted his having undertaken nothing in the spirit of a carnal ambition. He calls upon Israel to *hope in the Lord,* words which must have been abrupt had it not deeply concerned the common safety of the Church, to know that he sat upon the throne of the kingdom by Divine appointment, in which case the faithful would be certain of the bestowment of the promised blessing. Our hope is of the right kind when we cherish humble and sober views of ourselves, and neither wish nor attempt anything without the leading and approbation of God.

PSALM 132

The writer of this Psalm, whoever he may have been [126] here, in the name of all the faithful, puts God in remembrance of his promise, that he would never suffer his house or kingdom to fail, but support and defend both.

A Song of Degrees.

126 Lightfoot ascribes this Psalm to David, and supposes it to have been composed on the second removal of the Ark from the house of Obededom. (1 Chronicles 15:4, etc.) But the mention of David's name in the tenth verse in the third person, and the terms there employed, militate against his being the Author. Others ascribe it to Solomon, who, they think, wrote it about the time of the removing of the Ark into the Temple, which he had built for it. (2 Chronicles 5:2, etc.) Others are of opinion, that it was composed by Solomon for the solemn services that were celebrated at the dedication of the Temple. "The whole tenor of this Psalm," says Jebb, "is an exact epitome of the Dedication Prayer of Solomon. (2 Chronicles 6) The topics are the same the building the house of the Lord the promise to David the inhabitation of the Almighty; and the concluding sentences of the Dedication, are identical with those expressions of the Psalm in verses 8, 9, 10. There can, therefore, be little question that this Psalm was composed by Solomon." *Jebb's Literal Translation of the Book of Psalms*, etc., volume 2. As this forms one of the "Songs of Degrees," those who conceive that these Psalms were so called because sung by the Jews about the time of their return from Babylon, conclude that Ezra selected this ancient song to be sung at the dedication of the second Temple.

Psalm 132:1-5

1. O Jehovah! Remember David, and all his affliction: **2.** Who sware to Jehovah, vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob. **3.** If; shall enter into the tabernacle of my house, if I shall go up upon the cover of my couch, [127] **4.** If I give sleep to mine eyes, slumber to mine eyelids, **5.** Until I, find a place for Jehovah, habitations [128] for the Mighty One of Jacob [129]

1. *O Jehovah! remember David.* Interpreters are not agreed respecting the penman of this Psalm, though there is little doubt that it was either David or Solomon. At the solemn dedication of the Temple, when Solomon prayed, several verses are mentioned in the sacred history as having been quoted by him, from which we may infer that the Psalm was sufficiently well known to the people, or that Solomon applied a few words of it for an occasion in reference to which he had written the whole Psalm. The name of David is prominently mentioned, because it was to him that the continuance of the kingdom and Temple was promised, and though dead, this could not affect the truthfulness of God's word. The Church could very properly pray in the manner which is here done, that God would perform what he had promised to his servant David, not as a private individual, but in favor of all his people. It was therefore a preposterous idea of the Papists to argue from this passage that we may be benefitted by the intercession of the dead. Just as if the faithful were here to be understood as calling up an advocate from the tomb to plead their cause with God, when it is abundantly evident from the context that they look entirely to the covenant which God had made with David, knowing well that though given to one man, it was with the understanding that it should be communicated to all. There is a propriety why mention should

127 The expression of going up to one's bed may be illustrated by what Dr. Shaw says of the Moorish houses in Barbary. Having observed that their chambers are spacious, of the same length with the square court, in the sides of which they are built, he adds, "At one end of each chamber there is a little gallery raised three, four, or five feet above the floor, with a balustrade in the front of it, with a few steps likewise leading up to it. Here they place their beds; a situation frequently alluded to in the Holy Scriptures." The language of the text is no doubt hyperbolical, as Calvin observes, being intended to express David's great anxiety to have a house built for the worship of God.

128 ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ We have here the plural put by enallage for the singular." *Phillips.*

129 ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠*abir Yaaicob,* the *Mighty One of Jacob.* By this expression, which occurs both here and in Psalm 132:2, the Psalmist evidently has a reference to the Patriarch's own words which he employed in his blessing to Joseph, where God is emphatically so designated. (Genesis 49:24.) From this Hebrew name ⊠⊠⊠, *abir,* and ⊠⊠⊠, *cabir,* which is synonymous, probably came the *Cabiri,* or the great gods of the Grecians, and the *Abiry* of the Druids. See Thes. Antiq. Roman. tom. 5 page 760; Bryant's Myth. volume 2: page 473; and Cooke's Patriarchal and Druidical Religion.

be made of his *affliction* or *humiliation.* Some render the word *meekness,* but there is no reason for this whatsoever. In 2 Chronicles 6:42, it is true we read of ⊠⊠⊠⊠; that is, *mercies,* which I consider to be there understood in the passive sense, as meaning the benefits which had been conferred upon David; but I am clearly of opinion that here the reference is to the anxious cares, the numerous difficulties and struggles which David had to undergo, so long as he was kept by God in suspense. Remember, as if it had been said, the great anxieties, the heavy troubles, which David endured before he came to the kingdom, and how fervently and earnestly he desired to build the Temple, though he was not allowed to do it during his whole life. The dangers, labors, and troubles which he underwent, must clearly have confirmed the faith of God's people in the truth of the divine oracle, inasmuch as they showed how firmly and certainly he was himself convinced of the truth of what God had spoken. Some insert the copulative reading, *remember David and affliction;* but of this I do not approve. The particle ⊠ *eth,* rather denotes that special respect in which they would have David remembered, viz., as regarded his afflictions, or that he might come forth before the view of God with his afflictions, and obtain his desire according to them.

2. *Who sware to Jehovah.* One affliction of David is particularly mentioned, That he was filled with perplexity on account of the situation of the Ark. Moses had commanded the people ages before to worship God in the place which he had chosen. (Deuteronomy 12:5.) David knew that the full time had now arrived when the particular place should be made apparent, and yet was in some hesitation — a state of things which was necessarily attended with much anxiety, especially to one who was so ardently attached to the worship of God, and so vehemently desirous to have the fixed presence of God with the nation, for its defense and government. It is said that he swore to see to the building of the Temple, and to postpone every other consideration to the accomplishment of this object. [130] The objurgation may seem to assume a somewhat too harsh and severe form, when he declares his resolution to refuse sleep, his food, and the common supports of life, until a place should have been set apart for the Temple. To have acted in this way would have been to show an inconsiderate zeal, for it did not become him to prescribe the time to God, nor was it possible for him to endure any number of fasting days or sleepless nights. Then when are we to consider that this vow was taken? I am aware indeed that some Hebrew writers judge it to have been at that period when he fell down trembling at the sight of the angel; but, without denying that the plot of ground was pointed out to him immediately after that circumstance, it is altogether a forced and unsupported conjecture to say, that what had so long been in the thoughts of David was conceived at that exact time. Nor is there anything which should prevent us from

130 This oath is not mentioned in any of the historical books of the Old Testament. There is, however, allusion in them to his vow on the subject, although he was forbidden by God to perform it. See 2 Samuel 7:2, 3; and 1 Chronicles 22:7-10.

supposing that his language is here to be understood as hyperbolical, and that this was not a vow in the strict form of it, but to be understood in a qualified sense that he would never enter his house, nor ascend his couch, without feeling a concern upon this subject. He felt persuaded that the settlement of the sanctuary was intimately connected with the state of the kingdom; and we need not be surprised that so long as he was kept in uncertainty regarding the place of the Temple, he should scarcely have felt assured of his very crown, and have been incapable of sharing the ordinary comforts of life with any satisfaction. Still, where Scripture has been silent we can say nothing certain; and I may throw out these things as what seems to me the most probable interpretation. And I think the sense of the passage may very well bear to be that which I have mentioned, That until informed of the place of the Ark's destined residence, David was full of concern and anxiety, dwelling in his house, or when he lay upon his bed. As to the vow itself, this and other passages afford no ground for supposing, with the Papists, that God approves of whatever vows they may utter, without regard to the nature of them. To vow unto God that which he has himself declared to be agreeable to him, is a commendable practice; but it is too much presumption on our part to say that we will rush upon such vows as suit our carnal inclination. The great thing is that we consider what is agreeable to his will, otherwise we may be found depriving him of that wherein indeed his principal right lies, for with him "to obey is better than sacrifice." (1 Samuel 15:22.)

Psalm 132:6-9

6. Lo! We heard of it at Ephratha; we found it in the fields of the wood. **7.** We will go into his habitations, we will worship at his footstool. **8.** Arise, O Jehova! Into thy rest, thou, and the Ark of thy strength. **9.** Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy meek ones rejoice.

6. *Lo! we heard of it at Ephratha.* This verse is obscure, and we need not wonder at the difficulty which interpreters have felt in ascertaining its meaning. First, the relative pronoun [131] being of the feminine gender has no antecedent, and we are forced to suppose that it must refer to the word *habitation* in the foregoing sentence, although there it reads *habitations,* in the plural number. But the principal difficulty lies in the word *Ephratha,* because the Ark of the Covenant was never placed there. If the reference be to past time, Shiloh should have been the place mentioned; but as it is plain the Psalmist speaks of its new *residence,* the question returns, why Ephratha and not Zion is specified? Some would get rid of the difficulty by resorting to a frivolous conceit, That the place had two names, and that the plat of ground which was shown to David (2 Samuel 24:18; 1 Chronicles 21:18) was called Ephratha, because it was *fertile,* on which account Jerome styles it καρποφοριαν, and yet is not very consistent with himself, for in another place, when he gets into his allegories, he most absurdly interprets it to mean *frenzy.* I have no doubt whatever that the word comes from ⊠⊠⊠*parah,* which means to *bear fruit;* just as Bethlehem, which is situated in the same

131 That is, the objective affix ⊠, which appears at each of the verbs in this verse, and which is translated *it.* By some it is thought that the antecedent is ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *aron, ark,* which, although it is generally masculine, is yet sometimes feminine, as in 1 Samuel 4:17; 2 Chronicles 8:11. Such is the opinion of Dr. Lightfoot, who explains the verse thus: "We heard of it (the ark) in Ephratah, (that is, Shiloh,) a city of Ephraim; we found it in the fields of the wood, that is in Kirjath-jearim. 1 Samuel 7:1," etc. (Lightfoot's Chorogr. Cent., c. 45.) Others consider the ⊠to refer to *habitations,* in the preceding verse; and though that noun is in the plural, it is, as noticed in a preceding note, put by enallage for the singular. Rosenmuller thinks this opinion which is the one adopted by Calvin the more probable and no doubt at first sight the most obvious meaning is, that the pronoun *it* refers to the spot which David had discovered as a suitable place on which to erect the house of God. Walford, indeed, objects that "this cannot be intended, because the site of the Temple was neither at Ephratah, nor in the fields of the wood, or of Jaar;" and he gives at some length an ingenious explanation of this difficult passage, extracted chiefly from the German writer Tilingius. This objection, it will be perceived, is removed by one of the expositions suggested by Calvin, which supposes that the allusion is first to a report of Ephratha being the place where the Temple was to be built; and next to the certain information which the people of Israel afterwards obtained that Jerusalem was the spot which God himself had selected. Whether this however is the correct explanation of the verse, it is not so easy to determine.

quarter, was called for its fruitfulness "the house of bread." But any conjecture founded upon the mere name of the place is necessarily unsatisfactory, and we must seek some more probable explanation. I might begin by mentioning one which is not without force. A rumor had spread that the Ark of the Covenant was to be deposited in Ephratha, which was the place of David's nativity [132] , and we may suppose at least that his native soil would seem to many the most appropriate locality for the Ark and Sanctuary. We can easily understand how such an opinion should get abroad. In that case the hearing referred to by the Psalmist alludes to the report which had been circulated. Should this be taken as the meaning, the verb would be in the pluperfect tense, *we HAD heard that it was in Ephratha,* but we found it in the woods, that is, in a place by no means so attractive or well cultivated. Jerusalem might be said to be woody, because we know that it was surrounded by mountains, and that it was by no means in a part of the country which was noted for fruitfulness. There is another meaning which I would submit to the judgment of the reader. Let us suppose that the faithful here say that they had *heard of its being in Ephratha,* because God had spoken still greater things of Ephratha than of Zion. It is true that the memorable prediction (Micah 5:2) had not yet been given, yet it may have been that God had already issued some very great and signal prophecy regarding Bethlehem. We have heard, as if they had said, of Bethlehem, but it is only as yet a dim expectation which we have in reference to that place, and in the meantime we must worship God in this place of the woods, looking forward to the fulfillment of the promise regarding Ephratha. This interpretation, however, is far fetched, nor would I venture to adopt it, or at least recommend it to others as the right one. The simpler way seems to be to understand the word *Ephratha* as applying to David personally, and not so much to the place of that name, the declaration of the Psalmist being to this effect that now when God had chosen a king from Ephratha, the place would necessarily at the same time be marked out for the Ark of the Covenant. It is said, *have heard,* for the fixing of the place of the Sanctuary depended upon the will of God; nor until this was declared could men determine it according to their own fancy. The fact that now upon David's mounting the throne this illustrious oracle concerning the permanent settlement of the Temple was to take effect, afforded good ground of thanksgiving. We have proof here that the people of God did not deposit the Ark at random in any place, but had express directions from God himself as to the place where he would be worshipped all proper worship proceeding from faith, while faith cometh by hearing. (Romans 10:17.) Mount Zion had no peculiar excellencies almost to recommend it; but having once heard that it was the object of God's choice, they show that they consider it wrong to call the matter in question.

7. *We will go into his habitations.* Here he dictates to all the Lord's people a common form of mutual exhortation to the duty of going up to the place which had been pointed

132 Bethlehem, the place of David's nativity, is called Ephratha in Genesis 35:19.

out by the Angel. The clearer the intimation God may have given of his will, the more alacrity should we show in obeying it. Accordingly, the Psalmist intimates that now when the people had ascertained beyond all doubt the place of God's choice, they should admit of no procrastination, and show all the more alacrity as God was calling them more closely, and with a more privileged familiarity, to himself, now that he had selected a certain place of rest amongst them. He thus passes a virtual condemnation upon the lukewarmness of those whose zeal does not increase in proportion to the measure of revelation which they enjoy. *Habitations* are spoken of in the plural number, and this it may be (though we may doubt whether the Psalmist had such minute distinctions in his eye) because there was in the temple an inner sanctuary, a middle apartment, and then the court. It is of more importance to attend to the epithet which follows, where the Psalmist calls the Ark of the Covenant *God's footstool,* to intimate that the sanctuary could never contain the immensity of God's essence, as men were apt absurdly to imagine. The mere outward temple with all its majesty being no more than his footstool, his people were called upon to look upwards to the heavens and fix their contemplations with due reverence upon God himself. We know that they were prohibited from forming any low and carnal view of him. Elsewhere, it is true, we find it called "God's face," (Psalm 28:8,) to confirm the faith of the people in looking to this divine symbol which was set before them. Both ideas are brought out very distinctly in the passage before us, that, on the one hand, it is mere superstition to suppose God confined to the temple, and that, on the other hand, the external symbols are not without their use in the Church that, in short, we should improve these as helps to our faith, but not rest in them. While God dwells in heaven, and is above all heavens, we must avail ourselves of helps in rising to the knowledge of him; and in giving us symbols of his presence, he sets, as it were, his feet upon the earth, and suffers us to touch them. It is thus that the Holy Spirit condescends for our profit, and in accommodation to our infirmity, raising our thoughts to heavenly and divine things by these worldly elements. In reference to this passage, we are called to notice the amazing ignorance of the Second Council of Nice, in which these worthy weak Fathers [133] of ours wrested it into a proof of idolatry, as if David or Solomon commanded the people to erect statues to God and worship them. Now, that the Mosiac ceremonies are abolished we worship at the footstool of God, when we yield a reverential submission to his word, and rise from the sacraments to a true spiritual service of him. Knowing that God has not descended from heaven directly or in his absolute character, but that his feet, are withdrawn from us, being placed on a footstool, we should be careful to rise to him by the intermediate steps. Christ is he not only on whom the feet of God rest, but in whom the whole fullness of God's essence and glory resides, and in him, therefore, we should seek the Father. With this view he descended, that we might rise heavenward.

133 "Boni paterculi." — *Lat.*

8. *Arise, O Jehovah?* [134] Such language as this, inviting the great God who fills heaven and earth to come into a new place of residence, might seem strange and harsh, but the external symbols of religion which God had appointed are spoken of in these exalted terms to put honor upon them, and the better to ensure to them the regard of God's people. Should God institute no medium of intercourse, and call us to a direct communication with heaven, the great distance at which we stand from him would strike us with dismay, and paralyze invocation. Although, therefore, he does not thereby change place himself, he is felt by us to draw sensibly nearer. It was thus that he descended amongst his ancient people by the Ark of the Covenant, which he designed to be a visible emblem of his power and grace being present amongst them. Accordingly, the second clause of the verse is of an exegetical *character,* informing the Church that God was to be understood as having come in the sense of making a conspicuous display of his power in connection with the Ark. Hence it is called the *Ark of his strength,* not a mere dead idle shadow to look upon, but what certainly declared God's nearness to his Church. By the *rest* spoken of we are to understand Mount Zion, because, as we shall see afterwards, God was ever afterwards to be worshiped only in that place.

9. *Let thy priests,* etc. He now prays in general for the prosperity of the Church, as what stood intimately connected with the previous statement, the promotion of our best interests being the great end for which God dwells amongst us. Some construe the words into a wish that the worship of God might be maintained in its purity, and think that the Psalmist prays that the priests might be clothed with holiness in allusion to their sacred garments. Upon a closer view of the words and the whole context, I am rather inclined to be of another opinion, and to consider this a prayer that the righteousness of God might be displayed amongst the people, being as an ornament upon the priests, and communicating joy to all the people. Thus I take *righteousness* to mean the fruit or effects of righteousness, and this the righteousness of God, not of men. The *priests* are of course mentioned first, as holding a higher place in the appointed order of the Church; while they have their due place assigned to them, it is still the Church collectively to which the prayer refers as though the Psalmist requested that the glory of this righteousness should be reflected from the priests upon the people generally. God is said to clothe us with his righteousness when he appears as our Savior and help, defends us by his power, and shows in his government of us that we are the objects of his care. The *rejoicing* which is spoken of must have reference to a life of happiness. And these two things being joined together may convince us that by *righteousness*

134 *Arise, O Jehovah!* were the words which Moses used (Numbers 10:35) whenever in the journey through the wilderness the Ark moved forward; and this and the two following verses form a part of the prayer which Solomon offered at the dedication of the Temple, (2 Chronicles 6:41, 42,) which might be considered as the restingplace of God and of the Ark. The Ark is here called "the Ark of thy strength" that is, the symbol of thy power and majesty. This phrase is found only in this place and in the passage above cited.

nothing else is meant than God's guardianship and government. Consistently with this we find it said afterwards "Thy priests shall be clothed with salvation;" and I may add, that Solomon, in the solemn prayer already referred to, (2 Chronicles 6:41,) makes no mention of righteousness, but of salvation. I have repeatedly given the reason why the saints of God are called ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠*chasidim,* or *merciful ones,* because mercy or beneficence is that grace which assimilates us most to God.

Psalm 132:10-12

10. For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thy Christ. **11.** Jehovah has sworn to David in truth, nor will he turn from it; of the fruit of thy belly will I set upon thy throne. **12.** If thy children will keep my covenant and my, testimonies which I will teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.

10. *For thy servant David's sake, etc*. Some would connect the first part of the verse with the preceding, without adducing reasons against this, it must at once strike the reader that this verse must be taken together. Before entering upon an explanation of the Psalmist's meaning I may just say that it would be to put a forced sense upon the words were we to understand by *turning away the face of thy Christ* depriving us of a view of the Redeemer. We may infer with certainty from Solomon's prayer, that they are a request that God would show favor to the king. The same expression is employed by Bathsheba in the request which she made to her son Solomon, "Turn not away thy face," meaning that he would not cast her out of his sight. (1 Kings 2:20.) It is an expression tantamount to *shewing displeasure;* and we might say a word or two in reference to it because the other idea of referring the words to our Redeemer is plausible, and might mislead persons of little discernment. Nothing more, then, is here asked than that God would not despise and reject the prayers which David had preferred in the name of all the people. The favor is asked for David's sake, only because God had made a covenant with him. So far as that privilege was concerned, he did not stand exactly upon the footing of any other ordinary man. The prayer, in short, is to the effect that God in remembrance of his promise would show favor to the posterity of David, for though this prayer for the Church must be considered as dictated to each of the kings, the foundation was in the person of David. The Church was thus taught figuratively that Christ, as Mediator, would make intercession for all his people. As yet he had not appeared in the flesh, nor entered by the sacrifice of himself into the Holiest of all, and in the meantime the people had a figurative Mediator to embolden them in their supplications.

11. *Jehovah sware unto David.* [135] Here he brings out the idea still more clearly, that the only thing he had respect to in David was the free promise which God had made to him. He takes notice of the fact, as confirmatory to his faith, that God had ratified the promise by oath. As to the particular words used, he speaks of God having sworn in truth, that is, not fallaciously, but in good faith, so that no doubt could be entertained of his departing from his word. The thing promised was a successor to David of his own seed; for though he did not want children, he had already almost despaired of the regular succession, from the fatal confusions which prevailed in his family, and the discord which internally rent his

135 Compare Psalm 89:48. The sacred histories make no mention of such an oath, but a promise to the same effect is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:12; 2 Kings 8:25.

household, and might eventually ruin it. Solomon was particularly marked out, but the promise extended to a continuous line of successors. This arrangement affected the welfare of the whole Church, and not of David only, and the people of Godare encouraged by the assurance, that the kingdom which he had established amongst them was possessed of a sacred and enduring stability. Both king and people needed to be reminded of this divine foundation upon which it rested. We see how insolently the sovereigns of this world often deport themselves filled with pride, though in words they may acknowledge that they reign by the grace of God. How often, besides, do they violently usurp the throne; how rarely do they come to it in a regular manner. A distinction is therefore drawn between the kingdoms of this world and that which David held by the sacred tenure of God's own oracle.

12. *If thy sons keep my covenant.* More distinct notice is now taken of the descending line, by which the perpetuity of the succession, as I have already shown, is pointed out. Sons of princes commonly succeed them in this world by right of inheritance, but there was this undoubted peculiarity of privilege in the case of David's kingdom, that God expressly declared that he would always have a descendant from his body upon the throne, not for one age merely, but for ever. For though that kingdom was for a time destroyed, it was restored again, and had its everlasting establishment in Christ. Here the question occurs Did the continuance of the kingdom rest upon good conduct, or human merit? for the terms of this agreement would seem to suggest that God's covenant would not be made good, unless men faithfully performed their part, and that thus the effect of the grace promised was suspended upon obedience. We must remember, in the first place, that the covenant was perfectly gratuitous, so far as related to God's promise of sending a Savior and Redeemer, because this stood connected with the original adoption of those to whom the promise was made, which was itself free. Indeed the treachery and rebellion of the nation did not prevent God from sending forth his Son, and this was a public proof that he was not influenced by the consideration of their good conduct. Hence Paul says, (Romans 3:3,)

"What if some did not believe
is therefore the truth of God of none effect?"

intimating that God had not withdrawn his favor from the Jews, having chosen them freely of his grace. We know, too, that notwithstanding their efforts, as if it had been of set purpose, to destroy the promises, God met their malicious opposition with displays of his marvellous love, made his truth and faithfulness to emerge in a most triumphant manner, and showed that he stood firm to his own purpose, independently of any merit of theirs. This may serve to show in what sense the covenant was not conditional; but as there were other things which were accessories to the covenant, [136] a condition was appended, to the effect that God would bless them if they obeyed his commandments. The Jews, for declining

136 "Sed quia secum trahebat alias accessiones." *Lat.*

from this obedience, were removed into exile. God seemed at that time "to make void or profane his covenant," as we have seen elsewhere. The dispersion was a kind of breaking of the covenant, but only in part and to appearance. This will be brought out more clearly by reference to what we learn, from sacred history, to have occurred shortly after David's death. By the defection of the ten tribes the kingdom suffered a severe blow, only a small portion of it being left. Afterwards it was reduced by fresh disasters, till at length it was torn up by the root. And although their return from the captivity gave some hope of restoration, there was no one bearing the name of king, and any dignity that attached to Zerubbabel was but obscure, till kings sprung up who were spurious, and not of the right line. In this case would we not have said that the covenant of God was abolished? and yet, as the Redeemer came forth from the very source predicted, it is plain that it stood firm and stable. In this sense it is said by Ezekiel of the crown, (Ezekiel 21:26,)

"Remove the diadem; reversed, reversed, reversed shall it be,
till he come whose it is;"

where the Prophet might seem to cancel what God had written with his own hand, and nullify his promise, for the safety of the people stood intimately connected with the throne, according to the expression we find in the Lamentations,

"The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord,
was taken in their pits." (Lamentations 4:20)

The Prophet, we say, might seem to strike directly against the covenant made by God, when he speaks of the crown being taken away, and yet what he adds in the subsequent part of the sentence, proves that covenant, in so far as it was gratuitous, to have been everlasting and inviolable, since he holds out the promise of the Redeemer, notwithstanding the conduct of the Jews, which was such as to exclude them temporarily from the divine, favor. God, on the one hand, took vengeance upon the people for their ingratitude, so as to show that the terms of the covenant did not run conditionally to no purpose; while on the other, at the coming of Christ there was a free performance of what had been freely promised, the crown being set upon Christ's head. The obedience which God demands is particularly stated to be the obedience of his covenant, to teach us that we must not serve him by human inventions, but confine ourselves within the prescription of his word.

Psalm 132:13-16

13. Seeing that Jehovah has chosen Zion, [137] he hath desired it for his habitation. **14.** This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell: because I have desired it. **15.** Blessing I will bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread; **16.** And I will clothe her priests with salvation [138] and her merciful ones shall shout aloud for joy.

13. *Seeing that Jehovah has chosen Zion.* By coupling the kingdom with the priesthood and sanctuary service, he declares it still more emphatically to have been of divine and not human appointment. The connection is not to be overlooked, on another account. The true strength and stability of that kingdom were in Christ, and Christ's kingdom is inseparable from his priesthood. This may explain why mention is made of Zion being chosen. God decreed nothing in relation to the kingdom, but what had a certain connection with the sanctuary, the more perfectly to prefigure the Mediator who was to come, and who was both priest and king, after the order of Melchizedek. The kingdom and tabernacle were, therefore, closely allied. Notice is taken of the reason upon which the choice proceeded that mount Zion was not chosen for any excellency belonging to it, as we have seen, (Psalm 68:16,) but because such was the will of God. His good pleasure is specified in contrast with any merit in the place itself. This is another proof of what we have already stated that the covenant made by God with David proceeded from his mere goodness.

14. *This is my rest for ever.* The same truth is here put into the mouth of God, to give it additional weight; and it is declared not to have been in vain that the Temple had been erected, since God would show effectually and by practical testimonies the delight which he had in the worship of his own appointment. God's resting, or talking up his habitation, are expressions which denote his being present with men in the manifestation of his power. Thus *he dwelt in Zion,* in the sense that there his people worshipped him according to the prescription of his law, and found besides the benefit of the service in his favorable answer to their requests. It was eventually seen, in a very striking manner, that this was the promise

137 Solomon's Temple was built on mount Moriah, and not on mount Zion. But as Moriah was just at the end of Zion, it was sometimes reckoned a part of that mount, and was called by its name. Even the Temple and its courts are so designated, (Psalm 65:1; and Psalm 84:7.) Zion may, however, be here put for Jerusalem in general.

138 In Psalm 132:9, the prayer of the Psalmist to God is, that the priests may be clothed with righteousness; and in this concluding portion of the Psalm, where God is declaring what he will do to the king and city of his people, he promises to grant even more than was asked for in this petition; for, says he, 'I will clothe her priests with *salvation;'* not with righteousness only, but with what is the consequence or reward of righteousness, viz., salvation." *Phillips.*

of an infallible God, whet, after the Temple had been overthrown, the altar cast down, and the whole frame of legal service interrupted, the glory of the Lord afterwards returned to it once more, and remained there up to the advent of Christ. We all know in what a wicked and shameful manner the Jews abused the divine promise which is here made, under the impression that it necessarily laid God under an obligation to favor them, taking occasion from if, in the pride of their hearts, to despise, and even cruelly persecute the Prophets. Luther on this account calls it "the bloody promise;" for, like all hypocrites who make God's holy name a covert for iniquity, they did not hesitate, when charged with the, worst, crimes, to insist that it was beyond the power of the Prophets to take from them privileges which God had bestowed. With them to assert that the Temple could be stripped of its glory, was equivalent to charging God with falsehood, and impeaching his faithfulness. Under the influence of this spirit of vain confidence they proceeded such inconceivable lengths in shedding innocent blood. Were the Devil of Rome armed with pretensions as splendid, what bounds would be set to its audacity? As it is, we see how fiercely, and with what bloody pride it arrogates the name of the Church, while outraging all religion, in open contempt of God and flagrant violation of humanity. But what of that? the hierarchy would otherwise fall, and this must stand, if Christ would not desert his spouse the Church! The refutation of such a plea is not far to seek. The Church is limited to no one place: now that the glory of the Lord shines through all the earth, his rest is where Christ and his members are. It is necessary that we rightly understand what the Psalmist says of the everlasting continuance of the Temple. The advent of Christ was "the time of reformation," and the figures of the former Testament, instead of being then proved or rendered vain, were substantiated, and received their fulfillment in him. If it be still objected that mount Zion is here spoken of as the everlasting residence of God, it is sufficient to answer that the whole world became an enlarged mount Zion upon the advent of Christ.

15. *Blessing I will bless, etc*. God's dwelling in the midst of the people was what constituted the great source of their blessedness; and now some of the proofs are mentioned which he would give of his fatherly regard, such as preparing and administering their ordinary food, relieving their wants, clothing their priests with salvation, and filling all his people with joy and gladness. This it was necessary should be added, for unless we have ocular demonstration of the divine goodness, we are not spiritual enough to rise upwards to the apprehension of it. We have a twofold demonstration of it in the matter of our daily food; first in the earth's being enriched so as to furnish us with corn, and wine, and oil; and again in the earth's produce being multiplied, through a secret power, so as to provide us with sufficient nourishment. There is here a promise that God would exert a special care over his own people to supply them with food, and that though they might not have a great abundance, yet the poor would be satisfied. We must not omit mentioning the remarkable and ludicrous mistake which the Papists have made upon this passage, and which shows the judicial stupidity they

lie under to be such, that there is nothing so absurd they will not swallow. By confounding two letters into one, for *victus* they read *vidus,* and then conjectured that this must be a mutilation for *viduas blessing I will bless her widows!* Thus they made "*widows*" out of "food" an extraordinary blunder, which we would scarcely credit, were it not a fact that they sing the word out in their temples to this present day. [139] But God, who blesses the food of his own people, has infatuated their minds, and left them to confound everything in their absurd reveries and triflings. The inspired penman goes on to repeat what he had already said of other blessings, only the term *salvation* is used instead of *righteousness,* but in the same sense I already mentioned. Some understand it to have reference to purity of doctrine and holiness of life; but this seems a forced interpretation, and he means simply that they would be safe and happy under the divine protection.

139 "⊠⊠⊠⊠, *her provision.* The word ⊠⊠⊠ signifies food which is taken in hunting, and then it is used to express food of any kind — provision generally. The Septuagint has θήραν, which denotes provision that has been hunted, and so obtained; but another reading of the Greek version τὴν χήραν αὐτῶς, which has been followed by the Vulgate, Arabic, and Ethiopic; the rendering of the Vulgate being *viduam ejus* This corrupt reading is noticed by Jerome." *Phillips.*

Psalm 132:17-18
17. There will I make the horn of David to bud; I have prepared a lamp [140] for my Christ. **18.** His enemies will I clothe with shame, and upon, him shall his crown flourish. [141]

17. *There will I make,* etc. He reverts to the state of the kingdom, which God had promised to take under his care and protection. It is necessary that we should attend to the peculiar force of the words employed *I will make the horn of David to bud* Now there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the term *horn,* which in Hebrew is very commonly used to signify *force* or *power;* but we are to mark that by the *horn budding* there is an allusion to the humble original of the kingdom, and the singular restorations which it underwent. David was taken from the menial drudgery of the sheepfold, and from the lowly cottage where he dwelt, the youngest son of his father, who was no more than an ordinary shepherd, and was advanced to the throne, and rose by a series of unlooked for successes. Under Jeroboam the kingdom was at an early period so effectually cut down again, that it was only by budding forth from time to time that it maintained itself in a moderate degree of advancement. Afterwards it underwent various shocks, which must have issued in its destruction, had it not still budded anew. And when the people were dispersed in the captivity, what must have become of them, had not God made the broken and trampled horn of David, again to bud? Isaiah accordingly seems to have had this in his eye when he compared Christ to a rod which should spring not from tree in full growth, but from a trunk or stem. (Isaiah 11:1.) To the prophecy now before us Zechariah perhaps refers when he says, "Behold the man whose name is the Branch," (Zechariah 6:12,) intimating that in this way only could the power and dignity of the kingdom be restored after the dismemberment and ravages to which it had been exposed. In 2 Samuel 23:5, David makes use of the word employed in the verse before us, but in somewhat a different sense, referring to the continual advancement of the kingdom unto further measures of prosperity. Here the inspired penman rather refers to the singular manner in which God would cause the horn of David to revive again, when at any time it might seem broken and withered. The figure of *the lamp* is much to the same *effect,* and occurs in many other places of Scripture, being a prophecy very generally in the mouths of the people. The meaning is, that the kingdom, though it underwent occasional obscurations, would never be wholly extinguished under the calamities which overtook it, being as the lamp of God constantly burning, and pointing out safety to the Lord's people,

140 "Some think the lamp (Exodus 27:20) of the Tabernacle to be here alluded to. Chrysostom and Cyrill understand that the lamp here mentioned has a prophetic reference to John the Baptist." — *Cresswell.*

141 The idea of the crown flourishing on the head, seems to have been suggested by the ancient crowns bestowed upon victors; which consisted of certain species of evergreens, as the bay, laurel, ivy, dive, myrtle, etc.

though not shining to a great distance. At that time all the illumination enjoyed was but the feeble lamp which shone in Jerusalem; now Christ, the sun of righteousness, sheds a full radiance all over the world.

18. *His enemies will I clothe with shame.* The priests were said above "to be clothed with righteousness and salvation," now the enemies of David are represented as "clothed with shame." It is not enough that all go well within. God must keep us from the various harms and evils which come upon us from without, and hence we have this second promise added, which is one wherein we recognize often the goodness of God even more than in the blessings which he may shower upon us in the day of prosperity. The greater that fear which seizes upon us when exposed to aggression from enemies, the more are we sensibly awakened to take hold of divine help. The passage teaches us that the Church and people of God will never enjoy such peace on earth as altogether to escape being assaulted by the variety of enemies which Satan stirs up for their destruction. It is enough to have it declared, upon divine authority, that their attempts shall be unsuccessful, and that they will retire eventually with ignominy and disgrace. The, clause which follows has been variously interpreted. The verb which we have translated *to flourish,* in the Hiphil conjugation means sometimes *to see,* so that some have explained the words In that place shall the crown of David be seen, when the horn shall have been made to bud. Some derive the word from ⊠⊠⊠, *tsits, a plate,* as if it had been said that the crown of the king would be resplendent with plates of gold. But I consider that the crown is here said to *flourish,* just as formerly the allusion was to budding or germinating. Isaiah, on the other hand, speaks (Isaiah 28:5) of the crown of drunkenness of Ephraim as being a fading flower. Thus we have it here declared that however frail to appearance the crown of David might be in his posterity, it would be invigorated by some secret virtue, and flourish for ever.

PSALM 133

A Psalm of thanksgiving for that holy concord which prevailed in the nation, and which the Lord's people are earnestly exhorted to maintain.

A Song of Degrees of David.

Psalm 133:1-3

1. Behold! how good, and how becoming, that brethren [142] should even dwell together! **2.** Like the precious ointment upon the head, that descendeth upon the beard, the beard of Aaron, which descendeth upon the skirt of his garments. [143] **3.** Like the dew of Hermon, [144] which descendeth upon the mountains of Zion, [145] for there [146] Jehovah commanded the blessing, life for evermore.

142 The word *brethren* is not limited to those who are descended from the same parents; it denotes such as are members of the same community, profess the same holy religion, and are governed by the same institutions. All the people of Israel are in the first instance here addressed.

143 Kimchi, Jarchi, and others, instead of "to the *skirts,*" translate "to the *collar* of his garment." This seems to give the true meaning of the original, which implies that the head and beard of Aaron only were anointed, and that the costly sacerdotal robes were thus preserved from an unction, which must inevitably have spoiled them. For an account of this ointment and of its sprinkling on Aaron, and his sons, see Exodus 30:23-25, 30; Leviticus 8:12. When Aaron was consecrated High Priest the oil was poured on him, whilst on the other priests it was only sprinkled.

144 There is a mountain called Hermon, which is the highest of the ridge of mountains designated Anti-Lebanon, and which is situated in the northern border of the country beyond Jordan. This, however, is not the mountain supposed to be here intended, but another of the same name lying within the land of Canaan on the west of the river Jordan. It is described by Buckingham as a range of hills running for several miles east and west, and forming the southern boundary of the plain of Esdraelon, overlooked in which Mount Tabor is situated. Maundrell, who, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem had a full view of Tabor and Hermon at about six or seven hours' distance to the eastward, speaking of the copious dews which fell in that part of the country, says, "We were sufficiently instructed by experience what the Psalmist means by the dew of Hermon, our tents being as wet with it as if it had rained all night." — *Journey.*

145 Calvin gives the construction of these words as it is in the Hebrew text. But to make them intelligible something must be supplied. As Hermon and Zion are many miles distant from each other, it would be absurd to speak of the dews of the former as falling on the latter, not to mention the difficulty of understanding how the dew of one mountain can descend upon another. The translators of our English Bible repeat the words *like the dew* before *which descended;* and the insertion of this supplement is fully justified, as it is the most natural way of bringing out an intelligent meaning.

146 "The particles, ⌧⌧ ⌧⌧, refer not to Zion, but are put as introducing the reason of the goodness spoken of in Psalm 133:1, ⌧⌧⌧⌧." — *Phillips.* Others, as Lowth, maintain that ⌧⌧must refer to Zion, and that to it the blessing must also refer. "May not ⌧⌧mean the place wherever brethren dwell together in unity?" — *Archbishop Seeker.*

1. *Behold how good,* etc. I have no doubt that David in this Psalm renders thanks to God for the peace and harmony which had succeeded a long and melancholy state of confusion and division in the kingdom, and that he would exhort all individually to study the maintenance of peace. This is the subject enlarged upon, at least so far as the shortness of the Psalm admits of it. There was ample ground to praise the goodness of God in the highest terms, for uniting in one a people which had been so deplorably divided. When he first came to the kingdom the larger part of the nation considered him in the light of an enemy to the public good, and were alienated from him. Indeed so mortal was the feud which existed, that nothing else than the destruction of the party in opposition seemed to hold out the prospect of peace. The hand of God was wonderfully seen, and most unexpectedly, in the concord which ensued among them, when these who had been inflamed with the most violent antipathy cordially coalesced. This [147] peculiarity in the circumstances which called forth the Psalm has been unfortunately by interpreters, who have considered that David merely passes a general commendation upon brotherly union, without any such particular reference. The exclamation with which the Psalm opens, *Behold!* is particularly expressive, not only as setting the state of things visibly before our eyes, but suggesting a tacit contrast between the delightfulness of peace and those civil commotions which had wellnigh rent the kingdom asunder. He sets forth the goodness of God in exalted terms, the Jews having by long experience of intestine feuds, which had gone far to ruin the nation, learned the inestimable value of union. That this is the sense of the passage appears still further from the particle ⌧⌧, *gam,* at the end of the verse. It is not to be understood with some, who have mistaken the sense of the Psalmist, as being a mere copulative, but as adding emphasis to the context. We, as if he had said, who were naturally brethren, had become so divided, as to view one another with a more bitter hatred than any foreign foe, but now how well is it that we should cultivate a spirit of brotherly concord!

There can at the same time be no doubt; that the Holy Ghost is to be viewed as commending in this passage that mutual harmony which should subsist amongst all God's children, and exhorting us to make every endeavor to maintain it. So long as animosities divide us, and heartburnings prevail amongst us, we may be brethren no doubt still by common relation to God, but cannot be judged one so long as we present the appearance of a broken and dismembered body. As we are one in God the Father, and in Christ, the union must be ratified amongst us by reciprocal harmony, and fraternal love. Should it so happen in the providence of God, that the Papists should return to that holy concord which they have apostatized from, it would be in such terms as these that we would be called to render thanksgiving unto God, and in the meantime we are bound to receive into our

147 "Les expositeurs laissent passer cette cireonstanee, et mal, comme si David louoit generalement, et sans son propre regard, le consentement fraternel, etc." *Fr.*

brotherly embraces all such as cheerfully submit themselves to the Lord. We are to set ourselves against those turbulent spirits which the devil will never fail to raise up in the Church, and be sedulous to retain intercourse with such as show a docile and tractable disposition. But we cannot extend this intercourse to those who obstinately persist in error, since the condition of receiving them as brethren would be our renouncing him who is Father of all, and from whom all spiritual relationship takes its rise. The peace which David recommends is such as begins in the true head, and this is quite enough to refute the unfounded charge of schism and division which has been brought against us by the Papists, while we have given abundant evidence of our desire that they would *coalesce* with us in God's truth, which is the only bond of holy union.

3. *Like the precious ointment upon the head.* We have here clear proof that David, as we have just said, holds all true union among brethren to take its rise from God, and to have this for its legitimate object, that all may be brought to worship God in purity, and call upon iris name with one consent. Would the similitude have been borrowed from holy ointment if it had not been to denote, that religion must always hold the first place? [148] Any concord, it is thus insinuated, which may prevail amongst men, is insipid, if not pervaded by a sweet savor of God's worship. We maintain, therefore, that men are to be united amongst themselves in mutual affection, with this as the great end., that they may be placed together under the government of God. If there be any who disagree with these terms, we would do well rather to oppose them strenuously, than purchase peace at the expense of God's honor. We must hold, that when mention is made of the Priest, it is to intimate, that concord takes its rise in the true and pure worship of God, while by the *beard and skirts of the garments,* we are led to understand that the peace which springs from Christ as the head, is diffused through the whole length and breadth of the Church. The other figure, of the *dew* distilling upon Mount Zion and Hermon, denotes, that a holy unity has not only a sweet savor before *God,* but is productive of good effects, as the dew moistens the earth and supplies it with sap and freshness. Moses, we know, said of Judea, that it was not like Egypt fertilized by the overflowings of its river, but such as drank daily of the rain of heaven. (Deuteronomy 11:11.) David suggests, that the life of man would be sapless, unprofitable, and wretched, unless sustained by brotherly harmony. It is evident, that mount Hermon must have been rich and fruitful, being famed amongst places for pasture. Mountains depend principally for fertility upon the dews of heaven, and this was shown in the case of mount Zion. David adds in the close, that God commands his blessing where peace is cultivated; by which is meant, that he testifies how much tie is pleased with concord amongst men, by showering down blessings upon them. The same sentiment is expressed by Paul in other words, (2 Corinthians 13:11;

148 "Car a quel propos tireroit il ceste similitude de l'huile sacree, sinon a ceste fin clue la vraye religion tiene tousjours le premier lieu?" *Ft.*

Philippians 4:9,) "Live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you." Let us then, as much as lies in us, study to walk in brotherly love, that we may secure the divine blessing. Let us even stretch out our arms to those who differ from us, desiring to bid them welcome if they will but return to the unity of the faith. Do they refuse? Then let them go. We recognize no brotherhood, as I have said already, except amongst the children of God.

PSALM 134

An exhortation to praise God, addressed to the people of God generally, but more particularly to the Priests and Levites.

A Song of Degrees.

Psalm 134:1-3

1. Behold! bless ye Jehovah, all ye servants of Jehovah, who stand nightly in the house of Jehovah. **2.** Lift up your hands towards the sanctuary, [149] and bless Jehovah. **3.** Jehovah bless thee out of Zion, who made heaven and earth!

1. *Behold! bless ye Jehovah.* Some interpreters think, that others besides the Levites are here intended, and it must be granted, at least, that some of the more zealous of the people remained over night in the Temple, as we read (Luke 2:37) of Anna, a widow, "who served God constantly with prayers night and day." [150] But it is evident, from the close of the Psalm, that the inspired penman addresses priests only, since he prescribes the form of benediction which they were to offer up for the people, and this was a duty belonging exclusively to the Priests. It would appear then, that the Levites are here called servants of God, from the functions they discharged, being specially appointed, and that by turns, to watch by night in the Temple, as we read in the inspired history. [151] (Leviticus 8:35.) The Psalm begins with the demonstrative adverb Behold! setting the matter of their duty before their eyes, for they were to be stimulated to devotion by looking constantly to the Temple. We are to notice the Psalmist's design in urging the duty of praise so earnestly upon them. Many of the Levites, through the tendency which there is in all men to abuse ceremonies, considered that nothing more was necessary than standing idly in the Temple, and thus overlooked the principal

149 "⌧⌧⌧. Some persons render this word as if it were an adverb. So Tilingins has 'Attollite manus vestras sanete.' There is no doubt, that lifting up the hands reverently, is the ordinary and proper posture of suppliants at the throne of grace. Farther, St. Paul, in 1 Timothy 2:8, apparently with reference to this passage, speaks of *lifting up holy hands.* The Septuagint and Syriac, however, have taken the word as a noun, signifying *the sanctuary;* the former have ἅγια." *Phillips.* Warner and Cress, well with Calvin would read "towards the sanctuary;" *i.e.,* towards the holy of holies, where the ark, the symbol of the Divine presence, was fixed.

150 "We know generally," says Fry, "that there was a nightly service in the Temple, (2 Chronicles 21:) and Kimchi, a Jewish writer, represents those who by night stand in the house of the Lord, as holy men who rose from their beds in the night and went to pray in the Temple." After referring to the case of "Anna, a Prophetess," he adds, "And St. Paul, before Agrippa, speaking 'of the hope of the promise made unto the fathers,' gives us this remarkable description: 'unto which our' twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. There was public service in the Temple at Jerusalem not only by day but by night; which latter service many of the Jews, for whose special use this and the next Psalm seem to have been composed, were in the habit of attending." *Cresswell.*

151 *Ye servants off the Lord,* etc., i.e., ye Levites, whose duty it was, according to the Talmudists, to keep watch by night, standing in the Temple: the High Priest was the only one who sat in the Temple. Compare Leviticus 8:35; 1 Chronicles 9:33 Psalm 92:2; Psalm 119:147; Luke 2:37." Cresswell.

part of their duty. The Psalmist would show that merely to keep nightly watch over the Temple, kindle the lamps, and superintend the sacrifices, was of no importance, unless they served God spiritually, and referred all outward ceremonies to that which must be considered the main sacrifice the celebration of God's praises. You may think it a very laborious service, as if he had said, to stand at watch in the Temple, while others sleep in their own houses; but the worship which God requires is something more excellent than this, and demands of you to sing his praises before all the people. In the second verse he reminds them in addition, of the form observed in calling upon the name of the Lord. For why do men *lift their hands* when they pray? Is it not that their hearts may be raised at the same time to God? [152] It is thus that the Psalmist takes occasion to reprehend their carelessness in either standing idle in the Temple, or trifling and indulging in vain conversation, and thus failing to worship God in a proper manner.

3. *Jehovah bless thee out of Zion!* We have conclusive proof in my opinion from this verse that the Psalm is to be considered as referring to the priests and Levites only, for to them it properly belonged under the law to bless the people. (Numbers 6:23.) The Psalmist had first told them to bless God; now he tells them to bless the people in his name. Not that God meant by any such injunction that the people might themselves indulge in a life of carnal security an opinion prevalent among the Papists, who think that if the monks chant in the temples, this is all the worship necessary on the part of the whole body of the people. What God intended was, that the priests should lead the way in divine service, and the people take example by what was done in the temple, and practice it individually in their private houses. The duty of blessing the people was enjoined upon the priests, as representing Christ's person. Express mention is intentionally made of two things, which are in themselves distinct, when the God who blessed them out of Zion is said to be also the Creator of heaven and earth. Mention is made of his title as *Creator* to set forth his power, and convince believers there is nothing that may not be hoped from God. For what is the world but a mirror in which we see his boundless power? And those must be senseless persons indeed, that are not satisfied with the favor of Him who is recognized by them as having all dominion and all riches in his hand. Since many, however, are apt, when they hear God spoken of as Creator, to conceive of him as standing at a distance from them, and doubt their access to him, the Psalmist makes mention also of that which was a symbol of God's nearness to his people and this that they might be encouraged to approach him with the freedom and unrestrained confidence of persons who are invited to come to the bosom of a Father. By looking to the heavens, then, they were to discover the power of God by looking to Zion, his dwellingplace, they were to recognize his fatherly love.

152 "Car a quel propos les hommes *eslevent ils les mains* en priant, sinon afin qu'ils eslevent aussi leurs esprits a Dieu?" *Ft.*

Psalm 135

An exhortation to praise God, both for his goodness specially shown to his chosen people, and for his power and glory apparent in the world at large. A contrast is drawn between idols, which had but a vain show of divinity, and the God of Israel, who had established his claim to be considered the only true God by clear and indubitable proofs, and this with the view of leading his people the more cheerfully to praise him, and submit to his government.

Halleluiah.

Psalm 135:1-4

1. Praise ye the name of Jehovah, [153] praise him, O ye servants of Jehovah! **2.** Ye who stand in the house of Jehovah, and ye who stand in the courts of the house of our God. [154] **3.** Praise God, for good is Jehovah: sing unto his name, for it is pleasant. **4.** For God hath chosen Jacob [155] unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.

1. *Praise ye the name of Jehovah* Though this Psalm begins almost in the same manner with the preceding, the Psalmist would not appear to be addressing the Levites exclusively, but the people generally, since the reasons given for praising God are equally applicable to all God's children. No mention is made of night watching, or of their standing constantly in the Temple. But indeed, as it was the special duty of the priests to take the lead in this devotional exercise, to give out, if we might use such an expression, and sing the praises of God before the people, there is no reason why we should not suppose that they are primarily addressed, and stirred up to their duty. We need only to examine the words more closely in order to be convinced that the people are included as next in order to the priests. [156] For the Psalmist addresses the servants of God who *stand in the temple,* then those who are *in the courts,* whereas no notice was taken of the courts in the former Psalm. Mention seems to be made of *courts* in the plural number, because the priests had their court; and then there was another common to all the people, for by the law spoken of, (Leviticus 16:17,) they were prohibited from entering the sanctuary. To prevent any feeling of disgust which might arise from the very frequent repetition of this exhortation to the praises of God, it is only necessary to remember, as was already observed, that there is no sacrifice in which he takes greater delight than the expression of our gratitude. Thus, (Psalm 50:14,)

"Sacrifice unto the Lord thanksgiving,
and pay your vows to the Most High;"

and, (Psalm 116:12, 13,)

153 "Perhaps the original, ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠, *halelu et shem Jehovah,* should be translated, *Praise ye the namee Jehovah:* that is, praise God in his infinite essence, of being, holiness, goodness, and truth."—Dr. *Adam Clarke.*

154 The words *ye who stand* we have supplied in the second clause, as being necessary to bring out the sense which Calvin attaches to it. The ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠ "the house of Jehovah," mentioned in the first clause, remarks Mendlessohn in his Beor, is the place where the priests stood; whilst "the courts" surrounding the temple, referred to in the second clause, were occupied by the people when engaged in their public prayers.

155 The name "Jacob" is here put by metonymy for the posterity of Jacob, as is evident from the parallelism of the two members.

156 "Et quand on advisera de bien pres aux mots, on y trouvera que le peuple est adjoint, etc."—*Fr.*

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

Particular attention is to be paid to those passages of Scripture which speak in such high terms of that worship of God which is spiritual; otherwise we may be led, in the exercise of a misguided zeal, to spend our labor upon trifles, and in this respect imitate the example of too many who have wearied themselves with ridiculous attempts to invent additions to the service of God, while they have neglected what is of all other things most important. This is the reason why the Holy Spirit so repeatedly inculcates the duty of praise. It is that we may not undervalue, or grow careless in this devotional exercise. It implies, too, an indirect censure of our tardiness in proceeding to the duty, for he would not reiterate the admonition were we ready and active in the discharge of it. The expression in the end of the verse — *because it is sweet,* admits of two meanings — that the name of God is sweet, as in the previous clause it was said that God is good — or, that it is a sweet and pleasant thing to sing God's praises. The Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠ *naim,* properly signifies *beautiful* or *comely,* and this general signification answers best. [157]

4. *For God hath chosen Jacob* Other reasons are given afterwards why they should praise God, drawn from his government of the world. But as it was only the children of Abraham who were favored with the knowledge of God at that time, and were capable of praising him, the Psalmist directs them to the fact of their having been chosen by God to be his peculiar people, as affording matter for thanksgiving. The mercy was surely one of incomparable value, and which might well stir them up to fervent gratitude and praise, adopted as they were into favor with God, while the whole Gentile world was passed by. The praise of their election is given by the Psalmist to God — a clear proof that they owed the distinction not to any *excellency* of their own, but to the free mercy of God the Father which had been extended to them. He has laid all without exception under obligation to his service, for

"he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good."
(Matthew 5:45.)

But he bound the posterity of Abraham to him by a closer tie, such as that by which he now adopts men generally into his Church, and unites them with the body of his only-begotten Son. [158]

157 "Signifie proprement chose bien seante ou belle: et ce sens general convient mieux." — *Fr.*

158 "Comme c'est aujourd'huy de tous ceux qu'il adopte en sa bergerie, et ente au corps de son fils unique." — *Fr.*

Psalm 135:5-7

5. For I know that Jehovah is great, and our God above all gods. **6.** Whatsoever doth please him, Jehovah does in heaven and in earth, in the sea, and in all deep places. **7.** Causing the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth, he maketh lightnings for the rain, bringing forth the wind out of his secret places. [159]

5. *For I know that Jehovah is great* We have here a general description of the power of God, to show the Israelites that the God they worshipped was the same who made the world, and rules over all according to his will, neither is there any other besides him. He would not exclude others when he speaks of having known himself the greatness of God, but is rather to be considered as taking occasion from his own experience to stir up men generally to attend to this subject, and awake to the recognition of what lies abundantly open to observation. The immensity of God is what none can comprehend; still his glory, so far as was seen fit, has been sufficiently manifested to leave all the world without excuse for ignorance. How can one who has enjoyed a sight of the heavens and of the earth shut his eyes so as to overlook the Author of them without sin of the deepest dye? It is with the view, then, of stirring us up more effectually, — that the Psalmist makes reference to himself in inviting us to the knowledge of God's glory; or rather he reprehends our carelessness in not being alive enough to the consideration of it. The second part of the verse makes the truth of the observation which I have already stated still more apparent, — that the Psalmist's design was to retain

159 The heathen who in ancient times worshipped the elements, imagined them to possess the power of giving or withholding rain at pleasure, Referring to this superstitious imagination the Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 14:22) reclaims that power as peculiar to God who made and governs the world. "Are there among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Art thou not he, O Jehovah, our God? Therefore we will wait upon thee; for thou hast made all these things." Among the Greeks and Romans Jupiter was armed with the thunder and the lightning; and AEolus ruled over the winds. Here the Psalmist teaches us to restore the celestial artillery to its rightful owner. The description probably refers to the regular rainy season of autumn which comes on towards the end of September; and Dr. Russell's account of the weather at Aleppo in that month may be quoted as illustrating the particulars of the verse. "Seldom a night passes," says he, "without much lightning in the north-west quarter, but not attended with thunder; and, when this lightning appears in the west or south-west points, which is often followed with thunder, it is a sure sign of the approaching rain. A squall of wind, and clouds of dust, are the usual forerunners of these rains." Thus God may be said to "make lightnings for the rain," inasmuch as the lightnings in the west and south-west points are, in the East, the sure prognostics of rain; and the squalls of wind which bring on these refreshing showers may be said to be brought for that purpose from "God's secret places." From Dr. Russell's representing "*clouds of draft,*" as "the usual forerunners of these rains," Harmer concludes that ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *nesiim,* which, in our English Bible is rendered" vapours," must mean, as they elsewhere translate the word, "clouds."

the Israelites in the service and fear of the one true God, by a declaration to the effect that the God who covenanted with their Fathers was the same who created heaven and earth, No sooner had he made mention of Jehovah than he adds his being the God of Israel. It follows as a necessary consequence, that all who depart from this God prefer a god who has no claim to the title, and that Jews and Turks, for example, in our own day, are guilty of mere trifling when they pretend to worship God the Creator of the world. Where persons have diverged from the law and from the gospel, any show of piety they may have amounts to a renunciation of the true God. The Psalmist had, therefore, in his eye when he clothed God with a specific title,, to limit the Israelites to that.God who was set forth in the doctrine of the Law. If by ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *Elohim,* we understand the false gods of the Gentiles — the title is given them only by concession, for it could not be properly assigned to what are mere lying' vanities; and the meaning is, that God's greatness altogether eclipses any pretended deity. But the expression would seem to include the *angels,* as has been already observed, in whom there is some reflection of divinity, as being heavenly principalities and powers, but who are exalted by God, and assigned such a subordinate place as may not interfere with his glory. [160]

6. *Whatsoever doth please him, etc*. This is that immeasurable greatness of the divine being, of which he had just spoken. He not only founded heaven and earth at first, but governs all things according to his power. To own that God made the world, but maintain that he sits idle in heaven, and takes no concern in the management of it, is to cast an impious aspersion upon his power; and yet the idea, absurd as it is, obtains wide currency amongst men. They would not say, perhaps, in so many words, that they believed that God slept in heaven, but in imagining, as they do, that he resigns the reins to chance or fortune, they leave him the mere shadow of a power, such as is not manifested in effects; whereas Scripture teaches us that it is a real practical power, by which he governs the whole world as he does according to his will. The Psalmist expressly asserts every part of the world to be under the divine care, and that nothing takes place by Chance, or without determination. According to a very common opinion, all the power necessary to be assigned to God in the matter, is that of a universal providence, which I do not profess to understand. The distinction here made between the heavens, earth, and waters, denotes a particular governments. The term ⊠⊠⊠, *chaphets,* is emphatical. The Holy Spirit declares that he does whatsoever pleases him. That confused sort of divine government which many talk of, amounts to no more than a certain maintenance of order in the world, without due counsel. No account whatever is made of his will in this way, for will implies counsel and method. Consequently there is a special providence exerted in the government of the various parts of the world, there is no

160 "Tellement qu'il les embrasse et range en leur ordre, afin que sa grandeur ne soit nullement obscurcie par eux." — *Fr.*

such thing as chance, and what appears most fortuitous, is in reality ordered by his secret wisdom. We are not called to inquire why he wills events which contradict our sense of what his administration should be, but if we would not unsettle the very foundations of religion, we must hold by this as a firm principle, that nothing happens without, the divine will and decree. [161] His will may be mysterious, but it is to be regarded with reverence, as the fountain of all justice and rectitude, unquestionably entitled as it is to our supreme consideration. For farther information upon this subject the reader may consult Psalm 115.

7. *Causing the clouds to ascend* The Psalmist touches upon one or two particulars, in illustration of the point that nothing takes place of itself, but by the hand and counsel of God. Our understandings cannot comprehend a thousandth part of God's works, and it is only a few examples which he brings forward to be considered in proof of the doctrine of a divine providence which he had just announced. He speaks of *the clouds ascending from the ends of the earth;* for the vapours which rise out of the earth form clouds, when they accumulate more densely together. Now who would think that the vapours which we see ascending upwards would shortly darken the sky, and impend above our heads? It strikingly proves the power of God, that these thin vapours, which steam up from the ground:, should form a body over-spreading the whole atmosphere. The Psalmist mentions it as another circumstance calling for our wonder, that *lightnings are mixed with rain,* things quite opposite in their nature one from another. Did not custom make us familiar with the spectacle, we would pronounce this mixture, of fire and water to be a phenomenon altogether incredible. [162] The same may be said of the phenomena of the winds. Natural causes can be assigned for them, and philosophers have pointed them out; but the winds, with their various currents, are a wonderful work of God. He does not merely assert the power of God, be it observed, in the sense in which philosophers themselves grant it, but he maintains that not a drop of rain falls from heaven without a divine commission or dispensation to that effect. All readily allow that God is the author of rain, thunder, and wind, in so far as he originally established this order of things in nature; but the Psalmist goes farther than this, holding that when it rains, this is not effected by a blind instinct of nature, but is the consequence of the decree of God, who is pleased at one time to darken the sky with clouds, and at another to brighten it again with sunshine.

161 "Neantmoins si nous ne voulons arracher tons les rudimens de la vraye religion, ceci doit demeurer ferme," *etc.* — *Fr.*

162 "*Si* ce meslange du fen et de l'eau n'estoit cognu par usage, qui ne diroit que c'est une merveille," *etc.* — *Fr.*

Psalm 135:8-12
8. He smote the first-born of Egypt, from man to beast. **9.** He sent tokens and wonders in the midst of thee, O Egypt! On Pharaoh, and on all his servants. **10.**. He smote great nation, and slew mighty kings. **11.** Sikon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan. [163] **12.** And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage to Israel his people.

8. *He smote the first-born of Egypt* He now reverts to those more special benefits, by which God had laid his Church and chosen people under obligation to his service. As it was the Lord's believing people only whom he addressed, the chief point singled out as the subject of praise is God's having adopted them, small as they were in numbers, from the mass of the human family. Again, there was the fact of his having set himself in opposition, for their sakes, to great kingdoms and mighty nations. The wonderful works done by God in Egypt and in Canaan were all just so many proofs of that fatherly love which he entertained for them as his chosen people. It is not strictly according to historic order to begin with mentioning the destruction of the first-born of Egypt; but this is instanced as a memorable illustration of the great regard God had for the safety of his people, which was such that he would not spare even so mighty and wealthy a nation. The scope of the passage is to show that God, in delivering his people, had abundantly testified his power and his mercy.

10. *He smote great nations* He comes now to speak of the end for which God delivered them from their bondage. He did not lead his people out of Egypt, and then leave them to wander as they might, but brought them forth that he might settle them in the promised inheritance. This the Psalmist mentions as another signal proof of the favor of God, and his unwearied kindness to them; for having once taken the children of Abraham by the hand, he led them on, in the continued exercise of his power, till he put them in possession of the promised land. He takes occasion to extol God's power, from the circumstance that it was only after the slaughter of many enemies that they came to the peaceable possession of the country. And it was a striking illustration of the divine goodness to manifest this preference for the Israelites, who were but a multitude of inconsiderable persons, while those opposed to them were mighty kings and powerful nations. Notice is taken of two kings, Sihon and Og, not as being more powerful than the rest, but because shutting up the entrance to the land in front they were the first formidable enemies met with [164] and the people, besides,

163 "Comp. Numbers 21; Deuteronomy 2: and Deuteronomy 3; Joshua 12:7, etc. The chiefs of very small communities were in ancient times styled kings; Sihon and Og are particularly enumerated as being (Deuteronomy 3:11; Amos 2:9) of a gigantic race, of prodigious size and strength." — *Cresswell.*

164 "Sed quia praecluso terrae aditu in primis erant formidabiles." — *Lat.* "Mais pource qu'ils estoyent les plus a redouter, a cause qu'ils tenoyent l'entree de la terre fermee." — *Fr.*

were not as yet habituated to war. As the crowning act of the Lord's goodness, the Psalmist adds, that the Israelites obtained firm possession of the land. One has said —

"Non minor est virtus quam quaerere, parta tueri,"

"It is no less an achievement to keep possession than to acquire it;" and as the Israelites were surrounded with deadly enemies, the power of God was very eminently displayed in preserving them from being rooted out and expelled again, an event which must have repeatedly taken place, had they not been firmly settled in the inheritance.

Psalm 135:13-14
13. O Jehovah! thy name is for ever; O Jehovah! thy memorial is from generation to generation. **14.** For Jehovah will judge his people, and he will repent himself [165] concerning his servants.

13. *O Jehovah! thy name is for ever* There are many reasons why the name of God ought always to be kept up in the world, but here the Psalmist speaks more especially of that everlasting praise which is due to him for preserving his Church and people, the cause being immediately added — that *God will judge his people* The whole world is a theater for the display of the divine goodness, wisdom, justice, and power, but the Church is the orchestra, as it were — the most conspicuous part of it; and the nearer the approaches are that God makes to us the more intimate and condescending the communication of his benefits, the more attentively are we called to consider them. The term *judging* in the Hebrew expresses whatever belongs to just and legitimate government, [166] the future tense denoting continued action apparently, as it often does, so that what the Psalmist says is tantamount to this — that God would always watch over and preserve his people, and that being thus under God's guardian care, they would be placed in safety. Or we may suppose that the Psalmist employs the future tense to teach us that, under affliction, we must have a sustained hope, not giving way to despondency, though God may seem to have overlooked and deserted us, since whatever temporary delays there may be of his help, he will appear as our judge and defender at the proper season, and when he sees that we have been sufficiently humbled. This may recommend itself the more to be the true meaning, because the Psalmist seems to allude to the expression of Moses, (Deuteronomy 32:36,) whose very words indeed, he quotes. As some alleviation under the divine chastisements which the people would suffer, Moses foretold that God would come forth as their judge, to help and deliver them when in extremity. And this the writer of the present Psalm, whoever he may have been, makes use of with a general application to the Church, declaring that God would never allow it to be altogether destroyed, since upon the event of its destruction he would cease to be a King. To propose changing the tense of the verb into the past, and understand it of God having shown himself to be the judge of his people against the Egyptians, puts a feeble sense upon the passage, and one which does not suit with the context, either of this Psalm or of the address of Moses. The Hebrew verb ⊠⊠⊠, *nacham,* means either to *repent,* or to *receive comfort,* and both meanings answer sufficiently well. On the one hand, when God returns in mercy to

165 "Ou, prendra consolation." — *Fr. Marg.* "Or, will take comfort."

166 "Le mot de *juger* selon les Hebrieux,, contient en soy toutes les parties d'un juste et legitime gouvernement. — *Fr.*

his people, though this implies no change in him, yet there is a change apparent in the event itself. Thus he is said *to repent* when he begins to show mercy to his people, instead of manifesting his displeasure in just judgments against them. Again, he is said to *receive consolation,* or to be appeased and reconciled towards his people, when in remembrance of his covenant, which endures for ever, he visits them with everlasting mercies, though he had corrected them for a moment. (Isaiah 54:8.) The meaning, in short, is, that the displeasure of God towards his people is but temporary, and that, in taking vengeance upon their sins, he remembers mercy in the midst of wrath, as Habakkuk says. (Habakkuk 3:2.) Thus God is spoken of as man, manifesting a father's affection, and restoring his children, who deserved to have been cast off, because he cannot bear' that the fruit of his own body should be torn from him. Such is the sense of the passage — that God has a compassion for his people because they are his children, that he would not willingly be bereaved of them and left childless, that he is placable towards them, as being dear to him, and that having recoginsed them as his offspring, he cherishes them with a tender love.

Psalm 135:15-21

15. The images of the nations are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. **16.** They have a mouth, and will not speak: they have eyes, and will not see. **17.** They have ears, and will not hear; also [167] there is no breath in their mouth. **18.** Like be they to them who make them, whosoever trusteth in them. **19.** Bless Jehovah, O house of Israel! bless Jehovah, O house of Aaron! **20.** Bless Jehovah, O house of Levi! ye that fear Jehovah, bless Jehovah. **21.** Blessed be Jehovah out of Zion, who dwelleth at Jerusalem. Hallelujah. [168]

15. *The images of the nations,* etc. As the whole of this part of the Psalm has been explained elsewhere, it is needless to insist upon it, and repetition might be felt irksome by the reader. I shall only in a few words, therefore, show what is the scope of the Psalmist. In upbraiding the stupidity of the heathen, who thought that they could not have God near them in any other way than by resorting to idol worship, he reminds the Israelites of the signal mercy which they had enjoyed, and would have them abide the more deliberately by the simplicity and purity of God's worship, and avoid profane superstitions. He declares, that idolaters only draw down heavier judgments upon themselves, the more zealous they are in the service of their idols. And there is no doubt, that, in denouncing the awful judgments which must fall upon the worshippers of false gods, it is his object to deter such as had been brought up under the word of God from following their example. In Psalm 115 the exhortation given is to trust or hope in the Lord; here, to bless him. The Levites are mentioned in addition to the house of Aaron, there being two orders of priesthood. Every thing else in the two Psalms is the same, except that, in the last verse:, the Psalmist here joins himself, along with the rest of the Lord's people, in blessing God. He says, *out of Zion,* for when God promised to hear their prayers from that place, and to communicate from it the rich display of his favor, he thereby gave good ground why they should praise him from it. [169] The reason is stated, that *he dwelt in Jerusalem;* which is not to be understood in the low and gross sense that he was confined to any such narrow residence; but in the sense, that

167 "Some persons take ⧈⧈ as the adverb in the sense of *even;* as Kimchi; but the context, and also the corresponding passage in Psalm 115:6, show that it has the signification of *nose* ⧈⧈⧈, because it is followed by ⧈⧈, has merely the sense of *not.* (1 Samuel 21:9.) The meaning of this part of the verse is, that the idols of the heathen have not even breath to pass through the mouth and nostrils." — *Phillips.* "⧈⧈: I strongly suspect that a passage beginning with this word (noses have they) has fallen out of the text. It is found in one of Kennicotts MSS., and has been added in later times to the Septuagint." — *Jebb's Translation of the Psalms,* etc., volume 1.

168 The hallelujah with which this Psalm in the original text ends, has been transferred by the Septuagint to the title of Psalm 136.

169 "Quant et quant aussi il donnoit occasion et matiere de luy chanter louanges." — *Fr.*

he was there as to the visible manifestation of his favor, experience showing, that while his majesty is such as to fill heaven and earth, his power and grace were vouchsafed in a particular manner to his own people.

PSALM 136

The Psalmist reminds the Lord's people, that unless they were assiduous in his praises, they were chargeable with defrauding him of what was justly due to him for his benefits. And, in mentioning each benefit, he takes particular notice of the mercy of God, to teach us how necessary it is to the proper celebration of his praises that we own everything which we receive from him to be bestowed gratuitously. [170]

170 This Psalm is called by the Jews, the Great Thanksgiving.

Psalm 136:1-9

1. Praise Jehovah, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. **2.** Praise the God of gods, for his mercy endureth for ever. **3.**. Praise the Lord of Lords, [171] for his mercy endureth for ever. **4**. Who alone hath done great wonders, for his mercy endureth for ever, **5.** Who made the heavens by his wisdom, [or, intelligently,] for his mercy endureth for ever. **6.** Who stretcheth out the earth above the waters, for his mercy endureth for ever. **7.** Who made the great lights, for his mercy endureth for ever. **8.** The sun for rule by day, for his mercy endureth for ever. **9.** The moon and stars for rule by night for his mercy endureth for ever.

1. *For his mercy,* [172] etc. The insertion of this clause again and again in so many short and abrupt sentences, may seem a vain repetition, but verses repeated by way of chorus are

171 "The three first verses of this Psalm contain the three several names of the Deity, which are commonly rendered *Jehovah, God,* and *Lord, re*spectively; the first having reference to his essence as *self-existent,* and being his proper name; the second designating him under the character of a Judge or of an all-powerful being, if Aleim be derived from Al; and the third, *Adoni,* representing him as exercising rule." — *Cresswell.*

172 Jebb observes, that "the 136th Psalm is altogether peculiar in its construction, as it has the recurrence of the same words, 'For everlasting is his mercy,' at the end of every distich." He adds, that "this elaborate artifice of construction seems characteristic of that later period which comprised the captivity and restoration;" although he at the same time admits, that it is to be found in Psalms of an earlier date than the Baby-lonish captivity, quoting a passage in the account of the dedication of Solomon's Temple, which informs us, that the whole choir of Israel united in praising God "for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever:" and observing that this expression forms the.commencement of three other Psalms, the Psalm 106, Psalm 107, and Psalm 118. In his remarks on the Psalm 119, after adverting to the alphabetical character of that Psalm, he adds, "There are other artifices of construction observable in the Psalms and Hymns composed in these later ages of the Church. For example, that repetition of the same words and clauses, and the frequent recurrence of a characteristic word, so frequent in the Greater Hallel, [from the Psalm 111 to Psalm 118th, inclusive,] and in the Songs of Degrees: and in a continually recurring burden, in each distich, as in the Song of the three Children, and Psalm 136, which latter is unique in the Psalter. It has been the tendency of the poetry of most countries, in the progress of time, to make its characteristic features depend less upon the exactness of sentimental arrangement, and more upon some external artifice, whether this be prosodial metre, alliteration, rhyme, assonance, or the recurrence of a burthen. Now, though the poetry of the Scriptures, because it was inspired, never declined from the perfection of its sentimental construction, still those artificial contrivances, practiced, indeed, in earlier times, seem to have been more prevalent at the time of the captivity, and the time immediately following, than heretofore. It was probably so ordained, for the purpose of assisting the memories of the Jews, who at Babylon were excluded from the open exercise of their religion, and from public teaching, and, therefore, required more private helps, which could be

both allowed and admired in profane poets, and why should we object to the reiteration in this instance, for which the best reasons can be shown, Men may not deny the divine goodness to be the source and Fountain of all their blessings, but the graciousness of his bounty is far from being fully and sincerely recognised, though the greatest stress is laid upon it in Scripture. Paul in speaking of it, (Romans 3:23,) calls it emphatically by the general term of the glory of God, intimating, that while God should be praised for all his works, it is his mercy principally that we should glorify. It is evident from what we read in sacred history, that it was customary for the Levites according to the regulation laid down by David for conducting the praises of God, to sing by response, "for his mercy endureth for ever." The practice was followed by Solomon in the dedication of the Temple, (2 Chronicles 7:3, 6,) and by Jehoshaphat in that solemn triumphal song mentioned in 2 Chronicles 20:21, of the same book. [Before proceeding to recite God's works, the Psalmist declares his supreme Deity, and dominion, not that such comparative language implies that there is anything approaching] Deity besides him, but there is a disposition in men, whenever they see any part of his glory displayed, to conceive of a God separate from him, thus impiously dividing the Godhead into parts, and even proceeding so far as to frame gods of wood and stone. There is a depraved tendency in all to take delight in a multiplicity of gods. For this reason, apparently, the. Psalmist uses the plural number, not only in the word ⌧⌧⌧⌧, *Elohim,* but in the word ⌧⌧⌧⌧⌧, *Adonim,* so that it reads literally, *praise ye the Lords of Lords:* he would intimate, that the fullest perfection of all dominion is to be found in the one God.

4. *Who alone hath done great wonders* Under this term he comprehends all God's works from the least to the greatest, that he may awaken our admiration of them, for notwithstanding the signal marks of inconceivably great wisdom and divine power of God which are inscribed upon them we are apt through thoughtlessness to undervalue them. He declares that whatever is worthy of admiration is exclusively made and done by God, to teach us that we cannot transfer the smallest portion of the praise due to him without awful sacrilege, there being no vestige of divinity in the whole range of heaven and earth with which it is lawful to compare or equal him. He then proceeds to praise the wisdom of God, as particularly displayed in the skill with which *the heavens are framed,* giving evidence in a surprising degree of the fine discrimination with which they are adorned. [173] Next he comes to speak of *the earth,* that he may lead us to form a proper estimate of this great and memorable work of God, stretching forth as it does a bare and dry superficies above the waters. As these elements are of a spherical form, the waters, if not kept within their limits, would naturally

more easily communicated orally from parents to children, or from masters to disciples." — *Jebb's Translation of the Psalms,* etc., volume 2.

173 "Les cieux sont composez d'un si excellent et bel artifice, qu'ils crient que c'est d'une facon admirable qu'ils ont este ornez d'une si plaisante distinction." — *Fr.*

cover the earth, were it not that God has seen fit to secure a place of habitation for the human family. This philosophers themselves are forced to admit as one of their principles and maxims. [174] The earth's expanded surface, and the vacant space uncovered with water, has been justly considered therefore one of the great wonders of God. And it is ascribed to his mercy, because his only reason for displacing the waters from their proper seat was that regard which he had in his infinite goodness for the interests of man.

7. *Who made the great lights, etc.* — Moses calls the sun and moon the two great lights, and there is little doubt that the Psalmist here borrows the same phraseology. What is immediately added about the stars, is, as it were, accessory to the others. It is true, that the other planets are larger than the moon, but it is stated as second in order on account of its visible effects. The Holy Spirit had no intention to teach astronomy; and, in proposing instruction meant to be common to the simplest and most uneducated persons, he made use by Moses and the other Prophets of popular language, that none might shelter himself under the pretext of obscurity, as we will see men sometimes very readily pretended an incapacity to understand, when anything deep or recondite is submitted to their notice. Accordingly, as Saturn though bigger than the moon is not so to the eye owing to his greater distance, the Holy Spirit would rather speak childishly than unintelligibly to the humble and unlearned. The same remark may be made upon what the Psalmist adds regarding God's having assigned the sun and moon their respective parts, making the one to *rule the day,* and the other *to rule the night,* by which we are not to understand that they exercise any government, but that the administrative power of God is very manifest in this distribution. The sun in illuminating the earth through the day, and the, moon and stars by night, may be said to yield a reverential homage to God.

174 "De mettre ceci entre lents principes et maximes." — *Fr.*

Psalm 136:10-16

10. Who smote the Egyptians in their first-born, for his mercy endureth for ever. **11.** And brought out Israel from, the midst of them, for his mercy endureth for ever: **12.** With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, for his mercy endureth for ever. **13.** Who divided the Red Sea into divisions, for his mercy endureth for ever, **14.** And made Israel to pass through the midst of it, for his mercy endureth for ever. **15.** And cast Pharaoh and his host headlong into the Red Sea, for his mercy endureth for ever. **16.** And led his people through the wilderness, for his mercy endureth for ever.

10. *Who smote the Egyptians in, their first-born* Some read *with their first-born,* but the other rendering reads better. As we do not mean to sermonize upon the passage, it is unnecessary to detain the reader here with many words, as nothing is mentioned but what has been treated elsewhere. Only we may notice that the Egyptians are well said to have been smitten in their first-born, because they continued in their outrageous obstinacy under the other plagues, though occasionally terrified by them, but were broken and subdued by this last plague, and submitted. As it was not intended to recount all the wonders successively done in Egypt, the whole is summed up in one word when it is said, that he led his people forth from the midst of it with a mighty and a stretched out arm. For pressed down as they were on every side, it was only by a wonderful display of divine power that they could effect an escape. The figure of *an outstretched arm* is appropriate, for we stretch out the arm when any great effort is required; so that this implies that God put forth an extraordinary and not a common or slight display of his power in redeeming his people. [175]

13. *Who divided the Red Sea* I have already (Psalm 106:7) spoken of the word ⌧⌧⌧, *suph,* and have not therefore hesitated to render it *the Red Sea* The Psalmist speaks of *divisions* in the plural number, which has led some Jewish authors to conjecture that there must have been more passages than one — an instance of their solemn trifling in firings of which they know nothing, and of their method of corrupting the Scriptures entirely with their vain fancies. 'We may well laugh at such fooleries, yet we are to hold them at the same time in detestation; for there can be no doubt that the Rabbinical writers were led to this by the devil, as an artful way of discrediting the Scriptures. Moses plainly and explicitly asserts that the heaps of waters stood up on both sides, from which we infer that the space between was one and undivided. [176] But as the people passed through in troops, and not one by one, the pathway being so broad as to admit of their passing freely men and women, with their families and cattle, the Psalmist very properly mentions *divisions,* with a reference to the

175 "Dieu en deliverant son peuple n'a point monstre une petite puissance," etc. — *Fr.*

176 "Dont nous pouvons bien recueillir que l'espace d'entre deux estoit sans aucune separation." — *Fr.*

people who passed through, this circumstance not a little enhancing the mercy of God, that they saw large depths or channels dried up, so that they had no difficulty in advancing in troops abreast. Another circumstance which confirmed or enhanced the mercy shown, was, that Pharaoh was shortly afterwards drowned; for the very different issue proved that it could not be owing to any hidden cause of a merely natural kind, that some should have perished, while others passed over with entire safety. The distinction made afforded a conspicuous display of God's mercy in saving his people. Much is included in the single expression that God was *the leader of his people through the wilderness.* It was only by a succession of miracles of various kinds that they could have been preserved for forty years in a parched wilderness, where they were destitute of all the means of subsistence. So that we are to comprehend, under what is here stated, the various proofs of divine goodness and power which are mentioned by Moses as having been vouchsafed, in feeding his people with bread from heaven — in making water to flow from the rock — in protecting them under the cloud from the heat of the sun — giving them a sign of his presence in the pillar of fire — preserving their raiment entire — shielding them and their little ones in their exile wanderings under tents of leaves, [177] with innumerable other instances of mercy which must occur to the reader.

177 "Sous des logettes de feuilles." — *Fr.*

Psalm 136:17-26
17. Who smote great kings, for his mercy endureth for ever. **18.** And slew famous kings, for his mercy endureth for ever. **19.** Sihon, king of the Amorites, for his mercy endureth for ever. **20.** And Og, king of Bashan, for his mercy endureth for ever. **21.** And gave their land for an heritage, for his mercy endureth for ever. **22.** An heritage to Israel his servant., for his mercy endureth for ever. **23.** Who remembered us in our humiliation, for his mercy endureth for ever. **24.** And hath rescued us from our oppressors, for his mercy endureth for ever. **25.** Who giveth food to all flesh, for his mercy endureth for ever. **26.** Make acknowledgments to the God of heavens, for his mercy endureth for ever.

23. *Who remembered us in our humiliation* The six verses taken from the previous Psalm I pass over without observation; and I shall only touch very briefly upon the others, which do not need lengthened consideration. We may just observe that the Psalmist represents every age as affording' displays of the same goodness as had been shown to their fathers, since God had never failed to help his people by a continued succession of deliverances. It was a more notable proof of his mercy to interpose for the nation at a time when it was nearly overwhelmed by calamities, than to preserve it in its entire state and under a more even course of affairs, there being something in the emergency to awaken attention and arrest the view. Besides, in all the deliverances which God grants his people, there is an accompanying remission of their sins. In the close he speaks of the paternal providence of God as extending not only to all mankind, but to every living creature, suggesting that we have no reason to feel surprise at his sustaining the character of a kind and provident father to his own people, when he condescends to care for the cattle, and the asses of the field, and the crow, and the sparrow. Men are much better than brute beasts, and there is a great difference between some men and others, though not in merit, yet as regards the privilege of the divine adoption, and the Psalmist is to be considered as reasoning from the less to the greater, and enhancing the incomparably superior mercy which God shows to his own children.

PSALM 137

At the Babylonish captivity the established order of God's worship was overthrown, and the Psalmist complains, in the name of the Church at large, of the taunts which the enemy east upon the name of God, addressing at the same time a word of comfort to his people under their captivity, to cheer them with the hope of deliverance.

Psalm 137:1-4

1. By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, we even wept when we remembered thee, O Zion! **2.** We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. **3.** Then they that carried us away captive required of us the words of a song, and mirth when we were in suspense, saying, Sing to us one of the songs of Zion. **4.** How shall we sing Jehovah's song in a foreign land?

1. *By the rivers of Babylon* [178] *there we sat down* I have elsewhere said, that it is a great mistake to suppose that it is David who here prophetically apprises the people of God of the captivity which should come upon them. The Prophets in speaking of future events employ very different language. What is brought under notice is the event as now historically come, and matter of experience. We shall briefly explain the scope of the Psalmist. There was danger that the Jews when cast off in such a melancholy manner should lose hold altogether of their faith and of their religion. Considering how ready we are, when mixed up with the wicked and ungodly, to fall into superstition or evil practices, it was to be feared that they might wax profane amongst the population of Babylon. The people of the Lord might be thrown into despondency, besides, by their captivity, the cruel bondage they were subjected to, and the other indignities which they had to endure. The writer of this Psalm, whose name is unknown, drew up a form of lamentation, that by giving expression to their sufferings in sighs and prayers, they might keep alive the hope of that deliverance which they despaired of. Another end he has in view, is to warn them against, the decline of godliness in an irreligious land, and against; defilement with the contaminations of the heathen. Accordingly he denounces merited judgment upon the children of Edom, and declares that Babylon, whose prosperity, shortlived as it was destined to be in itself, eclipsed at that time the rest of the world, was an object of pity, and near to destruction. The length of time during which the captivity lasted, may of itself convince us how useful and even necessary it must have been to support the fainting minds of God's people. They must have been ready to acquiesce in the corrupt practices of the heathen, unless endued with surprising mental fortitude through a period of seventy years.

178 By "Babylon" is meant, not the city, but the kingdom; and the mention of rivers, according to the suggestion of Rosenmuller, is because the synagogues were usually built near rivers, for the greater convenience of the Jews, who were obliged to wash their hands before prayer. But as they had no synagogues in Babylon, they might frequent such localities as would, be suitable sites for places of worship, and there in the open air perform divine service. It is conjectured by Chrysostom that the Jewish captives were not suffered at first to dwell in any of their conquerors' towns or cities, but were dispersed all along several rivers of the country, where they built for themselves tabernacles or cottages.

When they are said to have *sat,* this denotes a continued period of captivity, that they were not only torn from the sight of their native country, but in a manner buried and entombed. [179] The demonstrative adverb of place, ⌧⌧, *sham, there,* is emphatical, setting the subject, as it were, before the eyes of the reader. Though the pleasantness of the country, irrigated by streams, might have had an effect in soothing their dejected minds, we are told that the Lord's people, so long as they dwelt there, were continually in tears. The particle ⌧⌧, *gam, even,* is used as being intensative, to let us know that the true fearers of the Lord could not be tempted by all the luxuries of Babylon to forget their native inheritance. The language is such as to intimate at the same time that they were not so entirely overwhelmed by their calamities as not to recognize in them the deserved chatisement of God, and that they were not chargeable with obstinately struggling against him; for tears are the expression of humility and penitence, as well as of distress. This appears still more plainly from its being *Zion* they remembered, which proves that what had charms for them was not any advantage of a worldly kind they might there enjoy:, but the worship of God. God had erected his sanctuary like a flag upon mount Zion, that as often as they looked to it, they might be assured of his salvation. Fair then and fertile as was the region where they dwelt, with charms which could corrupt effeminate minds, and long as they 'were detained in it, tears, which are proverbially soon dried up, never ceased to stream from their eyes, because they were cut off from the worship of God, upon which they 'were wont to attend, and felt that they were torn from the inheritance of promise.

2. *We hanged our harps upon the willows* [180] He deplores the suspension of the songs of praise, which God had enjoined in his Temple. The Levites were set over the department

179 It may also be observed that sitting on the ground is a posture which indicates mourning and deep distress. Thus it is said in Isaiah 3:26, where the captivity of the Jews in Babylon is foretold, "And she [Judea] being desolate shall sit upon the ground." And the Prophet Jeremiah, in portraying the sorrow which afflicted his pious and patriotic countrymen under the desolation of their country, says, "The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground and keep silence." (Lamentations 2:10) "We find Judea," says Mr. Addison, "on several coins of Vespasian and Titus in a posture that denotes sorrow and captivity. I need not mention her sitting on the ground, because we have already spoken of the aptness of such a posture to represent an extreme affliction. I fancy the Romans might have an eye on the customs of the Jewish nation, as well as those of their own country, in the several marks of sorrow they have set on this figure. The Psalmist describes the Jews lamenting their captivity in the same pensive posture: 'By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Zion!'" — *Addison on Medals,* Dial. 2.

180 "On the banks of the Babylonian rivers (say the Euphrates and Tigris) there are no woods or forests, or any considerable trees besides the cultivated date-palm. But these rivers are in some parts rather extensively lined with a growth of tall shrubs and bushes, interspersed with some small, and a few middling trees, amongst which the willow is at this day the most frequet and remarkable." — *Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible.* Hence Isaiah 15:7 calls the Euphrates "the brook *or* river of willows."

of singing, and led the way among the people in this devotional exercise. Is it asked how they had carried their harps with them so far from their native land, we have in this another proof mentioned by the Psalmist of their faith and fervent piety, for the Levites when stripped of all their fortunes had preserved their harps at least as a piece of precious furniture, to be devoted to a former use when opportunity presented itself. We may suppose that those who truly feared God put a high value upon the relics of his worship, and showed the greatest care in preserving them, till the period of their restoration. [181] When *willows* are mentioned, this denotes the pleasantness of the banks, which were planted with willows for coolness. But the Psalmist says that these shades, however delightful, could not dispel a grief which was too deeply seated to admit of common consolations or refreshment. As they sat upon the banks of the rivers covered with the shadows of the trees, this was just the place where they might have been tempted to take up their harps, and soothe their griefs with song; but the Psalmist suggests that their minds were too heavily wounded with a sense of the displeasure of the Lord to deceive themselves with such idle sources of comfort. He would even go farther, and intimate that joy of a good and holy kind was at this time suspended. For though it was neither right nor well judged to encourage their grief, we cannot wonder if the singing of praises in public was given up till their return from the captivity, called as they were by the chastisements of God to mourning and lamentation.

3. *Then they that carried us away captive, etc.* We may be certain that the Israelites were treated with cruel severity under this barbarous tyranny to which they were subjected. And the worst affliction of all was, that their conquerors reproachfully insulted them, and even mocked them, their design being less to wound the hearts of these miserable exiles, than to cast blasphemies upon their God. The Babylonians had no desire to hear their sacred songs, and very likely would not have suffered them to engage in the public praises of God, but they speak ironically, and insinuate it as a reproach upon the Levites that they should be silent, when it was their custom formerly to sing sacred songs. Is your God dead, as if they had said, to whom your praises were formerly addressed? Or if he delights in your songs, why do you not sing them? The last clause of the verse has been variously rendered by interpreters. Some derive ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, *tholalenu,* from the verb ⊠⊠⊠, *yalal, to howl,* reading — they required mirth *in our howlings.* Others translate it *suspensions of mirth.* [182] Some take it for a participle of the verb ⊠⊠⊠, *halal, to rage,* and read, *raging against us.* But as ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, *talinu,*

181 "It is probable that the Levites, (Ezra 2:40, 41,) who were the singers and the musicians of the temple, had taken their harps with them to Babylon, and that their captors, having heard of their skill in music, demanded of them a specimen of *it.*" — *Cresswell.*

182 "Others have it from. ⊠⊠⊠, *he suspended,* as thought, they demanded *joy on our suspended ones, i.e.,* harps which we had suspended from the willows." — *Bythner.*

the root of the noun here employed, is taken in the preceding verse as meaning *to suspend,* I considered the reading which I have adopted the simplest one.

4. *How shall we sing, etc*. The Psalmist puts a lofty and magnanimous answer into the mouth of the Lord's people to their insolent reproach, which is this, that they abstained from their songs, as from their legal sacrifices, because the land where they now were was polluted. The Chaldeans thought the Jews were bound down permanently to this place of their exile; the Psalmist, when he calls it *a foreign land,* suggests that it was but the place of their temporary stay. But the main idea is, that Chaldea was not worthy of the honor of having God's praises sung in it. No doubt the children of God wherever they have lived have always been strangers and foreigners in the world, but the land of Canaan was the sacred rest provided for them, and the Psalmist well describes them as being foreigners and sojourners when they were in other climes. He would in this way have them to be always ready and prepared for their return, tacitly enforcing what Jeremiah had prophesied, when, in order to prevent them from forgetting their native country, he had definitely foretold the time during which their exile should last, (Jeremiah 25:11; Jeremiah 29:10.) He would in the meantime animate them to constancy, and have them not to coalesce with the Babylonians through motives of fear. In our own day under the Papacy, great as the danger may be to which the faithful expose themselves by not conforming to the example around them, the Holy Spirit makes use of such a barrier as this to separate them from sinful compliances. [183] To those, whether Frenchmen, Englishmen, or Italians, who love and practice the true religion, even their native country is a foreign clime when they live under that tyranny. And yet there is a distinction between us and God's ancient people, for at that time the worship of God was confined to one place, but now he has his Temple wherever two or three are met together in Christ's name, if they separate themselves from all idolatrous profession, and maintain purity of divine worship. The Psalmist by the language which he employs would by no means put down every attempt on their part to celebrate God's praises. He rather exhorts them under their affliction to wait with patience till the liberty of publicly worshipping God was restored, saying' upon the matter — We have been bereft of our Temple and sacrifices, we wander as exiles in a polluted land, and what remains but that in remembrance of our outcast state we should sigh and groan for the promised deliverance.

183 "Toutesfois le Sainct Esprit leur met ia comme une barre pour les separer de toute simulation perverse, comme aussi elle emporteroit impiete." — *Fr.*

Psalm 137:5-9

5. If I shall forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right had forget. [184] **6.** Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not, if I set not Jerusalem over the head of all my joy. **7.** Remember, O Jehovah! the children or Edom, in the day of Jerusalem, saying, Lay it bare, lay it bare even to the foundation thereof. **8.** O daughter of Babylon laid waste. [185] happy he who shall pay thee back the retribution wherewith thou retributedst us! **9.** Happy he who shall take and dash thy little ones upon the stones. [186]

5. *If I shall forget thee, O Jerusalem!* This confirms what was said in the former verse, and leaves us in no difficulty to understand what the Psalmist meant by it. For here God's people declare, and with the solemnity of an oath, that the remembrance of the holy city

184 *Let my right hand forget* The sentence ends abruptly, and some supplementary word is necessary to render it complete. The Chaldee version, by altering the person of the verb, has avoided the ellipsis, *May I forget, my right hand.* The Syriac reads, *May my right hand forget.me.* The Septuagint has a passive verb, viz., ἐπιλησθείν, as if the original were ⊠⊠⊠. Calvin, in his Commentary, makes the same supplement as the translators of our English Bible — *Let my right hand forget its cunning;* and the correctness of this view is supported by the following verse, where we have, *Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,* etc. The object of both verses is to express a deep, heart-felt interest in Jerusalem; and should he lose that interest, the Psalmist wishes that the two members of the body, by which both instrumental and vocal music are performed, may be rendered incapable of doing their work — that the tongue may be unable to utter, and the right hand may forget the art of playing, or *its cunning.* "There here is a striking and appropriate point in this which has been overlooked. It is, that as it is customary for people in the East to swear by their possessions, so one who has no possessions — who is poor and destitute, and has nothing of recognised value in the world — swears by his right hand, which is his whole stake in society, trod by the 'cunning' of which he earns his daily bread. Hence the common Arabic proverb, (given by Burckhardt, No. 550,) reflecting on the change of demeanour produced by improved circumstances: 'He was wont to swear by *the cutting off of his right hand!* He now swears by 'the giving of money to the poor.'" — *Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible.*

185 Bishop Horsley translates, "O daughter of Babylon, that delightest in destruction."

186 "This is *not* the language of *imprecation,* but of *prophecy,* and predicts the horrors which would accompany the taking and sacking of the city of Babylon; and amongst these the atrocious cruelty of 'dashing the children against the stones.' (See Isaiah 13:16; Jeremiah 51:62; Hosea 13:16.) Homer mentions the unnatural practice as not uncommon in ancient times — 'Infants dashed
Against the ground, in dire hostility.'
— I1, 22 5 63." — Warner. "Happy he," etc., is merely declarative of the general opinion which would be reputed happy, would be celebrated as having done good service in the world, by destroying a power so universally hated for its oppression.

would be ever engra-yen upon their hearts, and never, under any circumstances, effaced. Having spoken of song, and of the instruments of music, the Psalmist's appeal is made in terms which corre-spond — that *his hand would forager* its cunning, and *his tongue cleave to his palate,* or *the roof of his mouth* The meaning' is, that the Lord's people, while they mourn under personal trials, should be still more deeply affected by public calamities which befall the Church, it being' reasonable that the zeal of God's house should have the highest place in our hearts, and rise above all mere private considerations. The second part of the sixth verse some interpret — If this be not my chief joy to see Jerusalem once more in a flourishing condition. Others — Joy will never enter my heart more, till I be gladdened by the Church's restoration. Both meanings are in my opinion comprehended in the words of the Psalmist. The one cannot be separated from the other; for if we set Jerusalem above our chiefest joy, the height of this joy must arise from the consideration of its prosperity, and, if this be the case, the grief we feel under its calamities will be such as effectually to shut out all worldly joys.

7. *Remember, O Jehovah! the children of Edom* Vengeance was to be executed upon the other neighboring nations which had conspired to destroy Jerusalem, so that they are all doubtless included here under the children of Edom, who are specified, a parr, for the whole, either because they showed more hatred and cruelty than the rest, or that theirs were not so easily borne, considering that they were brethren, and of one blood, being the posterity of Esau, and that the Israelites had, by God's commandment, spared the Edomites, when they devoted all beside them to destruction. (Deuteronomy 2:4.) It was, therefore, the height of cruelty in them to invite the Babylonians to destroy their own brethren, or fan the flames of their hostility. We are to notice, however, that the Psalmist does not break forth into these awful denunciations unadvisedly, but as God's herald, to confirm former prophecies. God both by Ezekiel and Jeremiah had predicted that he would punish the Edomites, (Ezekiel 25:13; Jeremiah 49:7; and Lamentations 4:21,22) and Obadiah distinctly gives the reason, answerable to what is here stated — that they had conspired with the Babylonians. (Obadiah 1:11.) We know that God intended in this way to comfort and support the minds of the people under a calamity so very distressing, as that Jacob's election might have seemed to be rendered frustrate, should his descendants be treated with impunity in such a barbarous manner, by the posterity of Esau. The Psalmist prays, under the inspiration of the Spirit, that God would practically demonstrate the truth of this prediction. Anti when he says, *Remember, O Jehovah!* he would remind God's people of the promise to strengthen their belief in his avenging justice, and make them wait for the event with patience and submission. To pray for vengeance would have been unwarrantable, had not God pro-raised it, and had the party against whom it was sought not been reprobate and incurable; for as to others, even our greatest enemies, we should wish their amendment and reformation. The *day of*

Jerusalem,, is a title given by him, and of frequent occurrence in Scripture, to the time of visitation, which had a divinely appointed and definite term.

8. *O daughter of Babylon* [187] *laid waste!* The Psalmist discerns the coming judgment of God, though not yet apparent, by the eye of faith, as the Apostle well calls faith "the beholding of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1.) Incredible as it might appear that any calamity should overtake so mighty an empire as Babylon then was, and impregnable as it was generally considered to be, he sees in the glass of the Word its destruction and overthrow. He calls upon all God's people to do the same, and by faith from the elevation of heaven's oracles, to despise the pride of that abandoned city. If the divine promises inspire us with hope and confidence, and God's Spirit attemper our afflictions to the rule of his own uprightness, we shall lift up our heads in the lowest depths of affliction to which we may be east down, and glory in the fact that it is well with us in our worst distresses, and that our enemies are devoted to destruction. In declaring those to be happy who should *pay back vengeance upon the Babylonians,* he does not mean that the service done by the Medes and Persians, in itself met with the approbation of God; [188] for they were actuated in the war by ambition, insatiable covetousness, and unprincipled rivalry; but he declares that a war which was carried on in a manner under God's auspices, should be crowned with success. As God had determined to punish Babylon, he pronounced a blessing upon Cyrus and Darius, while on the other hand Jeremiah (Jeremiah 48:10) declares those cursed who should do the work of the Lord negligently, that is, fail in strenuously carrying out the work of desolation and destruction, to which God had called them as his hired executioners. It may seem to savor of cruelty, that he should wish the tender and innocent infants to be dashed and mangled upon the stones, but he does not speak under the impulse of personal feeling, and only employs words which God had himself authorized, so that this is but the declaration of a just judgment, as when our Lord says,

"With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matthew 7:2.)

Isaiah (Isaiah 13:16) had issued a special prediction in reference to Babylon, which the Psalmist has doubtless here in his eye — "Behold God has sharpened the iron, and bent the bows; he sends forth the Medes and Persians, which shall not regard silver and gold; they shall thirst for blood only," etc.

187 *Daughter of Babylon* denotes the inhabitants of the Babylonish empire. The inhabitants of a city or kingdom are frequently spoken of in Scripture as its daughter. (See Psalm 45:13; Isaiah 47:1; Zechariah 9:9.)

188 "Il n'entend pas que le service des Perses et Medes ait este agreable a Dieu," etc. — *Fr.*

PSALM 138

In this Psalm David, in remembrance of the singular help which had always been vouchsafed him by God — the experience he had enjoyed of his faithfulness and goodness, takes occasion to stir himself up to gratitude; and from what he had known of the divine faithfulness, he anticipates a continuance of the same mercy. If dangers must be met, he confidently looks for a happy issue.

A Psalm of David.

Psalm 138:1-5

1. I will praise thee [189] with my whole heart, before the gods [190] will I sing psalms to thee. **2.** I will worship thee towards the temple of thy holiness, and sing unto thy name for thy mercy and for thy truth; for thou hast magnified thy name above all things by thy word. **3.** In the day when I cried to thee then thou answeredst me, and hast abundantly ministered strength to me in my soul. **4.** Let all kings of the earth praise thee, O Jehovah! because they have heard the words of thy mouth. **5.** And let theta sing in [191] the walls of Jehovah, for great is the glory of Jehovah.

1. *I will praise thee with my whole heart* As David had been honored to receive distinguishing marks of the divine favor, he declares his resolution to show more than ordinary gratitude. This is exercise which degenerates and is degraded in the case of hypocrites to a mere sound of empty words, but he states that he would return thanks to God not with the lips only, but with sincerity of heart, for by the *whole heart,* as we have elsewhere seen, is meant a heart which is sincere and not double. The noun ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *Elohim,* sometimes means *angels,* and sometimes *kings,* and either meaning will suit with the passage before us. The praise David speaks of is that which is of a public kind. The solemn assembly is, so to speak, a heavenly theater, graced by the presence of attending angels; and one reason why the cherubim overshadowed the Ark of the Covenant was to let God's people know that the angels are present when they come to worship in the sanctuary. We might very properly apply what is said here to *kings,* on account of their eminence in rank, as in Psalm 107:32, "Praise ye the Lord in the assembly of the elders" — that is, as we should say, in an assembly of an honored and illustrious kind. But I prefer the former sense, and this because believers in drawing near to God are withdrawn from the world, and rise to heaven in the enjoyment

189 Here "O Jehovah" is to be understood. Though it is not in the received Hebrew text, it was found in six copies examined by Dr. Kennicott, and in eight examined by De Rossi. The Septuagint, Arabic, Vulgate, and AEthiopic versions add" Jehovah" after the verb for "praise." "The omission of the Divine name," says Jebb, in his Translation of the Psalms, "in a passage like this, at the beginning of the Psalm, is altogether unexampled."

190 By the Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *Elohim,* translated *gods,* Calvin understands "angels" or "kings," but particularly the former. It is however proper to observe that ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *Elohim,* is one of the names applied to the Supreme Being in the sacred volume, and therefore some critics translate "before God," which they explain as meaning "before the ark," where were the sacred symbols of his presence. If after the Hebrew word for "before," we should suppose "thee" to be understood, the reading would be "before thee, *or* in thy presence, O God! will I sing praise unto thee."

191 Phillips observes that the force of ⊠, *beth,* seems to be that of *concerning:* — "'The kings of the earth shall sing concerning the ways of the Lord,' how that they are good and merciful."

of fellowship with angels, so that we find Paul enforcing his address to the Corinthians upon the necessity of decency and order, by requiring them to show some respect at least in their public religious assemblies to the angels. (1 Corinthians 11:10.) The same thing was represented by God long before, under the figure of the cherubim, thus giving his people a visible pledge of his presence.

2. *I will worship towards the temple* [192] *of thy holiness. H*e intimates that he would show more than private gratitude, and, in order to set an example before others, come in compliance with the precept of the law into the sanctuary. He worshipped God spiritually, and yet would lift his eyes to those outward symbols which were the means then appointed for drawing the minds of God's people upwards. He singles out the divine mercy and truth as the subject of his praise, for while the power and greatness of God are equally worthy of commendation, nothing has a more sensible influence in stimulating us to thanksgiving than his free mercy; and in communicating to us of his goodness he opens our mouth to sing his praises. As we cannot taste, or at least have any lively apprehensions in our souls of the divine mercy otherwise than through the word, mention is made of his faithfulness or truth. This coupling of mercy with truth is to be particularly taken notice of, as I have frequently observed, for however much the goodness of God may appear to us in its effects, such is our insensibility that it will never penetrate our minds, unless the word have come to us in the first place. Goodness is first mentioned, because the only ground upon which God shows himself to us as true is his having bound himself by his free promise. And it is in this that his unspeakable mercy shows itself — that he prevents those with it who were at a distance from him, and invites them to draw near to him by condescending to address them in a familiar manner. In the end of the verse some supply the copulative, and read — *Thou hast magnified thy name and thy word above all things* [193] This learned interpreters have rejected as a meagre rendering, and yet have themselves had recourse to what I consider a forced interpretation, *Thou hast magnified thy name above all thy word* I am satisfied David means to declare that God's name is exalted above all things, specifying the particular

192 This Psalm is entitled "a Psalm of David," and Calvin considers him to be its author agreeably to the title; lint the mention of "the temple" in the second verse seems to render such an opinion doubtful. If, however, we translate this word by "mansion," which is the proper rendering of the original — "the mansion of thy sanctity:" this objection to its composition by David falls to the ground. In the Septuagint version the title of this Psalm is, "A Psalm of David; of Haggai and Zechariah, when they were dispersed," (comp. Ezra 5:1); meaning a Psalm of David, used by Haggai and Zechariah.

193 According to this mode of rendering the passage ⊠⊠, *cal,* the word for *all,* is independent of ⊠⊠⊠, *shimcha,* the word for *thy name.* But "it has been properly observed by Aben Ezra, that ⊠⊠ in this case should have a Cholem, and not a Kametz Chateph, with which it is found in all copies. Besides, this translation is not supported by any of the ancient versions." — *Phillips.*

manner in which he has exalted his name, by faithfully performing his free promises. Nor can any doubt that owing to our blind insensibility to the benefits which God bestows upon us, the best way in which he can awaken us to the right notice of them is by first addressing his word to us and then certifying and sealing his goodness by accomplishing what he has promised.

3. *In the day when I cried to thee,* etc. Frequently God prevents our prayers, and surprises us, as it were, sleeping: but commonly he stirs us up to prayer by the influence of his Spirit, and this to illustrate his goodness the more by our finding that he crowns our prayers with success. David well infers that his escape front danger could not have been merely fortuitous, as it plainly appeared that God had answered him. This then is one thing noticeable, that our prayers more nearly discover his goodness to us. Some supply a copulative in the second part of the verse — Thou *hast increased me, and in my soul is strength.* But this is not called for, since the words read well enough as they stand, whether we render the passage as I have done above, or translate it, *Thou hast multiplied,* or *increased, me with strength in my soul.* The sense, is, That from a weak and afflicted state he had received fresh strength to his spirit Or some may, perhaps, prefer resolving it thus: Thou hast multiplied — that is, blest me, whence strength in my soul.

4. *Let all kings of the earth praise thee* Here he declares that the goodness he had experienced would be extensively known, and the report of it spread over all the world. In saying that even kings had heard the words of God's mouth, he does not mean to aver that they had been taught in the true religion so as to be prepared for becoming members of the Church, but only that it would be well known everywhere that the reason of his having been preserved in such a wonderful manner was God's having anointed him king by his commandment. [194] Thus although the neighboring kings reaped no advantage by that divine oracle, the goodness of God was illustrated by its being universally known, by his being called to the throne in an extraordinary manner. Having uniformly during the whole period of Saul's severe and bloody persecution declared that he raised his standard in God's name, there could be no doubt that he came to the crown by divine will and commandment. And this was a proof of divine goodness which might draw forth an acknowledgment even from heathen kings.

194 "Sed hoc ubique fore notum, non alia de causa mirabiliter servatum fuisse a Deo, nisi quod ejus mandate unctus fuerat in Regem." — *Lat.*

Psalm 138:6-8

6. Because Jehovah the exalted will yet have respect to the lowly, and being high will know afar off, [or, will know afar off him that is high.] **7.** Should I will [195] in the midst of trouble thou wilt revive me: thou wilt put forth thy hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me. **8.** Jehovah will recompense upon me. [196] thy mercy, O Jehovah! is for ever; thou wilt not forsake the works of thine own hand.

6. *Because Jehovah the exalted,* etc. In this verse he passes commendation upon God's general government of the world. The thing of all others most necessary to be known is, that he is not indifferent to our safety; for though in words we are all ready to grant this, our disbelief of it is shown by the feat' we betray upon the slightest appearance of danger, and we would not give way to such alarm if we had a solid persuasion of our being under his fatherly protection. Some read, *Jehovah on high,* that is, he sits on his heavenly throne governing the world; but I prefer considering, that there is an opposition intended — that the greatness of God does not prevent his having' respect to the poor and humble ones of the earth. This is confirmed by what is stated in the second clause, That being highly exalted he recognises afar off, or from a distance. Some read ⊠⊠⊠, *gabah,* in the accusative case, and this gives a meaning to the words which answers well to the context, That God does not honor the high and haughty by looking near to them — that he despises them — while, with regard to the poor and humble, who might seem to be at a great distance from him, he takes care of them, as if they were near to him. By some the verb ⊠⊠⊠, *yada,* is rendered, *to crush,* and they take the meaning to be, that God, while he favors the lowly, treads down the mighty who glory in their prosperity. There is reason to doubt, however, whether any such refinement of meaning is to be attached to David's words, and it is enough to conclude, that he here repeats the same sentiment formerly expressed, that God though highly exalted, takes notice of what might be thought to escape his observation. Thus we have seen, (Psalm 113:6,)

"The Lord dwelleth on high, yet he humbleth himself to behold both the things that are in heaven and on earth."

The meaning is, that though God's glory is far above all heavens, the distance at which he is placed does not prevent his governing the world by his providence. God is highly exalted, but he sees after off, so that he needs not change place when he would condescend to take care of us. We on our part are poor and lowly, but our wretched condition is; no reason why God will not concern himself about us. While we view with admiration the immensity of his glory as raised above all heavens, we must not disbelieve his willingness to foster us

195 "*Though I walk — an* Hebraism for *though I am.*" — *Cresswell.*

196 "Parfera en moy *son oeuvre.*" — *Fr.* "Will perform in me *his work.*"

under his fatherly care. The two things are, with great propriety, conjoined here by David, that, on the one hand, when we think of God's majesty we should not be terrified into a forgetfulness of his goodness and benignity, nor, on the other, lose our reverence for his majesty in contemplating the condescension of his mercy. [197]

7. *Should I walk in the midst of trouble, etc.* Here David declares the sense in which he looked flint God would act the part of his preserver — by giving him life from the dead, were that necessary. The passage is well deserving our attention for by nature we are so delicately averse to suffering as to wish that we might all live safely beyond shot of its arrows, and shrink from close contact with the fear of death, as something altogether intolerable. On the slightest approach of danger we are immoderately afraid, as if our emergencies precluded the hope of Divine deliverance. This is faith's true office, to see life in the midst of death, and to trust the mercy of God — not as that which will procure us universal exemption from evil, but as that which will quicken us in the midst of death every moment of our lives; for God humbles his children under various trials, that his defense of them may be the more remarkable, and that he may show himself to be their deliverer, as well as their preserver. In the world believers are constantly exposed to enemies, and David asserts, that he will be safe under God's protection from all their machinations. He declares his hope of life to lie in this, that the hand of God was stretched out for his help, that hand which he knew to be invincible, and victorious over *every* foe. And from all this we are taught, that it is God's method to exercise his children with a continual conflict, that, having one foot as it were in the grave, they may flee with alarm to hide themselves under his wings, where they malt abide in peace. Some translate the particle ☒☒, *aph, also,* instead of *anger,* reading — *thou wilt also extend over mine; enemies,* etc. But I have followed the more commonly received sense, as both fuller and more natural.

8. *Jehovah will recompense upon me, etc.* The doubtfulness which attaches to the meaning of the verb ☒☒☒, *gamar,* throws an uncertainty over the whole sentence. Sometimes it signifies *to repay,* and, in general, *to bestow,* for it is often applied to free favors. [198] Yet the context would seem to require.another sense, since, when it is added as a reason, *that Jehovah's mercy is everlasting, and that he will not forsake the works of his hands,* the better sense would seem to be — *Jehovah will perform for me,* that is, will continue to show that he cares for my safety, and will fully perfect what he has begun. Having once been delivered by an act of Divine mercy, he concludes that what had been done would be perfected, as God's nature is unchangeable, and he cannot divest himself of that goodness which belongs to him. There can be no doubt that the way to maintain good hope in danger is to fix our eyes upon the

197 "Ne nons oste le goust de sa bonte, et benignite: d'autre part aussi afin que sa bonte par laquelle il daigne bien s'abbaisser jusques a nons, ne diminue rien de la reverence que nous devons a sa gloire." — *Fr.*

198 "Il signifie aucunefois Rendre, recompenser, et mesme generalement ottroyer," etc — *Fr.*

Divine goodness, on which our deliverance rests. God is under no obligation on his part, but when, of his mere good pleasure, he promises to interest himself in our behalf. David concludes with the best reason, from the eternity of the Divine goodness, that the salvation granted him would be of no limited and merely evanescent character. This he confirms still farther by what he adds, that it is impossible God should leave his work, as men may do, in an imperfect or unfinished state through lassitude or disgust. This David is to be understood as asserting in the same sense in which Paul declares, that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Romans 11:29.) Men may leave off a work for very slight reasons which they foolishly undertook from the first, and from which they may have been diverted through their inconstancy, or they may be forced to give up through inability what they enterprised above their strength; but nothing of this kind can happen with God, and, therefore, we have no occasion to apprehend that our hopes will be disappointed in their course towards fulfillment. Nothing but sin and ingratitude on our part interrupts the continued and unvarying tenor of the Divine goodness. What we firmly apprehend by our faith God will never take from us, or allow to pass out of our hands. When he declares that God perfects the salvation of his people, David would not encourage sloth, but strengthen his faith and quicken himself to the exercise of prayer. What is the cause of that anxiety and fear which are felt by the godly, but the consciousness of their own weakness and entire dependence upon God? At the same time they rely with full certainty upon the grace of God, "being confident," as Paul writes to the Philippians,

"that he who has begun the good work will perform it till the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6.)

The use to be made of the doctrine is, to remember, when we fall or are disposed to waver in our minds, that since God has wrought the beginning of our salvation in us, he will carry it forward to its termination. Accordingly, we should betake ourselves to prayer, that we may not, through our own indolence, bar our access to that continuous stream of the divine goodness which flows from a fountain that is inexhaustible.

PSALM 139

In this Psalm David, that he may dismiss the deceptive coverings under which most men take refuge, and divest himself of hypocrisy, insists at large upon the truth that nothing can elude the divine observation — a truth which he illustrates from the original formation of man, since he who fashioned us in our mother's womb, and imparted to every member its particular office and function, cannot possibly be ignorant of our actions. Quickened by this meditation to a due reverential fear of God, he declares himself to have no sympathy with the ungodly and profane, and beseeches God, in the confidence of conscious integrity, not to forsake him in this life. [199]

199 This Psalm has often been admired for the grandeur of its sentiments, the elevation of its style, as well as the variety and beauty of its imagery. Bishop Lowth, in his 29th Prelection, classes it amongst the Hebrew idyls, as next to the 104th, in respect both to the conduct of the poem, and the beauty of the style. "If it be excelled," says he, "(as perhaps it is) by the former in the plan, disposition, and arrangement of the matter, it is not in the least inferior in the dignity and elegance of its sentiments, images, and figures." "Amongst its other excellencies," says Bishop Mant, "it is for nothing more admirable than for the exquisite skill with which it descants on the perfections of the Deity. The Psalmist's faith in the omnipresence and omniscience of Jehovah is in the commencement depicted · with a singular and beautiful variety of the most lively expressions: nor can anything be more sublime than that accummulation of the noblest and loftiest images, in the 7th and following verses, commensurate with the limits of created nature, whereby the Psalmist labors to impress upon the mind some notion of the infinity of God." If we compare this sacred poem with any hymn of classical antiquity in honor of the heathen deities, the immense superiority of the sentiments it contains must convince any reasonable person that David and the Israelites, though inferior in other respects to some other nations, surpassed them in religious knowledge. No philosopher of ancient times ever attained to such sublime views of the perfections and moral government of God as the Hebrew Prophets. How are we to account for this difference but on the supposition of the divine origin of the religion of the Hebrews? On any other supposition these Psalms are a greater miracle than any of those recorded by Moses. Bishop Horsley refers the composition of this Psalm to a later age than that of David. "The frequent Chaldaisms," says he, "of the diction, argue no very high antiquity." Dr. Adam Clarke, on the same ground, argues that it was; not written by the sweet singer of Israel, but during or after the time of the captivity. Other critics, however, maintain that the several Chaldaisms to be found in it afford no foundation for such an opinion. "How any critic," says Jebb, "*can* assign this Psalm to other than David, I cannot understand. Every line, every thought, every turn of expression and transition is his, and his only. As for the arguments drawn from the two Chaldaisms which occur, (□□□□ for □□□□, and □□□□ for □□□□,) this is really nugatory. These Chaldaisms consist merely in the substitution of one letter for another very like it in shape, and easily to be mistaken by a transcriber, particularly by one who had been used to the Chaldee idiom: but the moral arguments for David's author-ship are so strong as to overwhelm.'my such verbal or rather *literal* criticism, were even the objections more formidable than they actually are." — *Jebb's Literal Translation of the Psalms,* etc., volume 2.

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David.

Psalm 139:1-6

1. O Jehovah! thou hast searched me, and knowest me. **2.** Thou hast known my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. **3.** Thou besiegest my path, and my lying clown, and art acquainted with all my ways. **4.** For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo! O Lord! Thou knowest it altogether. **5.** Thou hast shut me up behind and before, and hast laid thine hand upon me. **6.** Thy knowledge is wonderful above me: [200] it is high, I cannot attain to it.

1. *O Jehovah! thou hast searched me* David declares, in the outset of this Psalm, that he does not come before God with any idea of its being possible to succeed by dissimulation, as hypocrites will take advantage of secret refuges to prosecute sinful indulgences, but that he voluntarily lays bare his innermost heart for inspection, as one convinced of the impossibility of deceiving God. It is thine, he says, O God! to discover every secret thought, nor is there anything which can escape thy notice, He then insists upon particulars, to show that his whole life was known to God, who watched him in all his motions — when he slept, when he arose, or when he walked abroad. The word ⌧⌧, *rea,* which we have rendered *thought,* signifies also a *friend* or *companion,* on which account some read — *thou knowest what is nearest me afar* off, a meaning more to the point than any other, if it could be supported by example. The reference would then be very appropriately to the fact that the most distant objects are contemplated as near by God. Some for *afar off* read *beforehand,* in which signification the Hebrew word is elsewhere taken, as if he had said — O Lord, every thought which I conceive in my heart is already known to thee beforehand. But I prefer the other meaning, That God is not confined to heaven, indulging in a state of repose, and indifferent to human concerns, according to the Epicurean idea, and that however far off we may be from him, he is never far off from us.

The verb ⌧⌧⌧, *zarah,* means to *winnow* as well as to *compass,* so that we may *very* properly read the third verse — *thou winnowest my ways,* [201] a figurative expression to denote

200 "C'est par dessus moy et ma capacite." — *Fr. Marg.* "That is, above me and my capacity."

201 Piscator, Campensis, Pagninus, Luther, and our English Version, read "thou compassest." This no doubt gives the meaning, of the original, though not the precise idea, which is noticed on the margin of our English Bible to be "winnowest." *The* verb ⌧⌧⌧, *zarah,* employed, signifies *to disperse, to fan, to ventilate, to winnow;* and here it denotes that as men separate the corn from the chaff, so God separates between, or investigates, the good and the bad in the daily conduct of men. Hence the Septuagint reads ἐξιχνίασας, "thou hast investigated." Bishop Hare, who renders "thou dost compass," supposes it to be a metaphor taken from hunting. "Winnowing," says Archbishop Secker," would sound uncouth But Mudge hath hit on the word *siftest,* which, though an idea somewhat different, suits very well."

the bringing of anything which is unknown to light. The reader is left to his own option, for the other rendering which I have adopted is also.appropriate. There has been also a difference of opinion amongst interpreters as to the last clause of the verse. The verb ⊠⊠⊠, *sachan,* in the Hiphil conjugation, as here, signifies to *render successful,* which has led some to think that David here thanks God for crowning his actions with success; but this is a sense which does not at all suit the scope of the Psalmist in the context, for he is not speaking of thanksgiving. Equally forced is the meaning given to the words by others — Thou hast made me to get acquainted or accustomed with my ways; [202] as if he praised God for being endued with wisdom and counsel. Though the verb be in the Hiphil, I have therefore felt no hesitation in assigning it a neuter signification — Lord, thou art accustomed to my ways, so that they are familiar to thee.

4. *For there is not a word, etc*. The words admit a double meaning. Accordingly some understand them to imply that God knows what, we are about to say before the words are formed on our tongue; others, that though we speak not a word, and try by silence to conceal our secret intentions, we cannot elude his notice. Either rendering amounts to the same thing, and it is of no consequence which we adopt. The idea meant to be conveyed is, that while the tongue is the index of thought to man, being the great medium of communication, God, who knows the heart, is independent of words. And use is made of the demonstrative particle *lo!* to indicate emphatically that the innermost recesses of our spirit stand present to his view.

In verse fifth some read — *behind and before thou hast fashioned me;* [203] but ⊠⊠⊠, *tsur,* often signifies *to shut up,* and David, there can be no doubt, means that he was surrounded on every side, and so kept in sight by God, that he could not escape in any quarter. One who finds the way blocked up turns back; but David found himself hedged in behind as well as before. The other clause of the verse has the same meaning; for those put a very forced interpretation upon it who think that it refers to God's fashioning us, and applying his hand in the sense of an artizan to his work; nor does this suit with the context. And it is much better to understand it as asserting that God by his hand, laid as it were upon men, holds

202 "Fecisti assuescere vias meas." — *Lat.*

203 Thus the Septuagint have ἔπλασάς με, *Thou hast formed me*. Similar is the rendering of the Syriac. Those who embrace this view take the verb, as if the root were ⊠⊠⊠, *yatsar.* "But," says Phillips, "it is certain that the root of ⊠⊠⊠⊠ must be ⊠⊠⊠, *to afflict, press, besiege.* Hence the meaning of the verse is, 'Thou hast so pressed upon, or besieged me, both behind and before, that I find there is no escaping from thee; *Thou hast placed thy hand* upon me, so that I am quite in thy power.' The whole passage is a figure, representing God's thorough knowledge of man." — *Phillips.* "*Thou besettest me behind and before, i.e.* thou knowest all my doings as perfectly as if I were begirt by thee on every *side.*" — *Cresswell.*

them strictly under his inspection, so that they cannot move a hair's breadth without his knowledge. [204]

6. *Thy knowledge is wonderful above me* Two meanings may be attached to ⌧⌧⌧⌧: *mimmenni.* We may read *upon me,* or, *in relation to me,* and understand David to mean that God's knowledge is seen to be wonderful in forming such a creature as man, who, to use an old saying', may be called a little world in himself; nor can we think without astonishment of the consummate artifice apparent in the structure of the human body, and of the excellent endowments with which the human soul is invested. But the context demands another interpretation; and we are to suppose that David, prosecuting the same idea upon which he had already insisted, exclaims against the folly of measuring God's knowledge by our own, when it rises prodigiously above us. Many when they hear God spoken of conceive of him as like unto themselves, and such presumption is most condemnable. Very commonly they will not allow his knowledge to be greater than what comes up to their own apprehensions of things. David, on the contrary, confesses it to be beyond his comprehension, virtually declaring that words could not express this truth of the absoluteness with which all things stand patent to the eye of God, this being a knowledge having' neither bound nor measure, so that he could only contemplate the extent of it with conscious imbecility.

204 "Comme mettant la main sur eux pour los arrester par le collet, ainsi qu'on dit, tellement qu'ils ne peuvent bouger le moins du monde qu'il ne le scache." — *Fr.*

Psalm 139:7-12

7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? rind whither shall flee from thy face? **8.** If I ascend up into heaters, thou art there; if I lie down in the sepulcher, lo! thou art there. **9.** Shall I take the wings of the morning, that I may dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea? **10.** Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. **11.** If I shall say; at least the darkness shall cover me, and the night shall be light for me; **12.** Even the darkness shall not hide from thee, and the night shall be lightened up as day, and darkness as the light.

7. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* I consider that David prosecutes the same idea of its being' impossible that men by any subterfuge should elude the eye of God. By the *Spirit of God* we are not here, as in several other parts of Scripture, to conceive of his power merely, but his understanding and knowledge. [205] In man the spirit is the seat of intelligence, and so it is here in reference to God, as is plain from the second part of the sentence, where by *the face of God* is meant his knowledge or inspection. David means in short that he could not change from one place to another without God seeing him, and following him with his eyes as he moved. They misapply the passage who adduce it as a proof of the immensity of God's essence; for though it be an undoubted truth that the glory of the Lord fills heaven and earth, this was not at present in the view of the Psalmist, but the truth that God's eye penetrates heaven and hell, so that, hide in what obscure corner of the world he might, he must be discovered by him. Accordingly he tells us that though he should fly to heaven, or lurk in the lowest abysses, from above or from below all was naked and manifest before God. *The wings of the morning,* [206] or of Lucifer, is a beautiful metaphor, for when the sun rises on the earth, it transmits its radiance suddenly to all regions of the world, as with the swiftness of flight. The same figure is employed in Malachi 4:2. And the idea is, that though one should fly with the speed of light, he could find no recess where he would be beyond the reach of divine power. For by *hand* we are to understand power, and the assertion is to the effect that should man attempt to withdraw from the observation of God, it were easy for him to arrest and draw back the fugitive. [207]

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205 Some commentators suppose the third person of the Trinity to be here referred to.

206 Or "of the dawn of the morning." ⌧⌧⌧, *shachar,* the word employed, "is the light which is seen in the clouds before the rising of the sun, and it is like as if it; had wings to fly with haste; for in a moment the dawn of the morning is spread over the horizon, from the end of the east to that of the west." — *Mendlessohn's Beor.*

207 Dathe understands *thy hand* of God's gracious presence to defend the Psalmist; and such may be the meaning of the words. But whether we take them in this sense, or according to Calvin, as expressing man's being under the power of God, in whatever part of the world he may be, they illustrate the divine omniscience, which Calvin regards as the chief design of the inspired writer.

11. *If I shall say,* etc. David represents himself as a man using every possible method to make his escape from a situation of embarrassment. So having acknowledged that it was vain to dream of flight, he bethinks himself of another remedy, and says, If no speed of mine can bear me out of the range of God's vision, yet, on the supposition of light being removed, the darkness might cover me, that I might have a short breath of respite. But this also he declares to be hopeless, as God sees equally well in the deepest darkness as at noon-day. It is a mistake in my opinion to consider, as some have done, that the two clauses of the verse are to be taken separately, and read, *If I shall say the darkness will cover me, even the night shall be as light before me* — meaning that darkness would be converted into light, and so though he saw nothing himself, he would stand manifest before the eye of God. David is rather to be considered as in both clauses expressing what he might be supposed to feel desirous of, and intimates that, could he only find any covert or subterfuge, he would avail himself of the license; [208] "if I shall say, at least the darkness will cover me, and the night be as light for me," that is, in the sense in which it is so to the robbers or wild beasts of the forest, who then range at greater liberty. That this is the proper construction of the words we may infer from the particle ⌧⌧, *gam.* If any one should 'think it a very unnecessary observation to say that as respects God there is no difference between light and darkness, it is enough to remind him that all observation proves with what reluctance and extreme difficulty men are brought to come forward openly and 'unreservedly into God's presence. In words we all grant that God is omniscient; meanwhile what none would ever think of controverting we secretly make no account of whatsoever, in so far as we make no scruple of mocking God, and lack even that reverence of him which we extend to one of our fellow-creatures. We are ashamed to let men know and witness our delinquencies; but we are as indifferent to what God may think of us, as if our sins were covered and veiled from his inspection. This infatuation if not sharply reproved will soon change light, so far as we are concerned, into darkness, and therefore David insists upon the subject at length in order to refute our false apprehensions. Be it our concern to apply the reproofs given, and stir ourselves up by them, when we feel disposed to become secure.

208 "C'est plustost que David prononcant ee propos selon son propre sentiment, entend que pourveu qu'il puisse estre par quelqne moyen couvert et cache, il aura quelque peu de bon temps," etc. — *Fr.*

Psalm 139:13-16

13. For thou hast possessed [209] my reins; thou hast covered me [210] in my mother's womb, **14.** I will praise thee; for I have been made wonderful terribly; marvellous are thy works, and my soul shall know them well. **15.** My strength is not hid from thee, [211] which thou hast made in secret: I was woven together in the lowest parts of the earth. **16.** Thine eyes did see my shapelessness; all are written in thy book, they were formed by days, and not one of them.

13. *For thou hast possessed my reins* Apparently he prosecutes the same subject, though he carries it out somewhat farther, declaring that we need not be surprised at God's knowledge of the most secret thoughts of men, since he formed their hearts and their reins. He thus represents God as sitting king in the very reins of man, as the center of his jurisdiction, and shows it ought to be no ground of wonder that all the windings and recesses of our hearts are known to him who, when we were inclosed in our mother's womb, saw us as clearly and perfectly as if we had stood before him in the light of mid-day. This may let us know the design with which David proceeds to speak of man's original formation, its scope is the same in the verse which follows, where, with some ambiguity in the terms employed, it is sufficiently clear and obvious that David means that he had been fashioned in a manner wonderful, and calculated to excite both fear and admiration, [212] so that he breaks forth

209 "The usual signification of ⊠⊠⊠ is, *to possess, to acquire;* but here it is thought to contain the notion of *forming,* or *creating.* The reason of this difference in the sense may be accounted for from the circumstance, that in Arabic there are two verbs to which ⊠⊠⊠ may correspond, viz., one *to possess,* and another *to form.* So in Genesis 14:19, God is said to be 'the *possessor* (⊠⊠⊠) of heaven and earth.' The Septuagint for ⊠⊠⊠, reads ὅς ἔκτισε, *who created,* and the Vulgate, *qui creavit* Again in Proverbs 8:22, for ⊠⊠⊠⊠ the Chaldee has ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, *hath begotten,* or *created me.* From these and other passages it is evident that ⊠⊠⊠ was supposed by the ancient interpreters to have the sense of *to form,* or *create;* and this meaning seems to be required in the verse before us, which comports with the next verb." — *Phillips.*

210 The "*covering*" here spoken of, is illustrated by Job 10:2, where God is said to have "clothed us with skin and flesh, and fenced us with bones and sinews." "A work so astonishing," observes Bishop Horne, "that before the Psalmist proceeds in his description of it, he cannot help breaking forth in rapture at the thought: 'I will praise thee, for! I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'"

211 "Ou, mon os n'est point cache de toy." — *Fr. marg.* "Or, my bone is not hid from thee."

212 "*Fearfully and wonderfully made* Never was so terse and expressive a description of the physical conformation of man given by any human being. So *fearfully* are we made, that there is not an action or gesture of our bodies, which does not, apparently, endanger some muscle, vein, or sinew, the rupture of which would destroy either life or health. We are so *wonderfully* made, that our organization infinitely surpasses, in skill, contrivance,

into the praises of God. One great reason of the carnal security into which we fall, is our not considering how singularly we were fashioned at first by our Divine Maker. From this particular instance David is led to refer in general to all the works of God, which are just so many wonders fitted to draw our attention to him. The true and proper view to take of the works of God, as I have observed elsewhere, is that which ends in wonder. His declaration to the effect that *his soul should well know* these wonders, which far transcend human comprehension, means no more than that with humble and sober application he would give his attention and talents to obtaining such an apprehension of the wonderful works of God as might end in adoring the immensity of his glory. The knowledge he means, therefore, is not that which professes to comprehend what, under the name of wonders, he confesses to be incomprehensible, nor of that kind which philosophers presumptuously pretend to, as if they could solve every mystery of God, but simply that religious attention to the works of God which excites to the duty of thanksgiving.

15. *My strength was not hid from thee* That nothing is hid from God David now begins to prove from the way in which man is at first formed, and points out God's superiority to other artificers in this, that while they must have their work set before their eyes before they can form it, he fashioned us in our mother's womb. It is of little importance whether we read *my strength* or *my bone,* though I prefer the latter reading. He next likens the womb of the mother to *the lowest caverns* or *recesses of the earth.* Should an artizan intend commencing a work in some dark cave where there was no light to assist him, how would he set his hand to it? in what way would he proceed? and what kind of workmanship would it prove? [213] But God makes the most perfect work of all in the dark, for he fashions man in mother's womb. The verb ⊠⊠⊠, *rakam,* which means *weave together,* [214] is employed to

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design, and adaptation of means to ends, the most curious and complicated piece of mechanism, not only ever executed 'by art and man's device, but ever conceived by the human imagination." — *Warner.*

213 "The figure," says Walford, "is derived from the darkness and obscurity of caverns and other recesses of the earth."

214 "⊠⊠⊠ is 'to embroider.'" — *Phillips.* Mant translates the verse thus: — "By all, but not by thee unknown,
My substance grew, and, o'er it thrown,
The fine-wrought web from nature's loom,
All wove in secret and in gloom." And after observing that the foetus is gradually formed and matured for the birth, like plants and flowers under ground, he adds — "The process is compared to that in a piece of work wrought with a needle, or fashioned in the loom: which, with all its beautiful variety of color, and proportion of figure, ariseth by degrees to perfection, under the hand of the artist, framed according to a pattern lying before him, from a rude mass of silk, or other materials. Thus, by the power and wisdom of God, and after a plan delineated in his book, is a shapeless mass wrought up into the most curious texture of nerves, veins, arteries, bones, muscles, membranes, and skin, most skilfully interwoven and connected with each other, until it becometh a body harmoniously diversified with all the limbs and lineaments of a man, not one of which at first appeared,

amplify and enhance what the Psalmist had just said. David no doubt means figuratively to express the inconceivable skill which appears in the formation of the human body. When we examine it, even to the nails on our fingers, there is nothing which could be altered, without felt inconveniency, as at something disjointed or put out of place; and what, then, if we should make the individual parts the subject of enumeration? [215] Where is the embroiderer who — with all his industry and ingenuity — could execute the hundredth part of this complicate and diversified structure? We need not then wonder if God, who formed man so perfectly in the womb, should have an exact knowledge of him after he is ushered into the world.

16. *Thine eyes beheld my shapelessness, etc.* The embryo, when first conceived in the womb, has no form; and David speaks of God's having known him when he was yet a shapeless mass, τὸ κύημα, as the Greeks term it; for τὸ εμβρυον is the name given to the foetus from the time of conception to birth inclusive. The argument is from the greater' to the less. If he was known to God before he had grown to certain definite shape, much less could he now elude his observation. He adds, that *all things were written in his book;* that is, the whole method of his formation was well known to God. The term *book* is a figure

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any more than the figures were to be seen in the ball of silk. But then, which is the chief thing here insisted on by the Psalmist, whereas the human artificer must have the clearest light whereby to accomplish his task, the divine work-master seeth in secret, and effecteth all his wonders within the dark and narrow confines of the womb." Bishop Lowth supposes that the full force and beauty of the metaphor in this passage will not be understood, unless it is perceived that the Psalmist alludes to the art of embroidery as consecrated by the Jews to sacred purposes, in decorating the garments of the priests and the curtains at the entrance of the tabernacle. "In that most perfect ode, Psalm 139," says he, "which celebrates the immensity of the omnipresent Deity, and the wisdom of the divine artificer in forming the human body, the author uses a metaphor derived from the most subtle art of Phrygian workmen: *'When I was formed in the secret place,*

W*hen I was wrought with a needle in the depths of the earth.* Whoever observes this, (in truth he will not be able to observe it in the common translations,)and at the same time reflects upon the wonderful mechanism of the human body, the various amplifications of the veins, arteries, fibres, and membranes; the 'indescribable texture' of the whole fabric; may indeed feel the beauty and gracefulness of this well-adapted metaphor, but will miss much of its force and sublimity, unless he be apprised that the art of designing in needle-work was wholly dedicated to the use of the sanctuary, and by a direct precept of the divine law, chiefly employed in furnishing' a part of the sacerdotal habits, and the veils for the entrance of the tabernacle. (Exodus 28:39; Exodus 26:36; Exodus 27:16; compare Ezekiel 16:10, 13, 18.) Thus the poet compares the wisdom of the divine artificer with the most estimable of human arts — that art which was dignified by being consecrated altogether to the use of religion; and the workmanship of which was so exquisite, that even the sacred writings seem to attribute it to a supernatural guidance. See Exodus 35:30-35 " — *Lowth's Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, volume* 1.

215 "Que sera-ce donc quand on viendra a contempler par le menu chacune partie?" — *Fr.*

taken from the practice common amongst men of helping their memory by means of books and commentaries. Whatever is an object of God's knowledge he is said to have registered in writing, for he needs no helps to memory. Interpreters are not agreed as to the second clause. Some read ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *yamim,* in the nominative case, *when days were made;* the sense being, according to them — All my bones were written in thy book, O God! from the beginning of the world, when days were first formed by thee, and when as *yet* none of them actually existed. The other is the more natural meaning, That the different parts of the human body are formed in a succession of time; for in the first germ there is no arrangement of parts, or proportion of members, but it is developed, and takes its peculiar form progressively. [216] There is another point on which interpreters differ. As in the particle ⊠⊠, *lo,* the ⊠, *aleph,* is often interchangeable with ⊠ *vau;* some read ⊠⊠, *to him,* and others ⊠⊠ *not.* According to the first reading, the sense is, that though the body is formed progressively, it was always one and the same in God's book, who is not dependent upon time for the execution of his work. A sufficiently good meaning, however, can be got by adhering' without change to the negative particle, namely, that though the members were formed in the course of days, or gradually, none of them had existed; no order or distinctness of parts having been there at first, but a formless substance. And thus our admiration is directed to the providence of God in gradually giving' shape and beauty to a confused mass. [217]

216 "*They* (my members) *have been daily formed,* or *forming.* They were not formed at once, but gradually; each day increasing in strength and size. This expression is probably parenthetical, so that the last words of the verse will refer to the writing of those things previously mentioned in God's register." — *Phillips.*

217 "The meaning is," says Warner, "there was a time when none of those curious parts, of which my form consists, existed. The germ of them all was planted by thee in the first instance; and gradually matured, by thy power, wisdom, and goodness, into that wonderful piece of mechanism which the human form exhibits." Phillips gives a different turn to the clause: "*And not one of them,* or among them, was omitted. Not one of the particulars concerning my formation has been left out of thy record."

Psalm 139:17-18

17. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great the sums of them!
18. If I should count them, they shall be multiplied above the sand: I have awaked, and am still with thee.

17. *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me* It is the same Hebrew word, ⊠⊠⊠, *reah,* which is used here as in the second verse, and means *thought,* not *companion* or *friend,* as many have rendered it, after the Chaldee translator, under the idea that the Psalmist is already condescending upon the distinction between the righteous and the wicked. The context requires that he should still be considered as speaking of the matchless excellence of divine providence. He therefore repeats — and not without reason — what he had said before; for we apparently neglect or underestimate the singular proofs of the deep wisdom of God, exhibited in man's creation, and the whole superintendence and government of his life. Some read — *How rare are thy thoughts;* but this only darkens the meaning. I grant we find that word made use of in the Sacred History, (1 Samuel 3:1,) where the oracles of the Lord are said to have been rare, in the time of Eli. But it also means *precious,* and it is enough that we retain the sense which is free from all ambiguity. He applies the term to God's thoughts, as not lying within the compass of man's judgment. To the same effect is what he adds that the *sums* or aggregates of them were great and mighty; that is, sufficient to overwhelm the minds of men. The exclamation made by the Psalmist suggests to us that were men not so dull of apprehension, or rather so senseless, they would be struck by the mysterious ways of God, and would humbly and tremblingly sit themselves before his tribunal, instead of presumptuously thinking that they could evade it. The same truth is set forth in the next verse, that if any should attempt to number the hidden judgments or counsels of God, their immensity is more than *the sands of the sea.* Our capacities conseqently could not comprehend the most infinitesimal part of them. As to what follows — *I have a waked, and am still with, thee,* interpreters have rendered the words differently; but I have no doubt of the meaning simply being that David found new occasion, every time he awoke from sleep, for meditating upon the extraordinary wisdom of God. When he speaks of rising, we are not to suppose he refers to one day, but agreeably to what he had said already of his thoughts being absorbed in the incomprehensible greatness of divine wisdom, he adds that every time *he awoke* he discovered fresh matter for admiration. We are thus put in possession of the true meaning of David, to the effect that God's providential government of the world is such that nothing can escape him, not even the profoundest thoughts. And although many precipitate themselves in an infatuated manner into all excess of crime, under the idea that God will never discover them, it is in vain that they resort to hiding-places, from which, however reluctantly, they must be dragged to light. The truth is one which we would do

well to consider more than we do, for while we may cast a glance at our hands and our feet, and occasionally survey the elegance of our shape with complacency, there is scarcely one in a hundred who thinks of his Maker. Or if any recognize their life as coming from God, there is none at least who rises to the great truth that he who formed the ear, and the eye, and the understanding heart, himself hears, and sees, and knows everything.

Psalm 139:19-24

19. If thou shalt slay, O God! the wicked, then depart from me, ye bloody men. **20.** Who have spoken of thee wickedly, thine adversaries have taken [thy name] falsely. **21.** Shall not I hold in hatred those that hate thee, O Jehovah! And strive with those that rise up against thee? **22.** I have hated them with perfect hatred; they were to me for enemies. [218] **23.** Search me, O God! and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; **24.** And know whether the way of wickedness be in me, and lead me throughout the way of this life. [219]

19. *If thou shalt slay,* etc. It is unnatural to seek, as some have done, to connect this with the preceding verse. Nor does it seem proper to view the words as expressing a wish — "I wish," or, "Oh! if thou God wouldst slay the wicked." Neither can I subscribe to the idea of those who think that David congratulates himself upon the wicked being cut off. The sentiment seems to me to be of another kind, that he would apply himself to the consideration of the divine judgments, and advance in godliness and in the fear of his name, so often as vengeance was taken upon the ungodly. There can be no question that God designs to make an example of them, that his elect ones may be taught by their punishment to withdraw themselves from their society. David was of himself well disposed to the fear and worship of God, and yet he needed a certain check, like other saints, as Isaiah says, (Isaiah 26:9,) "when God has sent abroad his judgments, the inhabitants of the earth shall learn righteousness," that is, to remain in the fear of the Lord. At the same time, I have no doubt that the Psalmist presents himself before God as witness of his integrity; as if he had said, that he came freely and ingenuously to God's bar, as not being one of the wicked despisers of his name, nor having any connection with them.

20. *Who have spoken of thee wickedly.* He intimates the extent to which the wicked proceed when God spares them, and forbears to visit them with vengeance. They not merely conclude that they may perpetrate any crime with impunity, but openly blaspheme their Judge. He takes notice of their *speaking wickedly,* in the sense of their taking no pains to disguise their sin under plausible pretences, as persons who have some shame remaining will exercise a certain restraint upon their language, but they make no secret of the contempt they entertain for God. The second clause, where he speaks of their taking God's name falsely, some have interpreted too restrictedly with reference to their sin of perjury. Those come nearer the truth who consider that the wicked are spoken of as taking God's name in vain, when they conceive of him according to their own idle fancies. We see from experience,

218 "Je les ay tenus pour mes ennemis." — *Fr.* "I have held them as my enemies."

219 "Via seculi." — *Lat.* "En la voye du siecle." — *Fr.* On the margin of the French Commentary there is the following note — "C'est, de ce monde;" — "That is, of this world."

that most men are ignorant of what God is, and judge of him rather as one dead than alive. In words they all acknowledge him to be judge of the world, but the acknowledgment comes to nothing, as they straightway denude him of his office of judgment, which is to take God's name in vain, by tarnishing the glory of it, and, in a manner, deforming it. But as *name* is not in the original, and ⌧⌧⌧, *nasa,* means *to lift Up,* or *on high,* I think we are warranted rather to interpret the passage as meaning', that they carried themselves with an arrogant and false pride. This elation or haughtiness of spirit is almost always allied with that petulance of which he had previously taken notice. What other reason can be given for their vending such poisonous rancour against God, but pride, and forgetfulness, on the one hand, of their own insignificance as men, and on the other, of the power which belongeth unto the Lord? On this account he calls them God's *adversaries,* for all who exalt themselves above the place which they should occupy, act the part of the giants who warred against heaven.

21. *Shall I not hold in hatred those that hate thee?* He proceeds to mention how greatly he had profited by the meditation upon God into which he had been led, for, as the effect, of his having realized his presence before God's bar, and reflected upon the impossibility of escaping the eye of him who searches all deep places, he now lays down his resolution to lead a holy and pious life. In declaring his hatred of those who despised God, he virtually asserts thereby his own integrity, not as being free from all sin, but as being devoted to godliness, so that he detested in his heart everything which was contrary to it. Our attachment to godliness must be inwardly defective, if it do not generate an abhorrence of sin, such as David here speaks of. If that zeal for the house of the Lord, which he mentions elsewhere, (Psalm 69:9,) burn in our hearts, it would be an unpardonable indifference silently to look on when his righteous law was violated, nay, when his holy name was trampled upon by the wicked. As to the last word in the verse, ⌧⌧⌧, *kut*, means *to dispute with,* or *contend,* and may be understood as here retaining' the same sense in the Hithpael conjugation, unless we consider David to have more particularly meant, that he inflamed himself so as to stir up his mind to contend with them. We thus see that he stood forward strenuously in defense of the glory of God, regardless of the hatred of the whole world, and waged war with all the workers of iniquity.

22. *I hate them with perfect hatred.* Literally it is, I hate them with perfection of hatred. He repeats the same truth as formerly, that such was his esteem for God's glory that he would have nothing' in common with those who despised him. He means in general that he gave no countenance to the works of darkness, for whoever connives at sin and encourages it through silence, wickedly betrays God's cause, who has committed the vindication of righteousness into our hands. David's example should teach us to rise with a lofty and bold spirit above all regard to the enmity of the wicked, when the question concerns the honor of God, and rather to renounce all earthly friendships than falsely pander with flattery to the favor of those who do everything to draw down upon themselves the divine displeasure.

We have the more need to attend to this, because the keen sense we have of what concerns our private interest, honor, and convenience, makes us never hesitate to engage in contest when any one injures ourselves, while we are abundantly timid and cowardly in defending the glory of God. Thus, as each of us studies his own interest and advantage, the only thing which incites us to contention, strife, and war, is a desire to avenge our private wrongs; none is affected when the majesty of God is outraged. On the other hand, it is a proof of our having a fervent zeal for God when we have the magnanimity to declare irreconcilable war with the wicked and them who hate God, rather than court their favor at the expense of alienating the divine layout. We are to observe, however, that the hatred of which the Psalmist speaks is directed to the sins rather than the persons of the wicked. We are, so far as lies in us, to study peace with all men; we are to seek the good of all, and, if possible, they are to be reclaimed by kindness and good offices: only so far as they are enemies to God we must strenuously confront their resentment.

23. *Search me, O God!* He insists upon this as being the only cause why he opposed the despisers of God, that he himself was a genuine worshipper of God, and desired others to possess the same character. It indicates no common confidence that he should submit, himself so boldly to the judgment of God. But being fully conscious of sincerity in his religion, it was not without due consideration that he placed himself so confidently before God's bar; neither must we think that he claims to be free from all sin, for he groaned under the felt burden of his transgressions. The saints in all that they say of their integrity still depend only upon free grace. Yet persuaded as they are that their godliness is approved before God, notwithstanding their falls and infirmities, we need not wonder that (hey feel themselves at freedom to draw a distinction between themselves and the wicked. While he denies that his heart was double or insincere, he does not profess exemption from all sin, but only that he was not devoted to wickedness; for ⌧⌧⌧, *otseb,* does not mean any sin whatever, but *grief, trouble,* or *pravity* — and sometimes metaphorically *an idol.* [220] But the last of these meanings will not apply here, for David asserts his freedom not from superstition merely, but unrighteousness, as elsewhere it is said, (Isaiah 59:7,) that in the ways of such men there is "trouble and destruction," because they carry everything by violence and wickedness. Others think the allusion is to a bad conscience, which afflicts the wicked with inward torments, but this is a forced interpretation. Whatever sense we attach to the word, David's

220 "Car le mot Hebrieu duquel il use en ce passage ne signifie pas indif-feremment tout peche, mais douleur et fascherie," etc. — *Fr.* "*Any way of wickedness* — the word rendered after the Septuagint by *wickedness* means both *sorrow, mischief;* and *idol:* the former is probably the sense in which the Psalmist here uses it, a *way of sorrow* is a way productive of sorrow, or tending to sorrow, as is the case (Psalm 1:7 [*sic*]) with every wicked way." — *Cresswell.*

meaning simply is, that though he was a man subject to sin, he was not devotedly bent upon the practice of it.

24. *And lead me,* etc. I see no foundation for the opinion of some that this is an imprecation, and that David adjudges himself over to punishment. It is true, that "the way of all the earth" is an expression used sometimes to denote death, which is common to all, but the verb here translated to *lead* is more commonly taken in a good than a bad sense, and I question if the phrase *way of this life* ever means death. [221] It seems evidently to denote the full continuous term of human life, and David prays God to guide him even to the end of his course. I am aware some understand it to refer to eternal life, nor is it denied that the world to come is comprehended under the full term of life to which the Psalm~ ist alludes, but it seems enough to hold by the plain sense of the words, That God would watch over his servant to whom he had already shown kindness to the end, and not forsake him in the midst of his days.

221 On the margin of the French Commentary Calvin refers to Joshua 23:14.

PSALM 140

David complains of the implacable cruelty of his enemies, and of their treachery and rancorous calumnies. In the close, having besought God's help, and expressing his persuasion of obtaining his layout, he comforts himself with the hope of deliverance, and just vengeance being executed upon his enemies.

To the chief Musician — A Psalm of David.

Psalm 140:1-5

1. Deliver me, O Jehovah! from the evil man, (homo,) preserve me from the man (vir) [222] of injuries. **2.** Who imagine mischiefs in their heart; daily they congregate for war. **3.** They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent: [223] the poison of an asp [224] is under their lips. Selah **4.** Keep us, O Jehovah! from the hands of the wicked: preserve me from the man of

222 "The word 'man' in these two lines is expressed in the first by ⊠⊠⊠ (homo,) in the second by ⊠⊠⊠ (vir.)" — *Jebb's Translation of the Psalms,* etc., volume 1.

223 Mant translates — *"The serpent's brandished tongue is theirs."* "The verb," says he, "here rendered 'brandished,' signifies either 'to whet, sharpen,' which is performed by reiterated motion or friction, or to 'vibrate.' In either case the metaphor, as applied to a wicked tongue, is beautiful and appropriate. I have preferred the latter as affording a more poetical image. See Parkhurst on ⊠⊠⊠, 3." In illustration of this figure Kimchi observes, that "the serpent when it comes to bite will open its mouth, and will hiss, and move its tongue here and there as if it would make it sharp as a *barber's razor.*"

224 The original word ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *achshub,* rendered "asp," is to be found in Scripture only in this place; and though it evidently denotes some of the serpent tribe, it is not so easy to determine the particular species intended. In our English Bible it is translated "adder," and as the word is derived from an Arabic verb, which signifies to coil up, or bend back, it has been said that this act perfectly corresponds with the nature of the adder, which in preparing to strike contracts itself into a spiral form, and raises its horrid head from the middle of the orb; and which also assumes the same form when it goes to sleep, coiling its body into a number of circles, with its head in the center. — (*Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture*, vol. i. p. 428.) But the same action is common to most serpents; and this name may, therefore have reference to no particular species. Some, however, contend that it is another name for the *pethem*, or *asp* mentioned in Job 20:14, the venom of which is so deadly as to be incurable and followed by speedy death, unless the wounded part is amputated. Such seems to have been the opinion of the LXX., as they render it by ασπις, in which they are followed by the Vulgate and by the Apostle Paul, who quotes this text in Romans 3:13. Calvin here adopts the word sanctioned by these authorities. "As to the poison, it will be observed, that in the venomous serpents there is a gland under the eye secreting the poisonous matter which is conveyed in a small tube or canal to the end of a fang which lies concealed at the roof of the mouth. This fang is moveable at the pleasure of the serpent, and is protruded when it is about to strike at an antagonist. The situation of this poison, which is in a manner behind the upper lip, gives great propriety to the expression — 'Adders' poison is under their lips.' The usage of the Hebrew language, renders it by no means improbable that the fang itself is called ⊠⊠⊠, *lashon*, 'a tongue,' in the present text; and a serpent might be said to sharpen its tongue, when in preparing to strike it protruded its fangs. We do not see any explanation by which a more consistent meaning may be extracted from the expression here employed." — *Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible.*

injuries, who plot to overthrow my goings. **5.** The proud have set a snare for me, and have spread a net with cords: by the way side they have set gins for me. [225] Selah

To the chief Musician, etc. I cannot bring myself to restrict this Psalm to Doeg, as the great body of interpreters do, for the context will clearly show that it speaks of Saul, and of the counselors who ceased not to inflame the king — himself sufficiently incensed against the life of one who was a saint of God. Being as he was a figure of Christ, we need not wonder that the agents of the devil directed so much of their rage against him. And this is the reason why he animadverts so sharply upon their rancor and treachery.

The terms *wicked* and *violent* men denote their unwarranted attempts at his destruction without provocation given. He therefore commends his cause to God, as having studied peace with them, as never having injured them, but being the innocent object of their unjust persecution. The same rule must be observed by us all, as it is against violence and wickedness that the help of God is extended. David is not Multiplying mere terms of reproach as men do in their personal disputes, but conciliating God's favor by supplying a proof of his innocence, for he must always be upon the side of good and peaceable men.

2. *Who imagine mischief's in their heart*. Here he charges them with inward malignity of heart. And it is plain that the reference is not to one man merely, for he passes to the plural number (in a manner sufficiently common,) reverting from the head to all his associates and copartners in guilt. Indeed what was formerly said in the singular number may be taken indefinitely, as grammarians say. In general he repeats what I have noticed already, that the hostility to which he was subjected arose from no cause of his. From this we learn that the more wickedly our enemies assail us, and the more of treachery and clandestine acts they manifest, the nearer is the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, who himself dictated this form of prayer by the mouth of David. The second clause may be rendered in three ways. Literally it reads, who gather wars, and so some understand it. But it, is well known that the prepositions are often omitted in the Hebrew, and no doubt he means that they stirred up general enmity by their false information's being as the trumpet which sounds to battle. Some render the verb — *to conspire, or plot together*, but this is a farfetched and meager sense. He intimates afterwards in what manner they stirred up unjust war by the

225 The imagery in this verse is borrowed from the practices of hunters and fowlers in the eastern regions of the world, who are accustomed to take and destroy the ferocious beasts and the larger species of birds by a variety of ingenious snares and devices. It is a curious circumstance, as noticed by Thevenot, that artifices of this kind are literally employed against men as well as against birds and wild beasts by some of the Orientals. "The cunningest robbers in the world," says he, as quoted by Mant, "are in this country. They use a certain slip, with a running noose, which they cast with so much slight about a man's neck when they are within reach of him, that they never fail, so that they strangle him in a trice."

wicked calumnies which they spread, as they could not crush a good and innocent person by violence, otherwise than by first overwhelming him with calumny.

4. *Keep me, O Jehovah!* To complaints and accusations he now again adds prayer, from which it appears more clearly, as I observed already, that it is God whom he seeks to be his avenger. It is the same sentiment repeated, with one or two words changed; for he had said *deliver me*, now he says *keep me*, and for *the wicked man* he substitutes the *hand of the wicked*. He had spoken of their conceiving mischief's, now of their plotting how they might ruin a poor unsuspecting individual. What he had said of their fraud and deceit he repeats in figurative language, which does not want emphasis. He speaks of nets spread out on every side to circumvent him, unless God interposed for his help. Though at first sight the metaphors may seem more obscure than the prayer was in its simple unfigurative expression, they are far from darkening the previous declarations, and they add much to the strength of them. From the word ⊠⊠⊠, *geim*, which signifies *proud* or *lofty* in the Hebrew, we learn that he does not speak of common men, but of men in power, who considered that they would have no difficulty in crushing an insignificant individual. When our enemies attack us in the insolence of pride, let us learn to resort to God, who can repel the rage of the wicked. Nor does he mean to say that they attacked him merely by bold and violent measures, for he complains of their spreading gins and snares; both methods are spoken of, namely, that while they were confident of the power which they possessed, they devised stratagems for his destruction.

Psalm 140:6-10

6. I said to Jehovah thou art my God; hear the voice of my supplication. **7.** O, Jehovah, my Lord! the strength of my salvation, thou hast set a covering upon my head in the day of arms. [226] **8.** Grant not, O Jehovah! the desires of the wicked; they have devised, do not though consummate, they shall be exalted. Selah. **9.** As for the head of those compassing me about, let the mischief of his lips cover him. **10.** Let coals with fire fall upon them; he shall cast them into deeps, [227] they shall not rise again.

6. *I said to Jehovah*. In these words he shows that his prayers were not merely those of the lips, as hypocrites will make loud appeals to God for mere appearance sake, but that he prayed with earnestness, and from a hidden principle of faith. Till we have a persuasion of being saved through the grace of God there can be no sincere prayer. We have here an excellent illustration of the nature of faith, in the Psalmist's turning himself away from man's view, that he may address God apart, hypocrisy being excluded in this internal exercise of the heart. This is true prayer — not the mere idle lifting up of the voice, but the presentation of our petitions from an inward principle of faith. To beget in himself a persuasion of his obtaining his present requests from God, he recalls to his mind what deliverance's God had already extended to him. He speaks of his having been to him as a shield in every time of danger. Some read the words in the future tense — "Thou wilt cover my head in the day of battle." But it is evident David speaks of protection formerly experienced from the hand of God, and from this derives comfort to his faith. He comes forth, not as a raw and undisciplined recruit, but as a soldier well tried in previous engagements. The strength of salvation is equivalent to salvation displayed with no ordinary power.

8. *Grant not, O Jehovah! the desires of the wicked* [228] We might render the words *Establish not*, though the meaning would be the same — that God would restrain the desires of the wicked, and frustrate all their aims and attempts. We see from this that it is in his power, whenever he sees proper, to frustrate the unprincipled designs of men, and their wicked expectations, and to dash their schemes. When, therefore, it is found impracticable to bring

226 That is, in the day of battle, in the day of the clashing or noisy collision of arms.

227 In the French version it is, as in our English Bible — "Fosses profondes;" "deep pits." The Hebrew word, according to Parkhurst, properly means *breaches* or *disruptions* of the earth, such as are made by an earthquake. He conceives that the Psalmist alludes to the punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and of the two hundred and fifty men who burnt incense. (Numbers 16:31-35.) See Parkhurst on ⊠⊠⊠. Bishop Horsley, who concurs with Parkhurst in the supposed allusion, translates *chasms of the yawning earth*, observing that he cannot otherwise than by this periphrasis express the idea of the word ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠

228 "The desires which the wicked have for my destruction." — *Phillips.*

our enemies to a right state of mind, we are to pray that the devices which they have imagined may be immediately overthrown and thwarted. In the next clause there is more ambiguity. As the Hebrew verb ⧈⧈⧈, *puk*, means to lead out, as well as to strike or fall, the words might mean, that God would not carry out into effect the counsels of the wicked. But the opinion of those may be correct who read — *their thought is thou wilt not strike*, David representing such hopes as the wicked are wont to entertain. We find him elsewhere (Psalm 10:6) describing their pride in a similar way, in entirely overlooking a divine providence, and considering all events as subject to their control, and the world placed under their sole management. The word which follows with thus come in appropriately — they shall be *lifted up*, in illusion to the wicked being inflated by pride, through the idea that they can never be overtaken by adversity. If the other reading be preferred, the negative particle must be considered as repeated — "Suffer not their attempts to be carried into effect; let them not be exalted." At any rate David is to be considered as censuring the security of his enemies, in making no account of God, and in surrendering themselves to unbridled license.

9. *As for the head, etc*. There may be a doubt whether, under the term head, he refers to the chief of the faction opposed to him; for we call suppose an inversion in the sentence, and a change of the plural to the singular number, bringing out this sense. [229] "Let the mischief of their wicked speeches, which they intended against me, fall upon their own head." [230] As almost all interpreters, however, have taken the other view, I have adopted it, only understanding the reference as being to Saul rather than Doeg. There follows an imprecation upon the whole company of his enemies generally, that *coals may fall upon them*, alluding to the awful fate of Sodom and Gomorrha. We find this elsewhere (Psalm 11:6) set forth by the Spirit of God as an example of Divine vengeance, to terrify the wicked; and Jude (Jude 1:7) declares that God testified, by this example of everlasting significance, that he would be the Judge of all the ungodly. Some translate what follows — *the wilt cast them into the fire*, which might pass. But as: ⧈, *beth*, in the Hebrew often denotes instrumentality, we may properly render the words — *thou wilt cast them down* By *fire*, or With *fire*, as God sent it forth against Sodom and Gomorrha. He prays they may be sunk into deep pits, whence they may never rise. God sometimes heals those whom he has smitten with great severity; David cuts off the reprobate from the hope of pardon, as knowing them to be beyond recovery. Had they been disposable to repentance, he would have been inclinable on his part to mercy.

229 "Car il pourreit estre que l'ordre des mots seroit renverse, et que le nombre singulier seroit mis pour le pluriel, en ce sens," etc. — *Fr*.

230 "The meaning of the verse may be, that the mischief designed by the wicked against others shall fall on their own head, as Psalm 7:17, 'his violence shall descend on his own head;' or it may express the leader of the hostile party, as Saul or Doeg, in the case of David being here the speaker." — *Phillips*.

Psalm 140:11-13

11. The man (vir) of tongue shall not be established in the earth, evil shall hunt the man (vir) [231] of violence to banishments. **12.** I have known that God will accomplish the judgment of the poor, the judgment of the afflicted. **13.** Surely the righteous will praise thy name, the upright shall dwell before thy face.

11. *The man of tongue*, [232] *etc*. Some understand by this the *loquacious man*, but the sense is too restricted; nor is the reference to a reproachful, garrulous, vain and boastful man, but the man of virulence, who wars by deceit and calumny, and not openly. This is plain from what is said of the other class of persons in the subsequent part of the sentence, that his enemies were given to open violence as well as to treachery and cunning — like the lion as well as the wolf — as formerly he complained that the poison of the asp or viper was under their lips. The words run in the future tense, and many interpreters construe them into the optative form, or into a prayer; but I prefer retaining the future tense, as David does not appear so much to pray, as to look forward to a coming deliverance. Whether his enemies wrought by treachery, or by open violence, he looks forward to God as his deliverer. The figure drawn from hunting is expressive. The hunter, by spreading his toils on all sides, leaves no way of escape for the wild beast; and the ungodly cannot by any subterfuge elude the divine judgments. *Mischief hunts them into banishment's*, for the more they look for impunity and escape, they only precipitate themselves more certainly upon destruction.

12. *I have known; that God*, *etc*. There can be no question that David here seals or corroborates his prayer by turning his thoughts and discourse to the providential judgments of God, for, as I have already said, doubtful prayer is no prayer at all. He declares it to be a thing known and ascertained that God cannot but deliver the afflicted. As he may connive for a time, however, and suffer good and upright persons to be grievously tried, David suggests as consideration which may meet this temptation, that God does so advisedly, that he may relieve those who are in affliction, and recover those who are oppressed. He accordingly says in express words that he will be *the judge of the poor and the afflicted*. In this way does he encourage both others and himself under continued troubles, till the time proper for deliverance arrive, intimating that though he might be universally considered an object of pity in being exposed to the fury of the wicked, and in not being immediately delivered by the hand of God, he would not give way to despair, but remember that it was the very part

231 ⊠⊠⊠ is the word for man in both these clauses.

232 "*A man, of tongue*, *i.e*., of evil tongue; a slanderer or detractor." — *Phillips*. The Bible translation renders the phrase "an evil speaker;" and the Chaldee Paraphrase has "the man of detraction, with a three-forked tongue;" because such a man wounds *three* at once — the receiver, the sufferer, and himself.

of God to undertake the cause of the poor. It were to weaken the passage if we considered David merely to be speaking of his own individual case.

He infers (Psalm 140:13) that the righteous would give thanks to God, and be safe under his help. For the particle אך, *ach*, which is often adversative in the Hebrew, is here affirmative, and denotes inference or consequence from what was formerly stated. Though the godly may be silenced for a time, and through the force of trouble may not raise the praises of God, David expresses his conviction that what was taken away would be speedily restored, and they would celebrate the loving kindness of the Lord with joy and alacrity. As this is not easily believed in circumstances of trial, the already referred to is inserted. We must endeavor, though with a struggle, to rise to a confident persuasion, that however low they may be brought, the Lord's people will be restored to prosperity, and will soon sing his praises. The second clause of the verse gives the reason of their thanksgiving's. He speaks of this as being the ground of the praises of the righteous, that they experience God's care of them, and concern for their salvation. For *to dwell before God's face* is to be cherished and sustained by his fatherly regards.

PSALM 141

Whatever may have been the immediate cause pressing David to pray in the manner he does in this Psalm, [233] it is plain that his desire is through divine grace to check and bridle his spirit, under injuries of a causeless and unprovoked description, so as not to break out into retaliation and revenge, and return evil for evil. Having attained to the exercise of forbearance, he seeks that God would judge between him and his enemies.

A Psalm of David.

233 Many commentators are strongly of opinion, that this Psalm was written as a memorial of that very interesting scene in the life of David, recorded in 1 Samuel 24, relating to his generous treatment of Saul. Though he had an opportunity of putting that his cruel persecutor to death in the cave of En-gedi, yet he spared his life, only cutting off his skirt, and not suffering his followers to touch him; and when Saul had gone out of the cave, David going out after him, remonstrated with him from some distance in the gentlest and most respectful language in regard to the injustice of his conduct towards him. It is thought that the sixth verse contains so express a reference to this very remarkable occurrence in David's history, as to leave little doubt that it was the occasion on which the Psalm was composed.

Psalm 141:1-4

1. O Jehovah! I have cried unto thee, make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice when I cry unto thee. **2.** Let my prayer be directed as incense before thy face; the lifting up of my hands, as [234] the evening sacrifice. **3.** Set a watch, O Jehovah! upon my mouth, keep a guard upon the door of my lips. **4.** Incline not my heart to an evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity, and that I may not eat of their dainties.

1. *O Jehovah! I have cried unto thee.* From such an exordium and manner of praying, it is evident that David was laboring under no small trial, as he repeats his requests, and insists upon receiving help. Without venturing to say anything definite upon the point, we would not disapprove of the conjecture that this Psalm was written by David with reference to the persecutions he suffered from Saul. He teaches us by his example to make application immediately to God, and not be tempted, as wicked men are, to renounce prayer, and rely on other resources. He says that he cried to God, not to heaven or earth, to men or to fortune, and other vain objects, which are made mention of, in the first place at least, in such cases by the ungodly. If they do address themselves to God, it is with murmurs and complaints, howling rather than praying.

In the second verse the allusion is evidently to the legal ceremonies. [235] At that time the prayers of God's people were according to his own appointment sanctified through the offering up of incense and sacrifices, and David depended upon this promise. [236] As to the conjecture some have made, that he was at this time an exile, and cut off from the privileges of the religious assembly, nothing certain can be said upon that point; their idea being that

234 *As*, here and in the preceding clause, is a supplement, very properly made by our author; a word signifying *like*, or *in the stead of*, being frequently understood in the Hebrew text of the Psalms.

235 The allusion, according to the opinion of most commentators, is to the morning and evening sacrifices, of which see an account in Exodus 29:38-42. In the phraseology of the verse it is supposed that there is a reference to the commencing and concluding acts of the daily public worship among the Jews. Every morning and evening the priests offered incense upon the incense-altar which stood in the holy place, while the people prayed without. But in the morning the incense was offered *before* the sacrifice was laid upon the altar of burnt-offering; whereas in the evening (at the ninth hour) it was offered after the sacrifice was laid upon the altar; and thus in the evening the sacrifice and the incense were offered at the same time. See Lightfoot's Temple Service, chapter 9: section 5. Dr. Adam Clarke, however, thinks that David does not refer to any *sacrifice*; "for," says he, "he uses not ⌧⌧⌧, *zebach*, which is almost universally used for a *slaughtered animal*, ⌧⌧⌧⌧, *minchath*, which is generally taken for a *gratitude offering*, or an *unbloody* sacrifice." He translates the last two words "the evening oblation."

236 "Car pource que lors Dieu vouloit que les prieres des fideles fussent sanctifiees par encensement et par sacrifices, David s'appuye sur ceste promesse." — *Fr.*

there is a tacit antithesis in the verse — that though prevented from continuing with God's worshippers into the sanctuary, or using incense and sacrifice, he desired God would accept his prayers notwithstanding. But as there seems no reason to adopt this restricted sense, it is enough to understand the general truth, that as these symbols taught the Lord's people to consider their prayers equally acceptable to God with the sweetest incense, and most excellent sacrifice, David derived confirmation to his faith from the circumstance. Although the view of the fathers was not confined entirely to the external ceremonies, David was bound to avail himself of such helps. As he considered, therefore, that it was not in vain the incense was burned daily on the altar by God's commandment, and the evening offering presented, he speaks of his prayers in connection with this ceremonial worship. *The lifting up of the hands,* evidently means prayer, for those who translate ⊠⊠⊠, *masath*, *a gift*, obscure and pervert the meaning of the Psalmist. As the word, which is derived from ⊠⊠, *nasa*, means *lifting up* in the Hebrew, the natural inference is, that prayer is meant, in allusion to the outward action practiced in it. And we can easily suppose that David here as elsewhere repeats the same thing twice. As to the reason which has led to the universal practice amongst all nations of lifting up the hand in prayer, I have taken notice of it elsewhere.

3. *Set a watch, O Jehovah! upon my mouth.* As David was liable to be hurt at the unbridled and unprincipled rage of his enemies, so as to be tempted to act in a manner that might not be justifiable, he prays for divine direction, and not that he might be kept back from manual violence merely, but that his tongue might be restrained from venting reproach, or words of complaint. Even persons of the most self-possessed temper, if unwarrantably injured, will some — times proceed to make retaliation, through their resenting the unbecoming conduct of their enemies. David prays accordingly that his tongue might be restrained by the Lord from uttering any word which was out of joint. Next he seeks that his heart be kept back from every mischievous device that might issue in revenge. The words added — *that I may not eat of their delicacies*, are to be understood figuratively, as a petition that he might not be tempted by the prosperity which they enjoyed in sin to imitate their conduct. The three things mentioned in the context are to be connected; and it may be advisable to consider each of them more particularly. Nothing being more difficult than for the victims of unjust persecution to bridle their speech, and submit silently and without complaint to injuries, David needed to pray that his mouth might be closed and guarded — that the door of his mouth might be kept shut by God, as one who keeps the gate watches the ingress and egress — ⊠⊠⊠, *nitsrah*, being the imperative of the verb, rather than a noun. He next subjoins *that God would not incline his heart to an evil thing*; for ⊠⊠, *dabar*, is here, as in many other places, used to signify *a thing*. Immediately after he explains himself to mean, that he would not desire to strive with them in wickedness, and thus make himself like his enemies. Had that monk of whom Eusebius makes mention duly reflected upon this resolution of David, he would not have fallen into the silly fallacy of imagining that he had shown himself the

perfect scholar by observing silence for a whole term of seven years. Hearing that the regulation of the tongue was a rare virtue, he betook himself to a distant solitude, from which he did not return to his master for seven years; and being asked the cause of his long absence, replied that he had been meditating upon what he had learned from this verse. It would have been proper to have asked him at the same time, whether during the interim he had thought none, as well as spoken none. For the two things stand connected the being silent, and the being free from the charge of evil thoughts. It is very possible that although he observed silence, he had many ungodly thoughts, and these are worse than vain words. We have simply alluded in passing to this foolish notion, as what may convince the reader of the possibility of persons running away with a word torn from its connection, and overlooking the scope of the writer. In committing himself to the guidance of God, both as to thoughts and words, David acknowledges the need of the influence of the Spirit for the regulation of his tongue and of his mind, particularly when tempted to be exasperated by the insolence of opposition. If, on the one hand, the tongue be liable to slip and too fast of utterance, unless continually watched and guarded by God; on the other, there are disorderly affections of an inward kind which require to be restrained. What a busy workshop is the heart of man, and what a host of devices is there manufactured every moment! If God do not watch over our heart and tongue, there will confessedly be no bounds to words and thoughts of a sinful kind, — so rare a gift of the Spirit is moderation in language, while Satan is ever making suggestions which will be readily and easily complied with, unless God prevent. It need not seem absurd to speak of God inclining our hearts to evil, since these are in his hand, to turn them whithersoever he willeth at his pleasure. Not that he himself prompts them to evil desires, but as according to his secret judgments he surrenders and effectually gives over the wicked to Satan's tyranny, he is properly said to blind and harden them. The blame of their sins rests with men themselves, and the lust which is in them; and, as they are carried out to good or evil by a natural desire, it is not from any external impulse that they incline to what is evil, but spontaneously and of their own corruption. I have read — *to work the works of iniquity;* others read — *to think the thoughts of iniquity*. The meaning is the same, and it is needless to insist upon the preference to be given. By ⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈, *manammim*, translated *delicacies*, is meant the satisfaction felt by the ungodly when their sins are connived at through the divine forbearance. While their insolence in such a case becomes more presumptuous, even the Lord's people are in danger of being deceived by the prosperity they see enjoying, and to take liberties themselves. David had reason therefore to pray for the secret restraints of the Holy Spirit, that he might be kept from *feasting on their delicacies*; that is, being intoxicated into license or sinful pleasure through anything debasing, flattering, or agreeable in outward circumstances. [237]

237 "C'est a dire qu'il ne s'enyure de la vaine douceur qu'ils out en se desbordant a mal, et qu'ainsi il ne s'esgaye en pechez." — *Fr.*

Psalm 141:5-7

5. Let the righteous smite me, a kindness; and let him chastise me, a precious oil, it shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities. **6.** Their judges have been thrown down upon stony places; and they shall hear my words, for they are sweet. **7.** As one who breaketh and cutteth [238] on the earth, our bones have been, scattered at the mouth of the grave.

5. *Let the righteous smite me, etc.* While Satan tempts the wicked by his allurements, they, at the same time, deceive one another by flattery, which leads David to declare, that he would much rather be awakened to his duty by the severe rod of reproof, than be seduced through pleasing falsehoods. Among those who hold religion in contempt no reproof is administered to one who has contracted any sin, and, therefore, if we have any concern for our spiritual safety we will connect ourselves with good men, who restore such as have fallen by upright admonition, and bring back those who have erred to the right way. It is not agreeable to corrupt nature to be reproved when we sin, but, David had brought himself to that degree of docility and self-denial which led him to consider no reproof distasteful which he knew to proceed from the spirit of kindness. As there is some ambiguity in the words, we may see to ascertain the proper meaning of them. The noun ⊠⊠⊠, *chesed*, can very well be resolved into the adverb — *the righteous shall smite me mercifully*, or in *mercy*, supplying the preposition. And this is the meaning adopted by most interpreters, that David reckoned as the best ointment such reproofs as breathed charity and kindness, or proceeded from a kind and dispassionate spirit. Should this reading be preferred it is to be remembered, that David refers, not so much to the outward manner in which the reproof is to be administered, as to the frame of the heart. However how good men may be, and whatever severity of language they may employ in admonishing those who have erred, they are still actuated by the force of brotherly affection. My, the very severity is, in fact, occasioned by their holy anxiety and fear of their brother's safety. The righteous act mercifully under all this apparent sharpness and severity — as the wicked, on the other hand, act cruelly who censure only in a very gentle manner. By noticing this feature in reproof, David besides would distinguish that kind of it which takes its rise in sincere affection, from invectives which proceed from

238 "*As one cutting and slitting*. Many persons understand ⊠⊠⊠, *wood*, after these participles, supposing the comparison of scattering the bones to be made with the scattering of wood after it has been cleft. But it is more probable that what the Psalmist intended to say was in substance as follows: 'Our bones lie scattered at the edge of the grave, just as one cutting and cleaving the earth in making a grave often throws up bones, which may be seen scattered here and there with the earth lying at its sides.' The verse is poetical, and the figure indicates great distress." — *Phillips*

hatred or private animosity, as Solomon says. (Proverbs 10:12.) The other rendering of the words, however, which I have adopted, is equally suitable —

Let the righteous censure me, it shall be mercy, or, I will reckon it a benefit, let him reprove me, this shall be precious ointment that will not hurt my head.

The last clause some interpret in another way — *the oil of the head let it not break my head*, that is, let not the wicked seduce me to destruction by their pleasing flatteries. [239] By the *oil* they understand the pernicious adulations by which the wicked would ruin us, and plunge us deeper and deeper in destruction, while they seem to administer pleasure. This would make the passage convey a fuller meaning, That while David was pliable and yielding in the matter of reproof, he fled from flattery as from the fatal songs of the Sirens. However sweet praise may be to the taste at first, every one who lends an ear to flattery, drinks in a poison which will presently diffuse itself through the whole heart. Let us learn by David's example to reject all flatteries, prone as we are naturally to receive them, and to renounce waywardness and obstinacy, lest we should put away from us those corrections which are wholesome remedies for our vices. For such is the infatuated love men have to their own destruction, that even when forced to condemn themselves they wish to have the approbation of the world. And why? that by superinducing torpor of conscience, they may, by their own spontaneous act, devote themselves to ruin.

For yet my prayer, *etc*. Three explanations of this clause have been suggested. According to some the meaning of it is, that, as we are ever ready to be corrupted by bad example, David here prays, that he might not decline to their evils, or the evils which they practiced. The second sense assigned is, that David, recognizing their mischievous devices, prays that he may be kept by the Lord from their wickedness. The third sense, that recognizing them as reduced to desperate calamities, he prays that the just vengeance of God might be executed upon them according to their deserts. The very opposite meaning might seem the more suitable, that David was not prevented by their obstinacy in wickedness from praying for their welfare. For there is the adverb yet emphatically inserted. Or, what if David is to be considered as predicting their unfortunate end, intimating, that though the ungodly now riot in excess, they shall shortly be arrested, and that before long his compassion would be exercised towards them? The way in which the words stand connected favors this view; for he does not say — *yet my prayer shall be in their calamities*, but rather separately, "*yet*, or, *yet a little while*, and then my power shall be in their calamities." As David was in danger of being tempted to yield to similarly vain courses with them, he very properly suggests a sustaining motive to his soul, why he should retain his integrity, that erelong they would be

239 "Que l'huile de la teste ne rompe point ma teste, c'est a dire, que les meschans ne m'amadouent point par leurs flatteries a ma perdition et ruine." — *Fr.*

overtaken with so awful a destruction as to entreat compassion from him and others of the people of God.

6. *Their judges have been thrown down upon stony places* [240] Almost all interpreters agree, that the tense of the verb should be changed from the preterit to the future, and then resolve it into the optative — *let them be thrown down*. It appears to me that the sense of David would be made very plain by reading, *When their judges have been cast down from the rock, or upon stony places, they shall hear my words*. David, on perceiving the rage which the common people expressed towards him, as carried away through the influence of error and misrepresentation, lays the blame upon their leaders. When their power should be taken away, he is confident that the simple, who had been misled, would be brought to a right mind. *Casting from the rocks, or upon stony places,* is a metaphorical expression in reference to the high and dignified position in which they were placed. Although not without blame in following evil counselors so as to persecute unjustly a good and godly man, yet he had reason to entertain more hope of their repentance, that they would return to consideration when God executed vengeance upon those who were at their head. We see how ready the common people are to judge by impulse rather than deliberation, and to be hurried into most condemnable proceedings by blind prejudice, while afterwards upon being admonished they retrace their steps with equal precipitation. So that, granting cruelty must always be sinful, and simplicity no excuse, we are taught by David's example to pray that sound counsel may be sent to such as are in error, with a view to enabling them to hear the truth and the right with patience.

7. *As one who breaketh*, *etc*. Here David complains that his enemies were not satisfied with inflicting upon him one death — death of a common description — but must first mangle him, and those associated with him, and then cast them into the grave. The common robber on the highway throws the body of his murdered victim whole into the ditch; David tells us, that he and those with him were treated more barbarously, their Bones being dispersed, as one cleaves wood or stones into fragments, or digs the earth. From this it appears, that David, like Paul, (2 Corinthians 1:9,) was delivered from deaths oft; [241] and we may

240 Those who understand this verse as containing an allusion to the generous manner in which David acted towards Saul in the cave of En-gedi, and to his mild expostulation after they had both left the cave, translate thus: — *"Their princes on the sides of the rock were dismissed,*

or *let go* in safety; *And they heard my words that they were pleasant."* This exactly corresponds with the occurrences referred to. In correspondence with the first line, it, is said in 1 Samuel 24:2, that Saul and his chosen men went to seek David upon the *rocks* of the wild goats; and the terms in which David expostulated with Saul, were so gentle, dutiful and affecting, as for the time to melt into tenderness and contrition the heart of Saul, and to impress the minds of all who heard them.

241 If David here refers to the treatment he and his followers met with at the hands of Saul, this exhibits in dark colors the extreme inhumanity of that monarch. "We are not sufficiently informed," says Walford, "respecting

learn the duty of continuing to cherish hope of life and deliverance even when the expression may apply to us, that our bones have been broken and scattered.

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the cruelties which were perpetrated against David and those who adhered to him, to enable us to point out the instances to which he here alludes; but the murder of Abimelech, and of the priests who were with him, furnishes a pregnant proof of the atrocities which Saul and his agents were capable of perpetrating. (See 1 Samuel 22.) It appears from the language of this verse that such enormities were not confined to a few cases, but must have been numerous, to give occasion to the image which is employed to describe them." How striking the contrast between David's treatment of Saul, and that which Saul adopted towards him! Mr. Peters in his Dissertations on Job, gives an exposition of this 7th verse which is ingenious, and which Archbishop Secker calls "admirable, though not quite unexceptionable." Understanding the verse as referring to the slaughter of the priests at Nob, just now adverted to, he renders the words □□□ □□□□, (which Calvin translates, *at the grave's mouth*,) *at the mouth*, that is, *at the command of Saul*. In support of this translation he produces similar expressions, □□ □□ □□□□, *at the command of Pharaoh*, (Genesis 45:21,) and □□□ □□, *at thy command*. (Job 39:17.) To this rendering there is, however, this strong objection, that we do not find David ever mentioning Saul by name in any of the Psalms. Peters, indeed, states that this objection was offered to him against his view, and he endeavors to remove it, though, as we think, with indifferent success.

Psalm 141:8-10
8. Because to thee, O Jehovah! My Lord, are my eyes; in thee have I hoped: leave mot my soul destitute. **9.** Keep we from the hands of the snare which they have spread for me, from the nets of the workers of iniquity. **10.** Let the wicked fall together into his nets; I always shall pass by. [242]

8. *Because to thee, O Jehovah*! *etc*. If we reflect upon what was comprehended under the previous figure of their bones being broken, his praying in such circumstances is just as if the torn fragments of a mangled corpse should cry unto God. This may give us some idea of the heroical courage of David, who could continue to direct his eyes to God even under such overwhelming difficulties; this being the very part faith ought to discharge, in making us collected and composed when our senses would otherwise be confounded. [243] Great a miracle as it would have been for God to have preserved them in life, when their bones were scattered abroad, it was a double miracle to support their minds in the firm persuasion of their not perishing.

9. *Keep me*, *etc*. He owns himself to be shut up in the snares of his enemies, unless set free by a higher hand. In praying to God under the straits to which he was reduced, he proves what a high estimate he formed of what his mercy could effect, as elsewhere he says, that the issues from death belong to him. (Psalm 68:20.) God often delays interposing, that the deliverance may be the more signal; and afterwards he makes the devices of the wicked to recoil upon their own heads. It seems absurd to refer the pronoun *his* to Saul, as if the sense were that Doeg and others of that character would fall into the snares of Saul. It would seem to be God who is intended. First, he had spoken of being preserved by God from the toils of the wicked, and now to these snares which the wicked spread for the upright he opposes the snares with which God catches the crafty in their own devices. And as the number of his enemies was great, he uses the expression, *let them fall together*, for escape would have been impossible, had he not been persuaded that it was easy for God to overthrow any combined force and array of men. What follows admits of two meanings. Many read, *I shall always pass*. But we may suppose order of the words changed and read, *until I pass*. It prays that his enemies should be held in the snare till he got off safe,

242 "Jusques a ce que je passe." — *Fr*. "Until I pass."

243 "C'est le propre de la foy de rassembler lessens de la personne dispersez, lequels autrement s'esvanouiroyent a chacun coup." —*Fr*.

PSALM 142

When Saul came into the cave where David lay concealed, this saint of God might upon such an occurrence have been either thrown into consternation, or led by his alarm into some unwarrantable step, it being common for persons in despair either to be prostrated with dismay, or driven into frenzy. But it appears from this Psalm that David retained his composure, relying with assured confidence upon God, and resigning himself to vows and prayers instead of taking any unauthorized steps.

A Prayer of David, giving instruction when he was in the cave. [244]

244 In the history of David we read particularly of the two caves in which he took shelter, that of Adullam, (1 Samuel 22:1,) and that of En-gedi, (1 Samuel 24:3.) The latter is generally supposed to be the cave here

Psalm 142:1-4

1. I cried to Jehovah with my voice, with my voice to Jehovah I made supplication. **2.** I pour out my meditation before his face: I tell my affliction before his face. **3.** When my spirit was perplexed within me, and thou knewest my path: in the way wherein I walked they laid a snare for me. **4.** On looking to the right hand, and perceiving, none would know me, refuge failed me, there was none seeking after my soul.

1. *I cried* [245] *to Jehovah*, *etc*. It showed singular presence of mind in David that he was not paralyzed with fear, or that he did not in a paroxysm of fury take vengeance upon his enemy, as he easily might have done; and that he was not actuated by despair to take away his life, but composedly addressed himself to the exercise of prayer. There was good reason why the title should have been affixed to the Psalm to note this circumstance, and David had good grounds for mentioning how he commended himself to God. Surrounded by the army of Saul, and hemmed in by destruction on every side, how was it possible for him to have spared so implacable an enemy, had he not been fortified against the strongest temptations by prayer? The repetition he makes use of indicates his having prayed with earnestness, so as to be impervious to every assault of temptation.

He tells us still more clearly in the next verse that he disburdened his ears unto God. To pour out one's thoughts and tell over his afflictions implies the reverse of those perplexing anxieties which men brood over inwardly to their own distress, and by which they torture themselves, and are chafed by their afflictions rather than led to God; or it implies the reverse of those frantic exclamations to which others give utterance who find no comfort in the superintending providence and care of God. In short, we are left to infer that while he did not give way before men to loud and senseless lamentations, neither did he suffer himself to be tormented with inward and suppressed cares, but made known his grief's with unsuspecting confidence to the Lord.

3. *When, my spirit*, *etc*. Though he owns here that he felt anxiety, yet he confirms what he had said as to the constancy of his faith. The figure which he uses of his spirit being *perplexed*, [246] aptly represents the state of the mind in alternating between various resolutions

245 In the Hebrew the verb is in the future — "I will cry;" but as that language has no present tense, it frequently uses for it the past and future promiscuously. Bishop Horne, therefore, renders in the present all the verbs in this Psalm, which Calvin translates in the past, except the verbs in the two first verses, which he renders in the future. Translators, however, in general concur with Calvin, and we think justly, the Psalm, as we conceive, being a recollection of the substance of the prayers he addressed to God while in the cave of En-gedi, but which it cannot be supposed he had then an opportunity of committing to writing.

246 "Or c'est une belle similitude quand il dit que son esprit a este en tortille et enveloppe," etc. — *Fr.*

when there was no apparent outgate from danger, and increasing its distress by resorting to all kinds of devices. He adds, that though there was no apparent way of safety, God knew from the beginning in what way his deliverance should be effected. Others put a different meaning upon this clause, *thou knowest my way,* as if David asserted God to have been witness of his integrity, but the other is the more correct, that God knew the way to deliver him, while his own mind was distracted by a variety of thoughts, and yet could not conceive any mode of extrication. The words teach us, when we have tried every remedy and know not what to do, to rest satisfied with the conviction that God is acquainted with our afflictions, and condescends to care for us, as Abraham said —

"The Lord will provide." (Genesis 22:8.)

4. *On looking to the right hand*, [247] *etc.*, He shows that there was good cause for the dreadful sufferings he experienced, since no human aid or comfort was to be expected, and destruction seemed inevitable. When he speaks of having looked and yet not perceived a friend amongst men, he does not mean that he had turned his thoughts to earthly helps in forgetfulness of God, but that he had made such inquiry as was warrantable after one on the earth who might assist him. Had any person of the kind presented himself, he would no doubt have recognized him as an instrument in the hand of God's mercy, but it was God's purpose that he should be abandoned of all assistance from man, and that his deliverance from destruction should thus appear more extraordinary. In the expression, *none seeking after my soul*, the verb to *seek after* is used in a good sense, for being solicitous about any man's welfare or safety.

247 The allusion here, it is supposed, is to the observances of the ancient Jewish courts of judicature, in which the advocate, as well as the accuser, stood on the *right hand* of the accused. (Psalm 109:5.) The Psalmist felt himself in the condition of one who had nobody to plead his cause, and to protect him in the dangerous circumstances in which he was placed.

Psalm 142:5-7

5. I cried unto thee, O Jehovah! I said thou art my hope and my portion in the land of the living. **6.** Attend unto my cry, for I labor very much under affliction: deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I. **7.** Rescue my soul from prison, that I may praise thy name; the righteous shall crown me, for thou wilt recompense me.

5. *I cried unto thee, O Jehovah*! With a view to hasten God's interposition, David complains of the low estate he was reduced to, and of his extremity; the term cry denoting vehemence, as I have elsewhere noticed. He speaks of deliverance as being plainly needed, since he was now held a prisoner. By *prison* some suppose he alludes to the cave where he was lodged, but this is too restricted a meaning. The subsequent clause, *the righteous shall compass me*, is translated differently by some, *they shall wait me*. I have retained the true and natural sense. I grant that it is taken figuratively for surrounding, intimating that he would be a spectacle to all, the eyes of men being attracted by such a singular case of deliverance. If any consider the words not to be figurative, the sense will be, That the righteous would not only congratulate him, but place a crown upon his head in token of victory. Some explain the passage, They will assemble to congratulate me, and will stand round me on every side like a crown. As the words literally read, *they will crown* upon me, some supply another pronoun, and give this sense, that the righteous would construe the mercy bestowed upon David as a glory conferred upon themselves; for when God delivers any of his children he holds out the prospect of deliverance to the rest, and, as it were, gifts them with a crown. The sense which I have adopted is the simplest, however, That the mercy vouchsafed would be shown conspicuously to all as in a theater, proving a signal example to the righteous for establishment of their faith. The verb ⌧⌧⌧, *gamal*, in the Hebrew, is of a more general signification than to repay, and means *to confer a benefit*, as I have shown elsewhere.

PSALM 143

Although the enemies with whom David had to contend were wicked, and their persecution as unjust as it was cruel, David recognized the just judgment of God in it all, and seeks to conciliate his favor by humbly supplicating pardon. Having complained of the cruelty of his enemies, and declared that amidst all his affliction he still remembered God, he prays for restoration, and the guidance of God's Spirit, that the remainder of his life might be devoted to his fear.

A Psalm of David. [248]

248 To the title "A Psalm of David," some copies of the Septuagint and the Vulgate add — "when his son Absalom pursued him," (see 2 Samuel 17:24, 25;) and interpreters in general agree that this is the most probable occasion on which it was penned.

Psalm 143:1-3

1. Hear my prayer, O Jehovah! give ear to my supplication, in thy truth answer me, in thy righteousness. **2.** And enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. **3.** For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath prostrated my life on the ground: he hath set me in dark places, as the dead of an age.

1. *Hear my prayer, O Jehovah*! It is evident that the oppression of his enemies must have been extreme, when David laments his case in such earnest and pathetic terms. The introductory words show that the grief he felt was great. His reason for speaking of the justice and faithfulness of God in connection we have shown elsewhere. Under the term *justice*, or *righteousness*, we are not to suppose that he speaks of merit, or hire, as some ignorantly imagine, but of that goodness of God which leads him to defend his people. To the same effect does he speak of God's *truth* or *faithfulness*; for the best proof he can give of his faithfulness is in not forsaking those whom he has promised to help. In helping his people he shows himself to be a just and true God, both in not frustrating their expectation, and in so far as he shows in this extension of mercy what his nature is, that David very properly encourages himself in prayer by making mention of both.

2. *And enter not into judgment*, [249] *etc.* I have hinted already why he proceeds to pray for pardon. When overtaken by adversity, we are ever to conclude that it is a rod of correction sent by God to stir us up to pray. Although he is far from taking pleasure in our trials, it is certain that our sins are the cause of his dealing towards us with this severity. While those to whom David was opposed were wicked men, and he was perfectly conscious of the rectitude of his cause as regarded them, he freely acknowledged his sin before God as a condemned suppliant. We are to hold this as a general rule in seeking to conciliate God, that we must pray for the pardon of our sins. If David found refuge nowhere else than in prayer for pardon, who is there amongst us who would presume to come before God trusting in his own righteousness and integrity? Nor does David here merely set an example before God's people how they ought to pray, but declares that there is none amongst men who could be just before God were he called to plead his cause. The passage is one fraught with

249 Walford thinks there is probably here a reference to the great transgression, the consequences of which followed David all his days. "As he would not fail to be reminded of it," says that writer, "by the sorrows which had now come upon him, from Absalom's misconduct, and as his purpose was, notwithstanding, to implore divine support and deliverance, he deprecates God's righteous judgment, since if no man could be just with God, certainly he, who had so greatly transgressed, could have no claim to such a state. The consciousness of his guilt, though he had reason to believe it was forgiven, induced him thus to abase himself before God, when he was about to offer earnest entreaties for deliverance from dangers which threatened his dignity and life; while he still maintained his hope, that God looked upon him as his servant, whom he had pledged himself to protect."

much instruction, teaching us, as I have just hinted, that God can only show favor to us in our approaches by throwing aside the character of a judge, and reconciling us to himself in a gratuitous remission of our sins. All human righteousnesses, accordingly, go for nothing, when we come to his tribunal. This is a truth which is universally acknowledged in words, but which very few are seriously impressed with. As there is an indulgence which is mutually extended to one another amongst men, they all come confidently before God for judgment, as if it were as easy to satisfy him as to gain man's approval. In order to obtain a proper view of the whole matter, we are first to note what is meant by being justified. The passage before us clearly proves that the man who is justified, is he who is judged and reckoned just before God, or whom the heavenly Judge himself acquits as innocent. Now, in denying that any amongst men can claim this innocence, David intimates that any righteousness which the saints have is not perfect enough to abide God's scrutiny, and thus he declares that all are guilty before God, and can only be absolved in the way of acknowledging they might justly be condemned. Had perfection been a thing to be found in the world, he certainly of all others was the man who might justly have boasted of it; and the righteousness of Abraham and the holy fathers was not unknown to him; but he spares neither them nor himself, but lays it down as the one universal rule of conciliating God, that we must cast ourselves upon his mercy. This may give us some idea of the satanic infatuation which has taken hold of those who speak so much of perfection in holiness, with a view to supersede remission of sins. Such a degree of pride could never be evinced by them, were they not secretly influenced by a brutish contempt of God. They speak in high and magnificent terms of regeneration, as if the whole kingdom of Christ consisted in purity of life. But in doing away with the principal blessing of the everlasting covenant — gratuitous reconciliation — which God's people are commanded to seek daily, and in puffing up both themselves and others with a vain pride, they show what spirit they are of. Let us hold them in detestation, since they scruple not to put open contempt upon God. This of itself, however, which we have stated, is not enough; for the Papists themselves acknowledge that were God to enter upon an examination of men's lives as a judge, all would lie obnoxious to just condemnation. And in this respect they are sounder, more moderate and sober, than those Cyclopses and monsters in heresy of whom we have just spoken. But though not arrogating to themselves righteousness in the whole extent of it, they show, by obtruding their merits and satisfactions, that they are very far from following the example of David. They are always ready to acknowledge some defect in their works, and so, in seeking God's favor, they plead for the assistance of his mercy. But there is nothing intermediate between these two things, which are represented in Scripture as opposites — being justified by faith and justified by works. It is absurd for the Papists to invent a third species of righteousness, which is partly wrought out by works of their own, and partly imputed to them by God in his mercy. Without all doubt, when he affirmed that no man could stand before God were his works brought to judgment, David

had no idea of this complex or twofold righteousness, but would shut us up at once to the conclusion that God is only favorable upon the ground of his mercy, since any reputed righteousness of man has no significance before him.

3. *For the enemy hath persecuted my soul.* Having acknowledged that he only suffered the just punishment of his sins, David comes now to speak of his enemies; for to have begun by speaking of them would have been a preposterous order. Their cruelty was shown in their not resting satisfied but with the destruction of one who was a saint of God; he declares that he must even now perish unless God should help him speedily. The comparison is not merely to a dead man, but a putrid corpse; for by *the dead of an age* [250] are meant those who have been long removed from the world. Such language intimates that he not only trusted in God as he who could heal him of a deadly disease, but considered that though his life should be buried, as it were, and long out of mind, God could raise it again, and restore his very ashes.

250 ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠. These words are differently rendered in the ancient versions. The Septuagint has ὡς νεκροὺς αἰωνος, *as the dead of the age*; the Syriac, *forever*; the Chaldee, *as they that lie down of that age.* The real sense of the expression is, *as they who have been dead a long time.* The Psalmist employs hyperbolical language in this verse; he says, the enemy hath beaten his life to the ground, hath made him dwell in dark places, and for such a length of time, that there remained no remembrance of him, and that he had become like those persons who had long since been in their graves. The design of all this is to express emphatically great sorrow and oppression." — Phillips.

Psalm 143:4-7

4. And my spirit is perplexed within me, my heart within me is astonished. **5.** I remembered the days of old, I meditated upon all thy works; I meditated upon the work of thy hands. **6.** I spread out my hands to thee, my soul is to thee as the earth without water. [251] Selah. **7.** Hasten, answer me, O Jehovah! my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, because I shall be like to those descending into the pit.

4. *And my spirit*, etc. Hitherto he has spoken of the troubles that were without, now he acknowledges the feebleness of his spirits, from which it is evident that his strength, was not like that of the rock, imperturbable or without feeling, but that, while overwhelmed with grief as to the feeling of the flesh, he owed his support entirely to faith and the grace of the Spirit. We are taught by his example not to throw up the conflict in despair, however much we may be weakened, and even exanimated by afflictions, as God will enable us to surmount them, if we only rise to him with our hearts amidst all our anxieties.

In the next verse David mentions that he had diligently sought means whereby to mitigate his grief. It is not to be wondered at, that many who spontaneously give themselves up to inaction, should sink under their trials, not using means to invigorate themselves by calling to remembrance the grace of God. Sometimes, it is true, our trials are only more keenly felt when we recall the former kindness which God may have shown to us, the comparison tending to awaken our feelings, and render them more acute; but David proposed a different end than this to himself, and gathered confidence from the past mercies of God. The very best method in order to obtain relief in trouble, when we are about to faint under it, is to call to mind the former loving-kindness of the Lord. Nor does David mean such as he had experienced from childhood, as some have thought, adopting in my judgment too restricted a sense; for the word ⊠⊠⊠, *kedem*, has a more extensive signification. I have no doubt, therefore, that he includes past history, as well as his own personal experience, it being easy to discover proofs there of God's continued goodness to his people. We should ourselves learn by his example, in reflecting upon personal favors received from God, to remember also how often he has assisted those that served him, and improve the truth for our own benefit. Should this not immediately or at once abate the bitterness of our grief, yet the advantage of it will afterwards appear. In the passage before us, David complains

251 In the Book of Common Prayer it is — "My soul gaspeth unto thee as a thirsty land." Mant translates similarly. The word *gaspeth* is a supplement, but it may convey the precise meaning; and according to this view the allusion is to the cracking of the lands of the east, in consequence of the extreme drought of the summer months. These dry lands, as has been noticed by travelers, have often chinks too deep for a person to see to the bottom of. This may be observed in the Indies more than anywhere, a little before the autumnal rains fall, and, wherever the lands are rich and hard. See Jeremiah 14:4.

that he did not get relief from his anxieties and cares from this consolatory source, but he prosecuted his meditations in expectation of finding the good result in due time. The verb ⊠⊠⊠, *suach*, I have elsewhere observed, may mean either *to declare with the tongue*, or *to revolve in the mind*. Some accordingly read — "I have discoursed of thy works." But as the verb ⊠⊠⊠, *hagah*, means to *meditate*, I consider that the Psalmist repeats the same thing twice, and this in token of earnestness. We will often upon a slight exercise of the thoughts upon God's works, start aside from them almost immediately; nor is it matter of surprise, that, in this case, there results no solid comfort. That our knowledge may be abiding we must call in the aid of constant attention.

6. *I have stretched forth my hands to thee*. Here appears the good effect of meditation, that it stirred David up to pray; for if we reflect seriously upon the acting's of God towards his people, and towards ourselves in our own experience, this will necessarily lead out our minds to seek after him, under the alluring influence of his goodness. Prayer, indeed, springs from faith; but as practical proofs of the favor and mercy confirm this faith, they are means evidently fitted for dissipating languor. He makes use of a striking figure to set forth the ardor of his affection, comparing *his soul to the parched earth.* In great heats we see that the earth is cleft, and opens, as it were, its mouth to heaven for moisture. David therefore intimates, he drew near to God with vehement desire, as if the very sap of life failed him, as he shows more fully in the verse which follows. In this he gives another proof of his extraordinary faith. Feeling himself weak, and ready to sink into the very grave, he does not vacillate between this and the other hope of relief, but fixes his sole dependence upon God. And heavy as the struggle was that he underwent with his own felt weakness, the fainting of spirit he speaks of was a better stimulant to prayer than any stoical obstinacy he might have shown in suppressing fear, grief, or anxiety. We must not overlook the fact, how in order to induce himself to depend exclusively upon God, he dismisses all other hopes from his mind, and makes a chariot to himself of the extreme necessity of his case, in which he ascends upwards to God.

Psalm 143:8-12

8. Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning, for in thee have I hoped; show me the way in which I may walk, for I have lifted up my soul to thee. **9.** Deliver me, O Jehovah! from my enemies; I have hidden with thee. **10.** Teach me that I may do thy will, for thou art my God; let thy good Spirit lead me into the right land. **11.** For thy name's sake, O Lord! thou wilt quicken me: in thy righteousness bring my soul out of trouble. **12.** And in thy mercy thou wilt scatter my enemies, and thou wilt destroy [252] all them that afflict my soul, for I am thy servant.

8. *Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness.* In this verse he again prays that God would show him his favor visibly and effectually. The expression cause me to hear, may seem not very proper, as the goodness of God is rather felt than heard; but as the mere perception of God's benefits, without a believing apprehension and improvement of them, would do us little good, David very properly begins with hearing. We see how wicked men riot in the abundance of them, while yet they have no sense of the Lord's goodness, through want of attention to the word, and a believing apprehension of God as a father. The adverb in the morning some confine to a reference to sacrifices — which is a meager interpretation — in allusion to the well-known fact that sacrifices used to be offered twice, in the morning and in the evening. Others give a more strained sense, understanding that when God deals in a more favorable way with his people, he is said to form a new day. [253] Others consider it to be a metaphor for a prosperous and happy condition, as an afflicted and calamitous time is often denoted by darkness. I wonder that there should be such a search after extraneous meanings for this word, by which he is simply to be considered as repeating his former prayer to God — make haste. In the morning means the same with speedily or seasonably. He founds a reason here, as elsewhere, upon his having hoped in God, this being something by which, in a sense, we lay God under obligation to us, for in making a liberal offer of himself to us, and promising to sustain the relationship of a father, he gives what men would call a pledge. This, accordingly, is a species of obligation. But so far is this from implying any worthiness or merit on our part, that the hope we entertain rather proves our nothingness and helplessness. His prayer that a way might be opened up for him to walk in, refers to the

252 In our English Bible the verbs "quicken," "scatter," and "destroy," are in the imperative mood; but Calvin renders them in the future tense. In this he is followed by Dr. Hammond and Bishop Horne; "and then," as this last commentator remarks, "the Psalm will end as usual, with an act of faith and assurance that all those mercies which have been asked shall be obtained."

253 "Que Dieu quand il commence a traitter ses serviteurs plus doucement, fait (par maniere de dire) luire un jour nouveau." — *Fr.*

anxieties which perplexed him. He intimates that he was dismayed, and brought to a stand, unable to move a step, if God did not open a way, by his divine power; that all the desires of his soul terminated upon him; and that he looked for counsel from him to procure relief in his perplexity.

9. *Deliver me, O Jehovah! from my enemies*. This prayer is to the same effect, his enemies being so earnestly bent upon his destruction as to leave no outgate for him. The verb ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *chisithi*, some render *to hope*: the proper meaning is *to cover*, and I am unwilling to depart from it. The explanation some give is, that David upon perceiving the imminent danger to which he was exposed, betook himself to the covert of God's shadow, and concealed himself under the protection of it. This seems a very natural rendering, at least I prefer it to another which has recommended itself to some as being ingenious — that David, instead of having recourse to various quarters for relief, was satisfied to have God cognizant of his case, and called upon him in a hidden manner and apart.

10. *Teach me that I may do thy will*. He now rises to something higher, praying not merely for deliverance from outward troubles, but, what is of still greater importance, for the guidance of God's Spirit, that he might not decline to the right hand or to the left, but be kept in the path of rectitude. This is a request which should never be forgotten when temptations assail us with great severity, as it is peculiarly difficult to submit to God without resorting to unwarrantable methods of relief. As anxiety, fear, disease, languor, or pain, often tempt persons to particular steps, David's example should bad us to pray for divine restraint, and that we may not be hurried, through impulses of feeling, into unjustifiable courses. We are to mark carefully his way of expressing himself, for what he asks is not simply to be taught what the will of God is, but to be taught and brought to the observance, and doing of it. The former kind of teaching is of less avail, as upon God's showing us our duty we by no means necessarily follow it, and it is necessary that he should draw out our affections to himself. God therefore must be master and teacher to us not only in the dead letter, but by the inward motions of his Spirit; indeed there are three ways in which he acts the part of our teacher, instructing us by his word, enlightening our minds by the Spirit, and engraving instruction upon our hearts, so as to bring us observe it with a true and cordial consent. The mere hearing of the word would serve no purpose, nor is it enough that we understand it; there must be besides the willing' obedience of the heart. Nor does he merely say, Teach me that I may be capable of doing, as the deluded Papists imagine that the grace of God does no more than make us flexible to what is good, but he seeks something to be actually and presently done.

He insists upon the same thing in the next clause, when he says, *Let thy good Spirit lead me*, *etc*., for he desires the guidance of the Spirit not merely as he enlightens our minds, but as he effectually influences the consent of our hearts, and as it were leads us by the hand. The passage in its connection warns us of the necessity of being sedulously on our guard

against yielding to inordinate passions in any contests we may have with wicked persons, and as we have no sufficient wisdom or power of our own by which to check and restrain these passions, that we should always seek the guidance of God's Spirit, to keep them in moderation. More generally, the passage teaches us what we are to think of free will; for David here denies the will to have the power of judging rightly, till our hearts be formed to a holy obedience by the Spirit of God. The term leading, which I have already adverted to, proves also that David did not hold that middle species of grace which Papists talk so much about, and which leaves man in a state of suspension or indecision, but asserts something much more effectual, agreeably to what Paul says, (Philippians 2:13,) that

"it is God who works in us both to will and to do
of his good pleasure."

By the words *right hand*, I understand, figuratively, *uprightness*; David's meaning being, that we are drawn into error whenever we decline from what is agreeable to the will of God. The term *Spirit* is tacitly opposed to that corruption which is natural to us; what he says being tantamount to this, that all men's thoughts are polluted and perverted, till reduced to right rule by the grace of the Spirit. It follows that nothing which is dictated by the judgment of the flesh is good or sound. I grant that wicked men are led away by an evil spirit sent from God, for he executes his judgments by the agency of devils, [254] (1 Samuel 16:14;) but when David in this place speaks of God's *good Spirit*, I do not imagine that he has any such strained allusion, but rather that he takes here to himself the charge of corruption, and assigns the praise of whatever is good, upright, or true, to the Spirit of God. When he says, *Because thou art my God,* he shows that his confidence of obtaining his request was founded entirely upon the free favor and promises of God. It is not a matter lying within our own power to make him our God, but it rests with his free preventing grace.

11. *For thy name's sake, O Jehovah! etc.* By this expression he makes it still more clear that it was entirely of God's free mercy that he looked for deliverance; for, had he brought forward anything of his own, the cause would not have been in God, and only in God. He is said to help us *for his own name's sake,* when, although he discovers nothing in us to conciliate his favor, he is induced to interpose of his mere goodness. To the same effect is the term *righteousness*; for God, as I have said elsewhere, has made the deliverance of his people a means of illustrating his righteousness. He at the same time repeats what he had said as to the extraordinary extent of his afflictions: in seeking to be quickened or made alive, he declares himself to be exanimated, and that he must remain under the power of death, if the God who has the issues of life did not recover him by a species of resurrection.

254 "Je confesse bien que le mauvais esprit de Dieu agite et transporte les reprouvez, (car Dieu execute ses jugemens par les diables,)" etc. — *Fr.*

12. *And in thy mercy, etc.* In this verse he repeats for the fifth or sixth time that he looked for life only of God's free mercy. Whatever severity may appear on the part of God when he destroys the wicked, David affirms that the vengeance taken upon them would be a proof of fatherly mercy to him. Indeed these two things often meet together — the severity and the goodness of God; for in stretching out his hand to deliver his own people, he directs the thunder of his indignation against their enemies. In short, he comes forth armed for the deliverance of his people, as he says in Isaiah,

"The day of vengeance is in mine heart,
and this is the year of my redemption." (Isaiah 63:4.)

In calling himself *The servant of God,* he by no means boasts of his services, but rather commends the grace of God, to whom he owed this privilege. This is not an honor to be got by our own struggles or exertions — to be reckoned among God's servants; it depends upon his free choice, by which he condescends before we are born to take us into the number and rank of his followers, as David elsewhere declares still more explicitly —

"I am thy servant, truly I am thy servant,
and the son of thine handmaid." (Psalm 116:16.)

This is equivalent to making himself God's client, and committing his life to his protection.

PSALM 144

This Psalm contains a mixture of praise trod prayer; for David, while he extols in very high terms the great mercies which God had bestowed upon him, is led at the same time, either from a consideration of the many trials to be met with in the whole course of human life, or from the connection he still had with wicked men, to pray that God would continue to show this favor to the end. There is this difference between it and Psalm 18, [255] that the latter is triumphant throughout, the kingdom having been thoroughly subdued, and affairs going forward prosperously, whereas in the present he mixes up one or two things which are indicative of fear and anxiety, there being some remaining enemies to cause him apprehension. [256]

A Psalm of David.

255 The ideas and the phraseology of a considerable part of this Psalm appear to be borrowed from the eighteenth.

256 The occasion on which this Psalm was written can only be conjectured. The Septuagint, Vulgate, Aethiopic, and Arabic versions entitle it "A Psalm of David against Goliah;" and that the Chaldee paraphrast took this to be the subject of the Psalm is evident from his reading in verse 10th, "the sword of Goliah." Judging, however, from internal evidence, the enemies referred to seem rather to be those of David and his kingdom, after he ascended the throne. Some refer the Psalm to David's war with the Ammonites and Syrians, recorded in 2 Samuel 10; and it may have been composed by him when about to encounter these hostile powers.

Psalm 144:1-4

1. Blessed be Jehovah, my strength, who teaches my hands for battle, my fingers for war. **2.** My goodness, and my munition, my citadel, and my deliverer, my shield, and in him I have hoped, who subdues my people under me. **3.** O Jehovah! what is man that thou acknowledgest him? the son of man that thou thinkest of him? **4.** Man is like to vanity: his deeds are as a shadow passing away.

1. *Blessed be Jehovah, my strength* [257] It is very evident that David, since he celebrates the favor of God in such high terms, had not only obtained the kingdom, but gained signal victories. When he calls God *his strength*, he acknowledges that any courage he had was given him from above, not only because he had been made from a country shepherd a mighty warrior, but because the constancy and perseverance he had shown was signally a gift from God. This term answers better than were we to translate it rock; for, by way of explanation, he adds immediately afterwards, that he had been formed under God's teaching for war. The words certainly imply an acknowledgment, that though of a warlike spirit, he was not born for warlike enterprises but needed to undergo a change. What kind of a commencement, for example, did he show in the case of Goliah? That attempt would have been preposterous on any other supposition than his being upheld by secret divine support, so as to be independent of mere human help. (1 Samuel 17:40.)

2. *My goodness, etc.* This way of using the word in a passive sense, as in the Hebrew, sounds harsh in Latin; just as elsewhere (Psalm 18:50) he calls himself "God's king," not in the sense of his having dominion over God, but being made and appointed king by him. Having experienced God's kindness in so many ways, he calls him "his goodness," meaning that whatever good he possessed flowed from him. The accumulation of terms, one upon another, which follows, may appear unnecessary, yet it tends greatly to strengthen faith. We know how unstable men's minds are, and especially how soon faith wavers, when they are assailed by some trial of more than usual severity. It is not enough, if God would sustain us under such weakness, to promise us his help in individual or single expressions; and, even however many aids he supplies us with, we are subject to very great vacillations, and a forgetfulness of his mercy creeps in upon us which almost overwhelms our minds. We are to remember that it is not merely in token of his gratitude that David heaps together so many terms in declaring the goodness of God, but to fortify God's people against all attacks of the world, and of the evil one. He had a reason for reckoning it among the chiefest of God's mercies, that he controlled the people under his government. For ⌧⌧⌧, *ami*, *my people*, some

257 "Ou, mon rocher." — *Fr. marg.* "Or, my rock."

read, ⬚⬚⬚⬚, *amim*, *peoples*; [258] and it is surprising they should prefer such a forced rendering, as David means simply that the settled state of the kingdom was owing not to any counsel, valor, or authority of his own, but to God's secret favor. The verb ⬚⬚⬚, *radad*, is used appropriately, signifying *to spread out*. The idea some have, that by a people spread out is meant a people set down at ease in a prosperous and happy condition, is farfetched. I have as great objections to the idea of others, that he means a people laid prostrate, so as that they may be trodden under foot; for a violent domination like this would not have been desirable over the chosen people, and sacred inheritance of the Lord. When a people yields a cordial and willing obedience to the laws, all subordinating themselves to their own place peaceably, this signally proves the divine blessing. And in such a settlement as this, where there is no turbulence, nor confusion, the people are appropriately represented, according to what we have said above, as being *spread out*. David accordingly having ascribed the victories he had gained over foreign enemies to God, thanks him at the same time for the settled state of the kingdom. Raised indeed as he was from an obscure station, and exposed to hatred from calumnious charges, it was scarcely to have been believed that he would ever obtain a peaceable reign. The people had suddenly and beyond expectation submitted to him, and so surprising a change was eminently God's work.

3. *O Jehovah! what is man*, *etc*. He amplifies the goodness shown by God by instituting a comparison. Having declared how singularly he had been dealt with, he turns his eyes inward, and asks, "Who am I, that God should show me such condescension? "He speaks of man in general; only the circumstance is noticeable that he commends the mercy of God, by considering his lowly and abject condition. In other places he mentions grounds of humiliation of a more personal or private nature, — here he confines himself to what has reference to our common nature; and though even in discussing the nature of man there are other reasons he might have specified why he is unworthy of the regard and love of God, he briefly adverts to his being like the smoke, and as a *shadow*. [259] We are left to infer that the riches of the divine goodness are extended to objects altogether unworthy in themselves.

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258 Those who conjecture that ⬚⬚⬚⬚, *amim*, is the correct reading, refer to the parallel passage in Psalm 18:47, where the word is in the plural. They also observe in support of their opinion, that this reading is actually found in a great number of MSS. examined by Kennieott and De Rossi; and they account for ⬚⬚⬚, *ami*, having got into the text by supposing that it was written in the first instance as a contraction for ⬚⬚⬚⬚, *amim*. Rosenmuller supposes, but with less probability, that the original word was ⬚⬚, and that the letter ⬚, *yod*, is paragogic, that is, has been annexed to improve the sound; ⬚⬚, *am*, being taken collectively. The Masorets have noticed that ⬚⬚, which the translators of our English Bible took to be ⬚⬚, with its possessive affix here, in 2 Samuel 22:44, and Lamentations 3:14, and consequently rendered by *my people*, is to be taken as the plural number of that noun.

259 "Et mesmes combion qu'en espluchant la nature des hommes il eust peu toucher d'autres choses, pour lesquelles ils sont indignes. — neantmoins," etc. — *Fr.*

We are warned, when apt at any time to forget ourselves, and think we are something when we are nothing, that the simple fact of the shortness of our life should put down all arrogance and pride. The Scriptures, in speaking of the frailty of man, comprehend whatever is necessarily connected with it. And, indeed, if our life vanish in a moment, what is there stable about us? We taught this truth also — that we cannot properly estimate the divine goodness, unless we take into consideration what we are as to our condition, as we can only ascribe to God what is due unto him, by acknowledging that his goodness is bestowed upon undeserving creatures. The reader may seek for further information upon this point in the eighth Psalm, where nearly the same truth is insisted upon.

Psalm 144:5-8

5. O Jehovah! bow thy heavens, [260] and descend: [261] touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. **6.** Thunder forth thunderings, and scatter them; [262] shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them. **7.** Send thy hand from above, rid me and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of the sons of the stranger. **8.** For their mouth hath spoken falsehood; and their right hand is a right hand of deceit.

5. *O Jehovah! bow thy heavens*. After extolling, as was due, the great goodness of God, he requests him to furnish such help for the preservation of the kingdom as was necessary in the present exigency. As formerly we saw that he had gloried in God with a heroical courage, so here he makes use of the same lofty terms in his prayers, That he would bow the heavens — that he would make the mountains to smoke — disturb the air with thunderings — and shoot forth arrows; forms of speech by which, doubtless, he would put away from him all the obstacles which stand between us and a believing apprehension of the omnipotence of God, and from which we find it so difficult to emerge. He employs almost the same phraseology in the eighteenth Psalm, but it is in praising God for help already extended, and to signify that he had been preserved from above in a wonderful and unusual manner. For although such signs as he mentions might not always occur when God interposed in his behalf, he had good ground to celebrate what had happened to him of an unexpected kind, by reference to extraordinary phenomena. In the passage before us his purpose is different. Threatened by destruction of various kinds, which might overwhelm his mind with despair, he would realize the wonderful power of God, before which all obstacles of a worldly kind must necessarily give way. We may be certain at least that he indulged in this figurative phraseology for a good reason, that he might not confine deliverance to human remedies; for nothing could be more preposterous at such a time than to measure divine power by ordinary rules.

260 "*Bow thy heavens*. This expression is derived from the appearance of the clouds during a tempest: they hang low, so as to obscure the hills and mountains, and seem to mingle heaven and earth together. Such an appearance is figuratively used to depict the coming of God, to execute vengeance upon the enemies of his people. See Psalm 18:10, and other instances." — *Walford*

261 The verbs in this and the two following verses are in the imperative mood, whereas in the corresponding passages in the eighteenth Psalm they are in the past tense. This difference is best accounted for by supposing, with Calvin, that these verses are the language of prayer, uttered by David in a time of threatened danger from the enemies of his kingdom and people; whilst those of the eighteenth Psalm were spoken after some signal deliverance or deliverances had been vouchsafed.

262 "Scatter them. The antecedent of 'them' is 'peoples' in verse second." — *Walford*.

7. *Send thy hand*, etc. In one word we are now made to see what was meant by the figures formerly used — that in the absence of all earthly help, God would put forth his hand from above, the greatness of the exigency making extraordinary help necessary. Accordingly he compares his enemies to great and deep waters. He calls them strangers, not in respect of generic origin, but character and disposition. It were a mistake to refer the term to the uncircumcision, for David rather animadverts upon degenerate Jews who gloried in the flesh; and shortly afterwards he hints that he had to do with internal foes rather than a foreign enemy, who would openly assault him with violence and arms. By the right hand of falsehood some understand rash attempts, which David hoped would be frustrated. Others limit the phrase to the solemn ceremony of taking an oath, as if he said they were perjured; [263] while others explain it as meaning that they not only lied with the tongue, but executed wicked devices with the hand. [264] But as it was customary in making promises to join hands, as Solomon says, (Proverbs 11:21; Proverbs 16:5,) I have no doubt David's reference here is to false, treacherous, and perfidious persons. The two things go naturally together in the verse — the lying tongue and the deceitful hand, meaning upon the matter that nothing was to be looked for from any of their promises, since it was only to deceive that they flattered with their mouth and gave the hand.

263 "In taking an oath the right hand was lifted up. The enemies of David profaned their oaths by violating the covenants into which they entered, and breaking their solemn engagements." — *Walford*.

264 "The meaning is, the hands with which they confirm their treaties of peace and leagues of friendship are immediately lifted up against the lives and liberties of their allies." — *Warner*.

Psalm 144:9-11
9. O God! I will sing a new song to thee: upon the nablum, upon the psaltery, [265] I will sing psalms to thee. **10.** Giving salvation to kings, delivering David his servant from the hurtful sword. **11.** Deliver me, and rescue me from the hand of the sons of the stranger, whose mouth hath spoken falsehood, and their right hand is a right hand of deceit.

9. *O God! I will sing a new song to thee*. He again sets himself, with self-possession, to the exercise of praising God, not doubting but he would continue those mercies which he had once bestowed. I have taken notice in another place that by a *new song* is meant one of a singular or uncommon kind; and we are left from this to infer that David's expectations stretched beyond the conclusions of man's judgment; for, with a view to the greatness of the help to be extended, he promises a song of praise unprecedented in its nature, and distinguished, by the title here applied to it, from ordinary thanksgiving's. As to the *nablum* and *psaltery*, I have elsewhere observed that they formed part of that system of training under the law to which the Church was subjected in its infancy. But the chief thing to be noticed is the subject of his songs that God, who is the preserver of kings, had kept — and even rescued from the sword — David, whom he had made and anointed king by his author-

265 In the French version it is — "Upon the psaltery, and upon an instrument of ten strings." It is evident that Calvin supposed two instruments to be here mentioned. This, however, has been doubted. The rendering in the Hebrew text is — ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠, *benebel asor*, "with a nobel (or psaltery, as the term is translated in our English Bible) ten (*stringed*)." Thus only one musical instrument may be indicated — "the psaltery of ten strings." In Psalm 33:2, we read similarly, ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠, *benebel asor*, "with the psaltery ten (*stringed*)." In Psalm 42:3, however, nebel and *asor* are represented as two distinct musical instruments. We there read, -⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠-⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠, *ale-asor veale-nabel*, "upon the *asor* or *ten* (*stringed instrument*), and upon the nebel *or* psaltery." But whatever inference may be drawn from the independent exhibition of *asor* in that text, yet in the passage before us, and in Psalm 33:2, if we may judge from the construction, it seems rather to represent the number of strings of the common nebel or psaltery, or a particular variety of that instrument, than to be a distinct musical instrument. With respect to the Hebrew nebel from which comes the ναβλος; of the Greeks, and the *nablum* of the Latins, our information is very limited and indistinct. It is supposed to have been a stringed instrument of the harp or lyre kind, and appears to have been of the triangular form. As it is not noticed in Scripture earlier than the days of David, it is not considered of equal antiquity with some other musical instruments. It was formed of precious wood, as we learn from 1 Kings 10:12, and ultimately, according to Josephus, of that species of precious mixed metal called *electrum*. From its being never mentioned in the Sacred Writings, except in connection with the worship of the sanctuary, it has been conjectured that it was not used in private, and that it was probably larger, and more costly, than other instruments of a similar kind. Josephus says that it was played upon with the fingers, and had twelve strings. The number of strings may, however, have varied according to circumstances.

itative decree. As to the idea of there being implied in the term *kings* an opposition to the commonalty, David meaning that not only the common class of people are indebted to divine preservation, but the more influential, and such as appear to have sufficient and abundant strength of their own, I question whether it be well founded. His meaning seems to me rather to be different from this, That while God preserves all men without exception, his care is peculiarly extended to the maintenance of political order, which is the foundation of the common safety of all. It is in effect as if he called him the guardian and defender of kingdoms; for as the very mention of government is an odious thing, and none willingly obeys another, and nothing is more contrary to natural inclination than servitude, men would seek to throw off the yoke, and subvert the thrones of kings, were these not hedged round by a hidden divine presidency. David, however, distinguishes himself from other kings, as elsewhere he is called "the firstborn of kings," (Psalm 89:27;) at least he speaks of the goodness of God as having been preeminently shown to him, representing himself as holding the highest place, on account of the holy anointing which had been more eminently bestowed upon him. As a title of distinction, he claims the special name of *God's servant*; for although all kings are God's servants, and Cyrus has the name applied to him by Isaiah emphatically, (Isaiah 45:1,) yet as no heathen prince ever recognized himself as called of God, and David alone of all others in the world was invested with legitimate authority, and had a warrant to reign which faith could rest upon with certainty, it was not without reason that this mark of distinction is applied to him. By *the hurtful sword*, are doubtless meant all the dangers he had passed through for a series of years, which were such that he might be truly said to have come to the throne by deaths oft, and to have been settled upon the throne in the midst of them.

Psalm 144:12-15

12. Because our sons are as plants which have grown up in their youth, our daughters as corners polished after the similitude of a palace. [266] **13.** Our recesses [or corners] full, going out, [267] from kind to kind; our sheep brining forth to thousands, to ten thousands, [268] in our streets. [269] **14.** Our oxen accustomed [270] to the burden, no breach, nor going out, nor cry in our streets. **15.** Happy the people to whom it is so! happy the people whose God is Jehovah!

12. *Because our sons, etc.* These three concluding verses some consider as being a wish or a prayer. [271] Others think that David congratulates himself, and all the people, that through the divine blessing every species of mercy was showered down prosperously upon them. I have no doubt that David commemorates, by way of thanksgiving, the liberality which God had shown to his people. But it consists very well with this, to suppose that he prays at the same time for the continuance or preservation of those divine benefits which must well-nigh be cut off altogether by wicked men and domestic foes, unless God should interpose, in the troubles and confusions which prevailed. The end he has in view therefore is, that God would not suffer the signal blessings with which he had loaded his people to fail and depart. He begins by making mention of the children, comparing the male portion of them, by way of commendation of their excellency, *to plants which have grown up in their*

266 "The paraphrase of Bishop Patrick, doubtless, conveys the real meaning: 'Tall and beautiful, like those polished pillars which are the ornaments of a palace.'" — *Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible*. "*The polished corners of the Temple* — rather, *the sculptured angles*, the ornament of a palace. Great care and much ornament were bestowed by the ancients upon the angles of their splendid edifices. It is remarkable that the Greeks made use of pilasters, called Caryatides, (carved after the figure of a woman dressed in long robes,) to support the entablatures of their buildings." — Cresswell.

267 "Ou, produisans, fournissans." — *Fr*, *marg*. "Or, producing, providing."

268 In the East sheep are remarkably fruitful, bringing forth, as Boehart shows, not only two at a time, (Song 4:2,) but sometimes three or four, and that twice a year. This accounts for the prodigious number of sheep which whitened the extensive pastures of Syria and Canaan. See 2 Kings 3:4; 1 Chronicles 5:21; 2 Chronicles 35:7; Psalm 65:14 [*sic*].

269 "*In our streets*. Streets are not proper places for sheep. The word ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *chutzoth*, is different from that properly rendered 'streets' in the ensuing verse, and is the same that is translated 'fields' in Job 5:10. The word literally means 'outplaces,' and as such is susceptible of various applications; in the present text it probably denotes the outpastures in the commons and deserts." — *Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible*

270 "Ou, gras." — *Fr. marg*. "Or, fat."

271 "Grant that our sons may be as plants," etc. Such is the view taken by the Translators of the English Bible.

youth; for trees rarely come to any height if they do not grow large early, and when yet tender. He speaks of the girls as being like *corners skillfully and ingeniously cut out*, to make the building beautiful; as if he would say that they adorned the house by their comeliness and elegance. It is not surprising that he should reckon a noble and well trained offspring to be the very first of God's earthly blessings, a point of which I have spoken elsewhere more at large. As David speaks in the name of the whole people, and of his own condition as mixed up with that of the community, we may infer from this that he was not exclusively occupied with his own private interests.

13. *Our recesses full*, *etc*. Some read *storehouses*, [272] and I would not reject this meaning. But as the word comes from the same root with ☒☒☒, *zavah*, which is rendered corner in the previous verse, it seems more agreeable to the etymology to translate the words as I have done — "that the recesses or corners were full." The participle ☒☒☒☒☒, *mephikim*, some take transitively, and read *producing*, but the meaning comes to the same thing, that abundance of every blessing flowed from all the corners, expression ☒☒-☒☒ ☒☒☒, *mizan el-zan*, [273] seems to me to denote the variety and manifold nature of the blessings, rather than, as some interpreters think, so abundant a produce as would issue in the different species being mixed, and forming a confused heap owing to the unmanageable plenty. We have no need to have recourse to this strained hyperbole, and the words as they stand evidently do not favor that sense, for had a confused heap been meant, it would have read simply ☒☒ ☒☒, *zan*. The meaning in short is, that there prevailed amongst the people such plenty, not only of wheat, but all kinds of produce, that every corner was filled to sufficiency with every variety.

14. *Our oxen*, *etc*. The Hebrew word ☒☒☒, *sabal*, is properly to carry. Accordingly some understand ☒☒☒☒☒☒, *mesubbalim*, to mean robust, [274] as unless they were strong oxen they would not be fit for carriage, or bearing burdens. Others think they are spoken of as laden with fat. There is no need for insisting upon this point, as it does not affect the main scope of the passage. It may be more important to notice, that God's fatherly care of his people is celebrated on the account that he condescends to attend to every the smallest matter which

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272 ☒☒☒☒☒, *Our garners*. This word is to be found in Scripture only once, but it has most probably the same root as ☒☒☒☒, and it may denote primarily *our corners*, and then our *garners*; because garners or storehouses were usually at the ends or corners of edifices." — *Phillips*

273 Literally, "from kind to kind."

274 ☒☒☒☒☒☒, *burdened*, viz. with flesh, according to Pagninus, who has *onusti carne*. The root is ☒☒☒, and the form is the pual participle, which occurs only in this place. Compensis has paraphrased it: santi et ferendis *oneribus apti*. Perhaps burdened oxen may be a phrase equivalent to our *beasts of burden* such as are strong and adapted to carry burdens; and here the prayer of the Psalmist is, that they may be *eminently* fitted for this service." — *Phillips*

concerns their advantage. As in the verse before he had ascribed the fruitfulness of the herds and flocks to God's goodness, so now the fattening of their oxen, to show that there is nothing relating to us here which he overlooks. As it would signify little to have abundance of everything unless we could enjoy it, he takes notice of it as another part of the Lord's kindness that the people were peaceable and quiet. By *breach* I have no doubt that he alludes to hostile incursions, that there was no enemy to break in upon them through demolished gates or walls. By *goings out* it is surprising that any should understand exile, that the people were not torn away from the bounds of their native country. All he means simply is, in my opinion, that there was no necessity of sallying out to repel an enemy, none offering violence or molestation. To the same effect is the expression, as to any crying in the streets, the effect of a sudden tumult. The meaning is, accordingly, that there was no disturbance in the cities, because God kept enemies at a distance.

15. *Happy the people*, *etc*. He thus concludes that the divine favor had been sufficiently shown and manifested to his people. Should any object that it breathed altogether a gross and worldly spirit to estimate man's happiness by benefits of a transitory description, I would say in reply that we must read the two things in connection, that those are happy who recognize the favor of God in the abundance they enjoy, and have such a sense of it from these transitory blessings as leads them through a persuasion of his fatherly love to aspire after the true inheritance. There is no impropriety in calling those happy whom God blesses in this world, provided they do not show themselves blinded in the improvement and use which they make of their mercies, or foolishly and supinely overlook the author of them. The kind providence of God in not suffering us to want any of the means of life is surely a striking illustration of his wonderful love. What more desirable than to be the objects of God's care, especially if we have sufficient understanding to conclude from the liberality with which he supports us he is our Father? For everything is to be viewed with a reference to this point. Better it were at once to perish for want than have a mere brute satisfaction, and forget the main thing of all, that they and they only are happy whom God has chosen for his people. We are to observe this, that while God in giving us meat and drink admits us to the enjoyment of a certain measure of happiness, it does not follow that those believers are miserable who struggle through life in want and poverty, for this want, whatever it be, God can counterbalance by better consolations.

PSALM 145

The Psalmist is led to celebrate the praises of God by reflecting upon his excellent wisdom, goodness, and righteousness, both in the government of the world generally, and particularly in managing, superintending, and defending the children of men. After recounting in general the praises of his providence, he comes to speak of the special favor shown by him to his own people.

The Praise of David [275]

275 This Psalm is with much propriety entitled "Praise of David;" for it is throughout a continued celebration of the perfections and doings of God. It is certainly one of the most interesting and beautiful of the compositions of the sweet singer of Israel; and so high an opinion did the ancient Hebrews form of it that they were wont to say — "Whoever utters this Psalm thrice each day with the heart and tongue is a happy man, and shall infallibly enjoy the blessings of the world to come." The time and occasion of its composition can only be conjectured. Dr. Morison thinks it probable that it was composed by David when he and the nation of Israel obtained the blessings which he implored in the preceding Psalm; and that it is that new song which he purposed to sing (Psalm 144:9) when God appeared in glory for his chosen people. This is the last of the alphabetical Psalms. The first verse commences with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the second verse with the second letter, and so on to the close, with the exception that the hemistich of which ⊠, *nun*, was the commencing letter is wanting. The other alphabetical Psalms are Psalm 25, Psalm 34, Psalm 37, Psalm 111, Psalm 112, Psalm 119.

Psalm 145:1-6

1. I will extol thee, my God and my king! [276] and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. **2.** Daily I will bless thee, and will praise thy name for ever and ever. [277] **3.** Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised, and there is no searching out, his greatness. **4.** Generation to generation, will praise thy works, and will show forth thy power. **5.** I will meditate upon [278] the beauty of the glory of thy excellency, and the words of thy wonderful things. **6.** And they shall speak of the might of thy terrible works, and I will declare thy greatness.

1. *I will extol thee, my God and my king*. David does not so much tell what he would do himself, as stir up and urge all others to this religious service of offering to God the praises due to his name. The design with which he declares God to be beneficent to the children of men is, to induce them to cultivate a pious gratitude, he insists upon the necessity of persevering in the exercise; for since God is constant in extending mercies, it would be highly improper in us to faint in his praises. As he thus gives his people new ground for praising him, so he stimulates them to gratitude, and to exercise it throughout the whole course of their life. In using the term *daily*, he denotes perseverance in the exercise. Afterwards he adds, that should he live through a succession of ages he would never cease to act in this manner. The repetitions used tend very considerably to give emphasis to his language. As it is probable that the Psalm was written at a time when the kingdom of David was in a flourishing condition, the circumstances deserves notice, that in calling God *his king* he gives both himself and other earthly princes their proper place, and does not allow any earthly distinctions to interfere with the glory due to God.

This is made still more manifest in the verse which follows, where, in speaking of the greatness of God as unmeasurable, he intimates that we only praise God aright when we are filled and overwhelmed with an ecstatic admiration of the immensity of his power. This admiration will form the fountain from which our just praises of him will proceed, according the measure of our capacity.

4. *Generation to generation*, etc. Here he insists upon the general truth, that all men were made and are preserved in life for this end, that they may devote themselves to the praise of God. And there is an implied contrast between the eternal name of God, and that immortality of renown which great men seem to acquire by their exploits. Human excellencies

276 The Jewish government was a *theocracy*.

277 "In seculum et usque." — *Lat*. The original Hebrew words are לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, *leolam vaad*, which Dr. Adam Clarke had translated "*for ever and onward* in this and the coming world." "These sorts of expressions," he adds, "are very difficult to be translated."

278 "Ou, parleray." — *Fr. marg*. "Or, will speak of."

are eulogized in histories; with God it stands differently, for there is not a day in which he does not renew remembrance of his works, and cherish it by some present effect, so as indelibly to preserve it alive upon our minds. For the same reason he speaks of the *glorious brightness*, or beauty of his excellence, the better to raise in others a due admiration of it. *By the words of his wonderful works,* I consider that there is an allusion to the incomprehensible method of God's works, for so many are the wonders that they overwhelm our senses. And we may infer from this, that the greatness of God is not that which lies concealed in his mysterious essence, and in subtle disputation upon which, to the neglect of his works, many have been chargeable with mere trifling, for true religion demands practical not speculative knowledge. Having said that he would *speak of*, or *meditate upon God's works*, (for the Hebrew word, ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *asichah*, as we have elsewhere seen, may be rendered either way,) he transfers his discourse to others, intimating, that there will always be some in the world to declare the righteousness, goodness, and wisdom of God, and that his divine excellencies are worthy of being sounded, with universal consent, by every tongue. And, should others desist and defraud God of the honor due to him, he declares that he would himself at least discharge his part, and, while they were silent, energetically set forth the praises of God. Some think, that *the might of his terrible works* is an expression to the same effect with what had been already stated. But it seems rather to denote the judgments of God against profane scoffers.

Psalm 145:7-13

7. They shall steak forth [or, utter copiously] the memory of the greatness of thy goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. **8.** Jehovah is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and great in mercy. **9.** Jehovah is good to all, and his mercies above all his works. **10.** All thy works shall praise thee, O Jehovah! and thy merciful ones shall bless thee. **11.** They shall speak the glory of thy kingdom, and shall talk of thy power. **12.** That they may make known his powers to the sons of men, and the glory of the beauty of his kingdom. **13.** Thy kingdom is a kingdom of all ages, and thy dominion unto all successive generations. [279]

7. *They shall speak forth*, *etc*. As the verb ⬚⬚⬚, *nabang*, means properly to *gush out*, some suppose, that, as applied to speech, it means not simply speaking, but an overflowing utterance, like water rushing from a fountain, and the verb ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚, *yerannenu*, in the close of the verse, answers to this, meaning *to shout*, or *sing aloud*. To celebrate the memory of the Lord's goodness, is the same with recalling to memory what we have personally experienced of his goodness. We cannot deny God's claim to praise in all his excellencies, but we are most sensibly affected by such proofs of his fatherly mercy as we have ourselves experienced. David makes use, therefore, of this alluring consideration to induce us the more readily and cheerfully to engage in the praises of God, or rather, (according to the figurative word already used,) to burst forth in celebration of them.

8. *Jehovah is gracious*, *etc*. He opens up the goodness of which he spoke by using several expressions, as that God is inclined to mercy, (for such is the proper meaning of the word ⬚⬚⬚⬚, *channun*,) and that he helps us willingly, as one sympathizing with our miseries. It is to be noticed that David has borrowed the terms which he here applies to God from that

279 After this verse two lines appear to have been lost in the Hebrew text. The Psalm, as we have said before, is alphabetical; and each stanza begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in regular order, till we come to Psalm 145:14, when a break — the only one in the Psalm — takes place. Psalm 145:13 begins with the letter ⬚, *mem*, and Psalm 145:14 with the letter ⬚, *samech*. Thus the stanza beginning with the letter, ⬚, *nun*, is wanting. It is thus supplied in the Septuagint: Πιστὸς Κύριος ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ὅσιος ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ. "Faithful is Jehovah in all his words, and holy in all his works." Dr. Adam Clarke, after observing that there is not a verse answering to ⬚, *nun*, in any of the printed copies of the Hebrew Bible, states, that there is one MS., now in Trinity College, Dublin, which has it thus (he supposes by correction) at the bottom of the page: ⬚⬚⬚⬚ ⬚⬚⬚ ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚ ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚ ⬚⬚⬚ ⬚⬚⬚⬚ ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚ Neeman Yehovah be-cal debaraiv; ve-chasid be-cal maasaiv. This exactly corresponds with the reading in the Septuagint. "Nothing," says Dr. Lowth in Merrick's Annotations on the Psalms, "can be more certain than the genuineness of the verse ⬚ which the Septuagint has preserved, varying only in two words from Psalm 145:17."

celebrated passage in Exodus 34:6; and as the inspired writers drew their doctrine from the fountain of the law, we need not wonder that they set a high value upon the vision which is there recorded, and in which as clear and satisfactory a description of the nature of God is given us as can anywhere be found. David, therefore, in giving us a brief statement of what it was most important we should know in reference to God, makes use of the same terms employed there. Indeed no small part of the grace of God is to be seen in his alluring us to himself by such attractive titles. Were he to bring his power prominently into view before us, we would be cast down by the terror of it rather than encouraged, as the Papists represent him a dreadful God, from whose presence all must fly, whereas the proper view of him is that which invites us to seek after him. Accordingly, the more nearly that a person feels himself drawn to God, the more has he advanced in the knowledge of him. If it be true that God is not only willing to befriend us, but is spoken of as touched with sympathy for our miseries, so as to be all the kinder to us the more that we are miserable, what folly were it not to fly to him without delay? But as we drive God's goodness away from us by our sins, and block up the way of access, unless his goodness overcome this obstacle, it would be in vain that the Prophets spoke of his grace and mercy. [280] It was necessary, therefore, to add what follows, that great is his mercy, that he pardons sins, and bears with the wickedness of men, so as to show favor to the unworthy. As regards the ungodly, although God shows them his long-suffering patience, they are incapable of perceiving pardon, so that the doctrine on which we insist has a special application to believers only, who apprehend God's goodness by a living faith. To the wicked it is said —

"To what end is the day of the Lord for you? the day of the Lord is darkness and not light, affliction and not joy."
(Amos 5:18.)

We see in what severe terms Nahum threatens them at the very beginning of his prophecy. Having referred to the language used in the passage from Moses, he adds immediately, on the other hand, to prevent them being emboldened by it, that God is a rigid and severe, a terrible and an inexorable judge. (Nahum 1:3.) They therefore who have provoked God to anger by their sins, must see to secure his favor by believing.

9. *Jehovah is good to all, etc.* The truth here stated is of wider application than the former, for the declaration of David is to the effect, that not only does God, with fatherly indulgence and clemency, forgive sin, but is good to all without discrimination, as he makes his sun to rise upon the good and upon the wicked. (Matthew 5:45.) Forgiveness of sin is a treasure from which the wicked are excluded, but their sin and depravity does not prevent God from showering down his goodness upon them, which they appropriate without being at all

280 "Si la bonte de Dieu ne surmonte cest empeschement, c'est en vain que les Prophetes traitteroyent de sa grace et misericorde." — *Fr.*

sensible of it. Meanwhile believers, and they only, know what it is to enjoy a reconciled God, as elsewhere it is said —

"Come ye to him, and be ye enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed; taste and see that the Lord is good."
(Psalm 34:5, 8.)

When it is added that *the mercy of God extends to all his works*, this ought not to be considered as contrary to reason, or obscure. Our sins having involved the whole world in the curse of God, there is everywhere an opportunity for the exercise of God's mercy, even in helping the brute creation.

10. *All thy works, etc.* Though many would suppress God's praises, observing a wicked silence regarding them, David declares that they shine forth everywhere, appear of themselves, and are sounded, as it were, by the very dumb creatures. He then assigns the special work of declaring them to believers, who have eyes to perceive God's works, and know that they cannot be employed better than in celebrating his mercies. What is added — *they shall speak the glory of thy kingdom* — I consider to have reference only to believers. If any incline to think that these words rather apply to God's creatures universally, I would not object to that view. But the particular kind of speaking or teaching which David here refers to, applies only to saints. Accordingly I have retained the future tense of the verbs, rather than the optative mood, as others have done. In using the term kingdom, David intimates that this is the tendency of the manifestation of God's works, to reduce the whole world to a state of order, and subject it to his government. He insists upon the excellency of this kingdom, that men may know that things are to be considered as in disorder and confusion, unless God alone be acknowledged supreme. He denies it to be transitory, like all earthly kingdoms, asserting that it will stand fast for ever. And to call our attention more particularly to its everlasting nature, he breaks out into an admiring exclamation, and addresses his discourse to God.

Psalm 145:14-16

14. Jehovah upholding all the falling, [281] and raising up all who are bowed down. **15.** The eyes of all hope in thee, and thou givest them their food in its season. **16.** Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest every living thing by thy good pleasure.

14. *Jehovah upholding all the falling.* He gives instances of the goodness and mercy of God, such as make it evident that God reigns only for the promotion of the general welfare of mankind. By *the falling*, and *those who are bowed down*, he means figuratively those who are overwhelmed by adversity, and would sink at once, were not God to extend his hand for their support. God, in short, has respect to the troubles of men, and helps such as are in distress, so that all ought not only to look upon his divine government with reverence, but willingly and cordially submit themselves to it. Another lesson taught us is, that none will be disappointed who seeks comfort from God in his affliction.

15. *The eyes of all hope in thee.* David adduces an additional proof of God's goodness, in giving food to all living creatures, and thus showing himself in the character of the father of a family. Some interpreters, led by the term hope, which is employed, restrict the application to men, as being endued with reason and intelligence, to seek their food from their heavenly father, while the beasts seek it only in a gross manner, by sight or smell. But although not endued with the exercise of reason, leading them to depend upon God's providence, necessity itself forces even them, by a certain hidden instinct, to seek their food, so that they may very properly be said to hope in God, as elsewhere the young ravens are said to cry unto him. (Psalm 147:9.) Besides, those who would restrict the words to man, still leave them open to the charge of impropriety; for the wicked have no regard to the fatherly care of God, more than the ox or the ass. Since such is the order established in nature that all animals are brought to a dependence upon their Maker, there is no impropriety in supposing the affection of desire or expectation to be here put for the fact of dependence itself. [282] All ambiguity is taken away by the next verse, where every living thing is said to be satisfied. It is said that he gives them their food, and in its season, for the very variety of it serves more to illustrate the providence of God. Each has its own way of feeding, and the different kinds of aliment are designed and adapted for different uses. David therefore speaks of that food which is particular to them. The pronoun is not in the plural, and we are not to read *in their season*, as if it applied to the animals. The food he notices as given in its season; for here

281 "⊠⊠⊠⊠ *nophelim*, *the falling*, or those who are not able to keep their feet — the weak. He shores them up — he is their *prop*. No man falls through his own weakness *merely*; if he rely on God, the strongest foe cannot shake him." — *Dr. Adam Clarke*

282 "Il ne sera point mal connenable que l'affection soit yei mise pour la chose mesme." — *Fr.*

also we are to notice the admirable arrangements of divine providence, that there is a certain time appointed for harvest, vintage, and hay crop, and that the year is so divided into intervals, that the cattle are fed at one time upon grass, at another on hay, or straw, or acorns, or other products of the earth. Were the whole supply poured forth at one and the same moment, it could not be gathered together so conveniently; and we have no small reason to admire the seasonableness with which the different kinds of fruit and aliment are yearly produced.

16. *Thou openest thine hand*, *etc.* The figure is a beautiful one. Most men pass over without observation the singular goodness of God apparent in this admirable ordering of things in nature, and David therefore represents him as stretching out his hand to distribute to the animals their food. We sinfully confine our attention to the earth which yields us our food, or to natural causes. To correct this error David describes God as opening his hands to put the food into our mouths. The word ⊠⊠⊠, *ratson*, some render *desire*, as though he meant that God supplied each kind of animal with food according to its wish. And a little afterwards we do indeed find it used in that sense. Others, however, refer it rather to God's feeding them of his mere good pleasure and kindness; it not being enough to say that our food is given us by God, unless we add, as in the second clause of the verse, that his kindness is gratuitous, and that there is no extrinsic cause whatever moving him to provide so liberally for every living creature. In that case the cause is put for the effect; the various kinds of provision being effects of his good pleasure — χαρισματα της χάριτος. If it be found that men and others of his creatures often suffer and die from want, this is to be traced to the change which has come upon nature by sin. The fair order which subsisted in it by God's original appointment often fails since the fall through our sins, and yet in what remains of it, though marred, we may see the kindness of God referred to by David, for in the severest failures of crop, there is no year so barren and unproductive, that God may not be said to open his hand in it.

Psalm 145:17-21

17. Jehovah is righteous in all his ways, and merciful in all his works. **18.** Jehovah is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth. **19.** He will perform the desire of them that fear him, and will hear their cry, and will save them. **20.** Jehovah preserves all them that love him, and will destroy all the wicked. **21.** My mouth shall speak the praise of Jehovah, and all, flesh shall bless his holy name for ever and ever.

17. *Jehovah is righteous in all his ways*. He does not now speak of God's goodness merely in providing all his creatures with their daily food, but comprehends other parts of his providence, as in correcting men for their sins, restraining the wicked, trying the patience of his people under the cross, and governing the world by judgments which are often inscrutable to us. The ground upon which praise is here ascribed to God may seem a common one, being in every one's mouth; but in nothing is wisdom shown more than in holding fast the truth, that God is just in all his ways, so as to retain in our hearts an unabated sense of it amidst all troubles and confusions. Though all acknowledge God to be just, most men are no sooner overtaken by affliction than they quarrel with his severity: unless their wishes are immediately complied with, they are impatient, and nothing is more common than to hear his justice impeached. As it is everywhere abused by the wicked imputations men cast upon it, here it is very properly vindicated from such ungrateful treatment, and asserted to be constant and unfailing, however loudly the word may disparage it. It is expressly added, *in all his ways and works,* for we fail to give God due honor unless we recognize a consistent tenor of righteousness in the whole progress of his operation. Nothing is more difficult in the time of trouble, when God has apparently forsaken us, or afflicts us without cause, than to restrain our corrupt feelings from breaking out against his judgments; as we are told of the emperor Mauricius in a memorable passage of history, that seeing his sons murdered by the wicked and perfidious traitor Phocas, and being about to be carried out himself to death, he cried out — "Thou art righteous, O God, and just are thy judgments!" As this man of no bad character opposed such a shield to the cruel trials he met with, we must learn to put a check upon our spirits, and always give God's righteousness the honor due to it. David, however, goes farther still, intimating that God, even when he seems to be most severe, is so far from being cruel as to temper his heaviest judgments with equity and clemency.

18. *Jehovah is near to all that call upon him*. This truth is principally applicable to believers, whom God in the way of singular privilege invites to draw near him, promising that he will be favorable to their prayers. Faith, there is no doubt, lies idle and even dead without prayer, in which the spirit of adoption shows and exercises itself, and by which we evidence that all his promises are considered by us as stable and sure. The inestimable grace of God,

in short, towards believers, appears in this, that he exhibits himself to them as a Father. As many doubts steal upon us when we pray to God, and we either approach him with trembling, or fail by becoming discouraged and lifeless, David declares it to be true without exception, that God hears all who call upon him. At the same time, as most men pervert and profane the method of calling upon God through inventions of their own, the right manner of praying is laid down in the next part of the verse, which is, that we should pray in truth. Although men resort to God in a cold manner, or even in their prayers expostulate with him, while their hearts are swelling with pride or with anger, they yet complain that they are not heard; just as if there were no difference between praying and quarreling, or the exercise of faith and hypocrisy. The greater part of men, involved in infidelity, scarcely believe that there is a God in heaven at all; others would banish him from it if they could; others would tie him down to their views and, wishes, while some seek slight and insufficient ways of reconciling him, so that the common way of praying is but an idle and empty ceremony.[283] And although nearly all men without exception have recourse to God in the time of their need, they are few indeed who bring the smallest measure of faith or repentance. It were better that the name of God should be buried in oblivion than exposed to such insults. There is good reason, therefore, why truth should be said to be necessary in our prayers — that they come from a sincere heart. The falsehood, which is the opposite of this sincerity, is of various kinds; indeed it were difficult to enumerate them — infidelity, wavering, impatience, murmuring, pretended humility, in short there are as many sorts of it as there are sinful dispositions. The truth being one of no small importance, David again confirms and enlarges upon it in the next verse. The repetition is worthy of our particular notice, for such is our tendency to unbelief, that there are few who in calling upon God do not look upon their prayers as fruitless. Hence the perverse manner in which the wandering minds of men are tossed hither and thither, as in the Papacy they invented patrons without number, holding it of no importance almost to embrace with an unwavering faith the promises by which God invites us to himself.

To throw the door still more open, the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of David, tells us, that *God will accommodate himself to the desires of all who fear him.* This is a mode of expression of which it is difficult to say how much it ought to impress our minds. Who is man, that God should show complaisance to his will, when rather it is ours to look up to his exalted greatness, and humbly submit to his authority? Yet he voluntarily condescends to these terms, to obtemper our desires. At the same time, there is a check to be put upon this liberty, and we have not a license of universal appetency, as if his people might forwardly clamor for whatever their corrupt desires listed, but before God says that he will hear their prayers,

283 "Les autres voudroyent qu'il fust sujet a eux: les autres comme par maniere d'acquit cerchent cluelque moyen de l'appaiser," etc. — *Fr.*

he enjoins the law of moderation and submission upon their affections, as we learn from John, —

"We know that he will deny us nothing,
if we seek it according to his will." (1 John 5:14.)

For the same reason, Christ dictated that form of prayer, "Thy will be done," setting limits round us, that we should not preposterously prefer our desires to those of God, nor ask without deliberation what first comes into our mouth. David, in making express mention of *them that fear God,* enjoins fear, reverence, and obedience upon them before holding out the favorable indulgence of God, that they might not think themselves warranted to ask more than his word grants and approves. When he speaks of their cry, this is a kind of qualification of what he had said. For God's willingness to grant our prayers is not always so apparent that he answers them at the very moment they are made. We have, therefore, need of perseverance in this trial of our faith, and our desires must be confirmed by crying. The last clause — *he will save them* — is also added by way of correction, to make us aware how far, and for what end God answers the prayers of his people, namely, to evidence in a practical manner that he is the faithful guardian of their welfare.

20. *Jehovah preserves*, etc. He insists upon the same truth, — that God is near to his people to help them in the time of need; this being a sure proof of his presence, that by his mercy they come safe and unhurt out of every danger which befalls them. It is worthy of our notice, that, instead of fear, he now speaks of love; for, in distinguishing believers by this title, *that they love God*, he intimates it to be the root of true godliness, that they submit themselves to him voluntarily, which again is the effect of faith. Till God draw us by the attractions of his grace, this placid submission will never follow. The love spoken of by David, however, is perhaps more extensive, as God's people not only attach themselves to him in the way of obedience to his authority, but knowing that union to him is of all other things most desirable, aspire with their whole soul after this happiness. Still there can be no doubt, that the reference is to it here as the chief part of holiness and righteousness, as was said by Moses,

"And now, O Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee," etc. (Deuteronomy 10:12.)

This effect of godliness in securing our safety and preservation under the divine guardianship, David exemplifies by an opposition clause, declaring, that all the wicked shall, in the just judgment of God, miserably perish. That he might close as he had begun, he again affirms, *that he will publish the praises of God*, and urges all to the same duty by his example. Some would read, *every living thing shall bless*, but this does not seem to me a proper reading. When Moses, speaking of the flood, says, that "all *flesh* in which was the breath of life perished," I grant that the term comprehends the brute creation, but wherever "flesh" is mentioned without any addition, the reference is only to men. Nor is David here stating what

they would, but what they should do, declaring all men bound by the great and inexhaustible goodness of God constantly and for ever to praise him.

PSALM 146 [284]

After stirring up himself, and others by his example, to praise God, David animadverts upon the diseased disposition, almost universally prevalent, to deceive ourselves by expectations entertained from various quarters. He, at the same time, points out the remedy — that our whole hope should be centered in God. To persuade us to resort to him more readily, he touches shortly upon some proofs of his power and mercy.

Hallelujah.

284 In the original Hebrew and in the Chaldee paraphrase, no author's name is prefixed to this Psalm: in the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, AEthiopic, and Arabic versions it is ascribed to Haggai and Zechariah. Upon the supposition that it was written by these Prophets its composition would be after the captivity; "and it may refer," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "to the time when Cyrus, prejudiced by the enemies of the Jews, withdrew his order for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, to which revocation of the royal edict the Psalm 146:3 may refer, 'Put not your trust in princes,' etc." Horsley, proceeding on the same view, entitles it, "A thanksgiving of the returning captives." There is, however, nothing in it which prohibits us from looking upon it as a Psalm of David.

Psalm 146:1-5

1. Praise Jehovah, O my soul! **2.** I will praise Jehovah in my life; I will sing psalms to my God so long as I shall have being. **3.** Trust not in princes; in the son of man in whom there is not safety. **4.** His breath shall go forth; he shall return to his earth, in that day his thoughts [285] shall perish. **5.** Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in Jehovah, his God.

1. *Praise Jehovah.* The five last Psalms close with the same word with which they begin. [286] But having in general called upon all to praise God, he addresses himself, or, which is the same thing, his soul, only that under the name of *soul* he addresses his inward self more emphatically. We may infer from this, that the influence which moved him was not volatile and superficial, (as many will blame themselves with remissness on this point, and then immediately lapse into it again,) but a staid and constant affection, followed up by activity, and proved by its effects not to be feigned. As David felt, that good endeavors are frustrated or hindered through the craft of Satan, he thinks it proper to apply a stimulus for exciting his own zeal, in the first place, before professing to be a leader or teacher to others. Although his heart was truly and seriously in the work, he would not rest in this, until he had acquired still greater ardor. And if it was necessary for David to stir himself up to the praises of God, how powerful a stimulant must we require for a more difficult matter when we aim at the divine life with self-denial. As to the religious exercise here mentioned, let us feel that we will never be sufficiently active in it, unless we strenuously exact it from ourselves. As God supports and maintains his people in the world with this view, that they may employ their whole life in praising him, David very properly declares, that he will do this to the end of his course.

3. *Trust not in princes* This admonition is appropriately inserted, for one means by which men blind themselves is that of involving their minds through a number of inventions, and being thus prevented from engaging in the praises of God. That God may have the whole praise due to him, David exposes and overthrows those false stays on which we would otherwise be too much disposed to trust. His meaning is, that we should withdraw ourselves from man in general, but he names *princes*, from whom more is to be feared than common men. For what promise could poor people hold out, or such as need the help of others? The

285 Horsley prefers translating "his false deceitful show," instead of "his thoughts." He observes, that the original word is literally "his glitterings." Parkhurst would render the original word "splendours, glories," "which," says he, "makes an excellent sense."

286 That is, with the word "Hallelujah," the Hebrew for "Praise Jehovah." Hence they have been called, "Hallelujah Psalms."

great and wealthy, again, have a dangerous attraction through the splendor attaching to them, suggesting to us the step of taking shelter under their patronage. As the simple are fascinated by looking to their grandeur, he adds, that the most powerful of the world's princes is but a *son of man* This should be enough to rebuke our folly in worshipping them as a kind of demigods, as Isaiah says, (Isaiah 31:3,) "The Egyptian is man, and not God; flesh, and not spirit." Although princes then are furnished with power, money, troops of men, and other resources, David reminds us, that it is wrong to place our trust in frail mortal man, and vain to seek safety where it cannot be found.

This he explains more fully in the verse, which follows, where he tells us how short and fleeting the life of man is. Though God throw loose the reins, and suffer princes even to invade heaven in the wildest enterprises, the passing of the spirit, like a breath, suddenly overthrows all their counsels and plans. The body being the dwelling-place of the soul, what is here said may very well be so understood; for at death God recalls the spirit. We may understand it more simply, however, of the vital breath; and this will answer better with the context — that as soon as man has ceased to breathe, his corpse is subject to putrefaction. It follows, that those who put their trust in men, depend upon a fleeting breath. When he says that *in that day all his thoughts perish,* or *flow away*, perhaps under this expression he censures the madness of princes in setting no bounds to their hopes and desires, and scaling the very heavens in their ambition, like the insane Alexander of Macedon, who, upon hearing that there were other worlds, wept that he had not yet conquered one, although soon after the funeral urn sufficed him. Observation itself proves that the schemes of princes are deep and complicated. That we may not fall, therefore, into the error of connecting our hopes with them, David says that the life of princes also passes away swiftly and in a moment, and that with it all their plans vanish.

5. *Blessed is he, etc.* As it would not have been enough to reprove the sin, he submits the remedy upon which the proper correction of it depends; and this is, that the hopes of men are only stable and well-founded when they rest entirely upon God. For even the wicked sometimes come the length of acknowledging the folly of trust in man. Accordingly they are often angry with themselves for being so inconsiderate as to expect deliverance from men; but by neglecting the remedy, they are not extricated from their error. The Psalmist having condemned the infatuation, which we have seen to be natural to us all, wisely subjoins that they are blessed who trust in God. Jeremiah observes the same order. (Jeremiah 17:5, 7.)

"Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm," etc.;

and then — "Blessed is the man whose hope the Lord is." When David pronounces *those blessed whose help is the Lord*, he does not restrict the happiness of believers to present sense, as if they were only happy when God openly and in outward acts appeared as their helper, but he places their happiness in this — that they are truly persuaded of its being en-

tirely by the grace of God they stand. He calls him *the God of Jacob*, to distinguish him from the multitude of false gods in which unbelievers gloried at that time; and there was good reason for this; for while all propose to themselves to seek God, few take the right way. In designating the true God by his proper mark, he intimates that it is only by an assured faith of adoption that any of us can rest upon him; for he must show himself favorable to us before we can look for help from him.

Psalm 146:6-10

6. Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things which are in them: who keepeth truth for ever. **7.** Rendering right to the unjustly oppressed, giving bread to the hungry, Jehovah, loosening the bound. **8.** Jehovah enlightening the blind, [287] Jehovah raising up the bowed down, Jehovah loving the righteous. **9.** Jehovah guarding the strangers; he relieves the fatherless and widow, and will destroy the way of the wicked. **10.** Jehovah shall reign for ever; thy God, O Zion! from generation to generation. Hallelujah.

6. *Who made heaven*, *etc*. By all these epithets he confirms the truth previously stated. For though at first sight it may seem inappropriate to speak of the Creation, the power of God bears most pertinently upon his helping us whenever danger is near. We know how easily Satan tempts to distrust, and we are thrown into a state of trembling agitation by the slightest causes. Now, if we reflect that God is the Maker of heaven and earth, we will reasonably give him the honor of having the government of the world which he created in his hands and power. There is in this first ascription, then, a commendation of his power, which should swallow up all our fears. As it is not enough that God is merely able to help us, but as a promise is farther necessary, to the effect that he is willing and shall do it, David next declares *that he is faithful and true,* that, on discovering his willingness, no room may be left for hesitation.

7. *Rendering right*, *etc*. He instances other kinds both of the power and goodness of God, which are just so many reasons why we should hope in him. All of them bear upon the point, that the help of God will be ready and forthcoming to those who are in the lowest circumstances, that accordingly our miseries will be no barrier in the way of his helping us; nay, that such is his nature, that he is disposed to assist all in proportion to their necessity. He says first, that God *renders justice to the oppressed,* to remind us that although in the judgment of sense God connives at the injuries done to us, he will not neglect the duty which properly belongs to him of forcing the wicked to give an account of their violence. As God, in short, would have the patience of his people tried, he here expressly calls upon the afflicted not to faint under their troubles, but composedly wait for deliverance from one who is slow in in-

287 In our English Bible it is "openeth *the eyes of* the blind." From this clause some of the ancients concluded that the whole of the attributes here enumerated are intended to apply to Christ. Bishop Horne, and other modern divines, entertain the same opinion. But though all that is here said may with the strictest truth be predicated of Christ, the propriety of restricting the interpretation of the Psalm to him, upon the slender ground specified, may be doubted. Walford translates this clause — "Jehovah delivereth them that are in darkness." "There is no word," says he, "in Hebrew to correspond with the 'eyes' of the English Bible; and it is more in agreement with the parallelism of the verse, to understand this clause of persons who are in distress and adversity, expressed by being in darkness."

terposing, only that he may appear eventually as the righteous judge of the world. It follows, that he *gives bread to the hungry*. We learn from this that he is not always so indulgent to his own as to load them with abundance, but occasionally withdraws his blessing, that he may succor them when reduced to hunger. Had the Psalmist said that God fed his people with abundance, and pampered them, would not any of those under want or in famine have immediately desponded? The goodness of God is therefore properly extended farther to the feeding of the hungry. What is added is to the same purpose — that *he looses them that are bound, and enlightens the blind.* As it is the fate of his people to be straitened by anxiety, or pressed down by human tyranny, or reduced to extremity, in a manner equivalent to being shut up in the worst of dungeons, it was necessary to announce, by way of comfort, that God can easily find an outgate for us when brought into such straits. *To enlighten the blind* is the same with giving light in the midst of darkness. When at any time we know not what to do — are in perplexity, and lie confounded and dismayed, as if the darkness of death had fallen upon us — let us learn to ascribe this title to God, that he may dissipate the gloom and open our eyes. So when he is said *to raise up the bowed down,* we are taught to take courage when weary and groaning under any burden. Nor is it merely that God would here have his praises celebrated; he in a manner stretches out his hand to the blind, the captives, and the afflicted, that they may cast their grief's and cares upon him. There is a reason for repeating the name *Jehovah* three times. In this way he stimulates and excites men to seek him who will often rather chafe and pine away in their miseries, than betake themselves to this sure asylum. [288] What is added in the close of the verse — *that Jehovah loves the righteous*, would seem to be a qualification of what was formerly said. There are evidently many who, though they are grievously afflicted, and groan with anxiety, and lie in darkness, experience no comfort from God; and this because in such circumstances they provoke God more by their contumacy, and by failing for the most part to seek his mercy, reap the just reward of their unthankfulness. The Psalmist therefore very properly restricts what he had said in general terms of God's helping the afflicted, to the righteous — that those who wish to experience his deliverance, may address themselves to him in the sincere exercise of godliness.

9. *Jehovah guarding, etc*. By *strangers, orphans*, and *widows,* the Psalmist means all those in general who are destitute of the help of man. While all show favor to those who are known to them and near to them, we know that strangers are, for the most part, exposed to injurious treatment. We find comparatively few who come forward to protect and redress widows and orphans; it seems lost labor, where there is no likelihood of compensation. Under these cases the Psalmist shows that whatever the grievance may be under which we suffer, the reason can only be with ourselves if God, who so kindly invites all who are in distress to

288 "Qui saepe frenum rodendo, malunt putrescere in suis miseriis, quam ad certum hoe asylum se conferre." — *Lat.*

come to him, does not stretch forth his arm for our help. On the other hand, he declares that everything will have an adverse and unfortunate issue to those who wickedly despise God. We have said upon the first Psalm, that by *the way* is meant the course of life in general. God *will destroy the way of the wicked,* inasmuch as he will curse all their counsels, acts, attempts, and enterprises, so that none of them shall have good success. However excellent they may be in planning, although they may be crafty and sharp-sighted, and abound in strength of resources of every kind, God will overturn all their expectations. While he extends his hand to those who are his people, and brings them through all obstacles, and even impassable ways, he on the contrary destroys the path of the wicked, when apparently most open and plain before them.

10. *Jehovah shall reign, etc.* He directs his discourse to the Church, that he may more effectually persuade all God's people of their really finding him to be such as he had just described. When he says that God is king for ever, we are to remember at the same time the purpose for which he reigns — taking our definition of it from the preceding ascription's. It follows that, whether living or dying, we shall be safe under the keeping of a king who reigns expressly for our salvation. Had he said no more than that Jehovah reigned for ever, we would have been ready to object the distance between us and his inconceivable greatness. He states, therefore, in express terms, his being bound by sacred covenant to his chosen people.

PSALM 147

This Psalm also incites the people of God to praise him upon two accounts; first, for the display of his power, goodness, wisdom, and other perfections in the common government of the world, and the several parts of it, the heavens and the earth, but more particularly for his special goodness in cherishing and defending the Church which he has chosen of his free grace, in restoring it when fallen down, and gathering it when dispersed. [289]

289 In the Hebrew text, and in the Chaldee and Vulgate versions, this Psalm is without a title, but in the Septuagint it is assigned to the days of Haggai and Zephaniah, the title being — Αλλελουια Αγγαιου και Ζαχαριου; and this may be regarded as a probable reference. In Psalm 147:2 and Psalm 147:13 there seems to be an allusion to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Bishop Horsley entitles it — "Thanksgiving of the returned captives. Perhaps composed for a Pentecost or Feast of Trumpets, after the Restoration." "Eben Ezra, and other Jewish writers, think that it foretells the future rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the Jews from their present captivity, and refer it to the times of Messiah." — *Dr. Gill.*

Psalm 147:1-6

1. Praise ye God; for it is good to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and praise is comely. **2.** Jehovah building up Jerusalem, will gather the dispersed of Israel: **3.** Healing the contrite in heart, and binding up their griefs: **4.** Numbering the multitude of the stars, giving names to each of them. **5.** Great is our Lord, and plenteous in power, there is no figure for his understanding. **6.** Jehovah raiseth up the miserable, and casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Praise ye God, etc. Though the benefits he speaks of are such as God extends to all men indiscriminately, it is plain that he addresses more especially God's people, who alone behold his works in an enlightened manner, whereas stupidity and blindness of mind deprive others of their understanding. Nor is his subject confined to the common benefits of God, but the main thing which he celebrates is his mercy, as shown to his chosen people. That the Church may address itself to the praises of God with more alacrity, he states that this kind of exercise is good, delightful, and pleasant, by which he indirectly censures a sin which is all but universal of becoming wearied at the very mention of God, and counting it our highest pleasure to forget both God and ourselves, that we may give way to unrestrained indulgence. To teach men to take a delight in this religious exercise, the Psalmist reminds them that praise is *comely,* or *desirable.* For the term ⊠⊠⊠, *navah,* may be rendered either way.

2. *Jehovah building up, etc.* He begins with the special mercy of God towards his Church and people, in choosing to adopt one nation out of all others, and selecting a fixed place where his name might be called upon. When he is here called the builder of Jerusalem, the allusion is not so much to the outward form and structure, as to the spiritual worship of God. It is a common figure in treating of the Church to speak of it as a building or temple. The meaning is, that the Church was not of human erection, but formed by the supernatural power of God; for it was from no dignity of the place itself that Jerusalem became the only habitation of God in our world, nor did it come to this honor by counsel, industry, effort or power of man, but because God was pleased to consecrate it to himself. He employed the labor and instrumentality of men indeed in erecting his sanctuary there, but this ought never to take from his grace, which alone distinguished the holy city from all others. In calling God the former and architect of the Church, his object is to make us aware that by his power it remains in a firm condition, or is restored when in ruins. Hence he infers that it is in his power and arbitrament to gather those who have been dispersed. Here the Psalmist would comfort those miserable exiles who had been scattered in various quarters, with the hope of being recovered from their dispersion, as God had not adopted them without a definite purpose into one body. As he had ordered his temple and altar to be erected at Jerusalem, and had fixed his seat there, the Psalmist would encourage the Jews

who were exiles from their native country, to entertain good hope of a return, intimating that it was no less properly God's work to raise up his Church when ruined and fallen down, than to found it at first. It was not, therefore, the Psalmist's object directly to celebrate the free mercy of God in the first institution of the Church, but to argue from its original, that God would not suffer his Church altogether to fall, having once founded it with the design of preserving it for ever; for he forsakes not the work of his own hands. This comfort ought to be improved by ourselves at the present period, when we see the Church on every side so miserably rent asunder, leading us to hope that all the elect who have been adjoined to Christ's body, will be gathered unto the unity of the faith, although now scattered like members torn from one another, and that the mutilated body of the Church, which is daily distracted, will be restored to its entireness; for God will not suffer his work to fail.

In the following verse he insists upon the same truth, the figure suggesting that though the Church labor under, and be oppressed by many diseases, God will speedily and easily recover it from all its wounds. The same truth, therefore, is evidently conveyed, under a different form of expression — that the Church, though it may not always be in a flourishing condition, is ever safe and secure, and that God will miraculously heal it, as though it were a diseased body.

4. *Numbering the multitude, etc.* As the gathering together of the people of whom the Psalmist spoke might appear to be an impossibility, there seems some ground for the opinion of those who think that he confirms it in this verse. The connection they give to the Psalmist's words is this — that as it is at least not more difficult to gather men together who are outcast and scattered, than to number the stars, there was no reason why the wandering exile Israelites should despair of their return, provided they should resort with one consent to God as their only head. There is some probability, too, in the conjecture that the Psalmist may allude to that promise —

"Look now towards the stars of heaven, if thou canst tell them,
so shall thy seed be." (Genesis 15:5.)

But as the Psalmist immediately afterwards treats of the order of things in nature generally, the simplest rendering, I think, is to understand this verse with reference to the admirable work of God to be seen in the heavens, where we behold his matchless wisdom, in regulating, without one degree of aberration, the manifold, complex, winding courses of the stars. To each of them he assigns its fixed and distinct office, and in all the multitude there is no confusion. He therefore exclaims immediately — *Great is God, and boundless, both in power and understanding.* We learn from this that there cannot be greater folly than to make our judgment the measure of God's works, displaying in these, as he often does, his incomprehensible power and wisdom.

6. *Raising up, etc.* The ascription of this to God fitly tends to confirm our hope under affliction, and prevent our souls from fainting under the cross. From this we may infer that

although our fathers who lived under the Law were more gently dealt with, they knew something at least of that warfare with which God daily exercises us, in order to make us seek our true rest elsewhere than in this world. Should a doubt steal upon the minds of those who have been brought under heavy afflictions, as to the forthcoming of that help which God has promised to extend, let the truth recur to our remembrance, that we are brought low that God may lift us up again. And if upon seeing the prosperity of the wicked we are smitten and inflamed with envy, let the words of the Psalmist come into our mind, That they are lifted up that they may be cast down into destruction. When he speaks of their being *cast down even to the earth,* there can be no doubt that he passes an indirect censure upon their pride which leads them to exalt themselves on high, as if they belonged to some superior order of beings.

Psalm 147:7-11

7. Sing to Jehovah in thanksgiving, sing psalms to our God upon the harp. [290] **8.** Who covereth the heavens with clouds, prepareth rain for the earth, maketh grass to germinate on the mountains. [291] **9.** Who giveth to the cattle their food, to the young ones of the ravens which cry to him. **10.** Not in the strength of the horse will he take pleasure, nor in the legs of man will he delight. **11.** Jehovah delighteth in those who fear him, who hope in his mercy.

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290 The Hebrew word here is ⊠⊠⊠, *kinnor.* It is uniformly translated "harp" by Calvin, and also by the translators of our English Bible. But as is supposed by Calmet and others, it more probably corresponded with the *lyre* of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. In the Septuagint it is usually either thrown into the Greek form κινυρα, *cinyra,* or rendered κιθαρα, *cithara,* one of the various names by which the principal varieties of the ancient lyres were distinguished. And where these are not the words by which it is rendered in that version, it is rendered by other names which the Greeks gave to different forms of the lyre. From this it is evident that the translators of the Greek version believed that ⊠⊠⊠ *kinnor,* denoted *the lyre,* although from their translating it by different words, each signifying a particular variety of that instrument, they were uncertain as to the particular species of lyre. "The brief intimations in Scripture are in full accordance with this statement; for it is not described as such an instrument — large, heavy, and resting on the ground when played — as the word 'harp' suggests to our minds; but as a light portable instrument, which the player carried in his hand or on his arm, and might walk or dance the while. In fact, Scripture describes the *kinnor* as being used in such a manner and on such occasions as we know the lyre to have been by the ancients, who indeed had not, so far as we know, any harps large and resting on the ground like ours. We speak only of the Greeks and Romans, however, for the Egyptians had large standing harps; from which we shall in a future note take occasion to conclude that such were also known to the Hebrews, while we retain our impression that the lyre is denoted by the *kinnor.*" — *Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible.* The *kinnor* is an instrument of the highest antiquity, being one of those two invented by Jubal before the flood. Genesis 4:21. It was used at an early period on festal occasions, as appears from the next instance in which it is mentioned in Scripture, six hundred years after the deluge, namely, in Laban's words to Jacob, as recorded in Genesis 31:27. It was also used by the prophets in their sacred music, as we learn from the next instance in which it is noticed — in the time of Samuel, 1 Samuel 10:5. The notes of the *kinnor* might be mournful, (Isaiah 16:11;) but they were also cheerful, (Job 21:2; Job 30:31; 1 Samuel 16:23; Psalm 137:2.) This musical instrument was constructed of wood, 1 Kings 10:12; and it no doubt was to be found among the Hebrews of different forms and power, and varying in the number of strings. The ancient lyres were either played with the fingers, or struck with a *plectrum,* an instrument which appears generally to have consisted of a piece of ivory, polished wood, or metal, in the form of a quill.

291 "After this clause the Vulgate, the Septuagint, AEthiopic, Arabic, and Anglo-Saxon add, 'and herb for the service of man.' It appears that a hemistich or half line has been lost from the Hebrew text, which, according to the above version, must have stood as in Psalm 104:14." — *Dr. Adam Clarke.*

7. *Sing to Jehovah in thanksgiving* Again he exhorts to sing the praises of God, intimating at the same time that abundant matter was not wanting, since new proofs still meet our eyes of his power, goodness, and wisdom. First he tells us that *he covers the heavens with clouds,* and this change would awaken our attention, were we not chargeable with so much thoughtlessness. Various as are the marvels to be seen in the heavens above us, were the same serenity always to continue, we would not have so wonderful a display of his power as when he suddenly veils them with clouds, withdrawing the light of the sun, and setting a new face as it were upon the world. He afterwards hints that in this way provision is made for all living creatures, for thus the herbs germinate, and the earth is supplied with the moisture which makes it fertile. Thus in connection with the proofs of his power God sets before our eyes those of his mercy and fatherly consideration for the human family; nay, he shows that he does not overlook even the wild beasts and cattle. Philosophers discover the origin of rain in the elements, and it is not denied that clouds are formed from the gross vapors which are exhaled from the earth and sea, but second causes should not prevent us from recognizing the providence of God in furnishing the earth with the moisture needed for fructification. As the earth chapped with heat shows its thirst by opening its mouth, so God on his part in sending rain distills drink for it. He might in other ways of a more secret kind give it strength to preserve it from failing, but this irrigation is something which passes before our eyes to image forth the continual care which he has over us.

9. *Who gives to the cattle their food* By giving an instance he explains more clearly what he had said, of God's providing food for every living creature. When he speaks of the cattle and the ravens being fed, and not of men, this is to give more emphasis to his argument. We know that it was for man's sake the world was made at all, and endued with fertility and plenty; and in proportion as we are nearer in the scale of existence to God, he shows us the more of his goodness. But if he condescends to notice the brute creation, it is plain that to us he will be a nurse and a father. For the same reason he names *the ravens,* the most contemptible of all birds, to teach us that the goodness of God extends to every part of the world. When he says that their young *cry unto God,* he no doubt refers to their natural cry, but hints at the same time that they own that they must be in want unless God give them meat from heaven. As to the Jewish fable that the ravens desert their young ones as soon as put forth, and that worms are bred in the barks of the trees to feed them, this is one of their customary stories, never scrupling as they do, nor being ashamed, to invent anything, however unfounded, when a difficulty comes in the way. [292] It is enough for us to know that the whole system of nature is so regulated by God, that not even the young ravens want

292 "Car quant a la fable que les Juifs racontent, que les corbeaux laissent leur petits si tost qu'ils sont esclos," etc. — *Fr.*

their food, when with hoarse outcry they confess that they are in need, and that they cannot have it supplied except by God.

10. *Not in the strength of the horse*, *etc*. After the Psalmist has shown that there is proof of the divine goodness in every part of the world, he takes particular notice that men have no strength but what is given them from above, and this he adds with the express purpose of checking the pride by which almost all men are inflamed, and which leads them to trust in their own strength. The meaning of the passage is, that let man come in the preparation of his own strength, and with all the assistance's that seem to him most prevalent, this will only issue in smoke and vanity; nay, that in arrogating the very least to himself, this will only be a hindrance in the way of the mercy of God, by which alone we stand. *The strength of the horse* is mentioned by synecdoche to denote any kind of protection. Not that God is displeased with those things in themselves considered which he has given us as helps, but it is necessary that we be withdrawn from a false confidence in them, for very commonly when any resource is at hand, we are foolishly intoxicated and lifted up with pride. He opposes the fear of God therefore to the strength both of men and of horses, and places his hope in his mercy, intimating that it is highly incumbent upon us to show our moderation in worshipping God with reverence and holiness, and depending upon his grace. Hence we learn that he only condemns that strength which would take from God the honor due to him.

Psalm 147:12-14

12. Celebrate Jehovah, O Jerusalem! praise thy God, O Zion! **13.** For he strengthens the bars of thy gates, he blesses thy children in the midst of thee. **14.** Who maketh thy borders peace; with the fatness of the corn he satifieth thee.

12. *Celebrate Jehovah, O Jerusalem!* Having spoken in general of the mercies of God, he again addresses his discourse to the Lord's people, who alone, as we have remarked already, can appreciate them, calling upon them to recognize with thanksgiving the blessings which others riot upon without acknowledgment. Under the name of *Jerusalem,* he comprises the whole Church, for in that place the faithful then held their religious assemblies, and flowed together as it were to the standard of the Lord. Although he will take occasion afterwards again to speak of the government of the world at large, he here commemorates the goodness of God as manifested to his own people, in protecting his own Church, bountifully cherishing it, enriching it abundantly with all blessings, and preserving it in peace and safety from all harm. When he says that *the bars of the gates are strengthened by God,* he means that the holy city was perfectly guarded by him from all fear of hostile attack. To the same effect is the other expression which comes after — that *all its bounds were made peace* Enemies were under divine restraint so as to cause no disturbance or confusions. Not that the Church is always in a state of peace throughout its whole extent, and exempt from attack, but that God in a visible manner stretches forth his hand to repel these assaults, and it can securely survey the whole array of its enemies. A more extensive meaning indeed may be given to the term *peace*, which is often taken to signify a happy and prosperous condition. But as mention is made of *bounds*, the former sense seems most appropriate. The blessing of God enjoyed within is next spoken of, consisting in this, that the citizens dwell prosperously and happily in it, and are fed bountifully, even to satiety; which does not mean that the children of God always wallow in abundance. This might be the means of corrupting them, prone as our nature is to wantonness; but it suggests that they recognize the liberality of God in their daily food more clearly than others who want faith, and whom either abundance renders blind, or poverty vexes with deplorable anxiety, or covetousness inflames with a desire that never can be satisfied. God's paternal favor was shown more particularly to our fathers under the law in the abundance of temporal provision, it being necessary to lead them forward to something higher by what was elementary.

Psalm 147:15-20

15. While he sends forth his word to the earth, his word runneth very swiftly. **16.** Who giveth snow like wool, [293] and scattereth the hoar frost as ashes. **17.** He casteth forth his ice like morsels: [294] before his cold who can stand? [295] **18.** He shall send his word, and shall melt them: his breath shall blow, the waters shall flow. **19.** He announces his words to Jacob, his edicts and his judgments to Israel. **20.** He hath not done so to every nation, and his judgments he hath not showed them. Hallelujah.

15. *While he sends forth, etc.* He again touches upon some instances of the operation of God, everywhere to be seen in the system of nature. And as the changes which take place in the air, and upon the earth, and which should be considered evidences of his power, may perhaps be regarded by the world as the effect of chance, the Psalmist, before proceeding to speak of the snow, hoar frost, and ice, expressly declares, that earth is governed by his power and control. The *sending forth of his word* is nothing else than the secret influence by which he regulates and governs all things, for without his orders and appointment no movement could take place among the elements, nor could they be borne, now one way and now another, upon their own spontaneous impulse without his foregoing secret decree.

293 We learn from Chardin in a manuscript note on this passage, as quoted by Harmer in his Observations, that towards the Black Sea, in Iberia and Armenia, and therefore he imagines in other countries also, "the snow falls in flakes as big as walnuts; but not being either hard or very compact, it does no other harm than presently to cover and overwhelm the traveller." The inspired writer had probably seen flakes of equal size on the mountains of Judea; and this would suggest to his mind the strikingly appropriate figure, "He giveth his snow like wool."

294 Walford translates, "He casteth down his ice in hail-stones." "The expression, 'like morsels,'" says he, "is a literal version of the Hebrew, but it gives so imperfect and obscure a representation of the meaning, as to induce the substitution which is here found. There can be no doubt but that hail is the thing intended: in this the critics are unanimous. It is most likely that the Hebrew term, which is translated 'morsels,' means small pieces of some substance, which we cannot now determine."

295 "The cold is sometimes extremely severe and even mortal in Palestine and the neighboring countries. Fulchirius Carnotensis, as cited by Mr. Harmer, 'saw the cold prove deadly to many. Jacobus de Vitriaco informs us, that the same thing happened to many of the poorer people, engaged in an expedition in which he himself was concerned, against Mount Tabor: they had suffered severely the preceding days by cold; but on the 24th of December it was so sharp that many of the poor people, and of the beasts of burden, actually died. Albertus Acquensis tells us the same thing happened to thirty of the people that attended King Baldwin I., in the mountainous districts of Arabia by the Dead Sea, where they had to conflict with horrible hail, with ice, and unheard of snow and rain.' These citations, as Harmer appositely remarks, may remove our wonder at such passages as that here commented on, in a hymn composed in those warmer climates." — *Mant.*

He says, that *his word runneth quickly,* because, when once God has intimated his will, all things concur to carry it into effect. If we do not hold fast by this principle, however acutely we may investigate second causes, all our perspicacity will come to nothing. It is thus that Aristotle, for example, has shown such ingenuity upon the subject of meteors, that he discusses their natural causes most exactly, while he omits the main point of all, upon which the merest child, at least having any religion, has the superiority over him. He must have little discernment who, in the sudden snows and hoar-frosts, does not perceive how quickly the word of God runs. If, then, we would avoid a senseless natural philosophy, we must always start with this principle, that everything in nature depends upon the will of God, and that the whole course of nature is only the prompt carrying into effect of his orders. When the waters congeal, when the hail spreads through the air, and hoar frosts darken the sky, surely we have proof how effectual his word is. But if all these wonders produce no effect upon most men, at least the piercing cold which benumbs our bodies, should force us to recognize the power of God. When the heat of the sun scorches us in summer, and again, upon the succession of winter, all things are bound up, such a change as this, which must have appeared incredible had we not been accustomed to it, cries out loudly that there is a being who reigns above.

19. *He announces his words to Jacob, etc*. Here it is another word that is spoken of than what was formerly mentioned; for God speaks in a different way to the insensate works of his hands, which he silently subordinates to his will by secret laws impressed upon them, than he does to men who are endued with understanding, for these he teaches with articulate language, that they may obey him intelligently and with consent. Although the blessings formerly mentioned are not to be depreciated, they fall far short of this, that he has condescended to be the teacher of his chosen people, by communicating to them that religious doctrine which is a treasure of everlasting salvation. How little would it avail the Church that it were filled with the perishing enjoyments of time, and protected from hostile violence, did not its hope extend beyond this world. This, accordingly, is the grand proof of his love, that he has set before us in his word the light of eternal life. On this account it is appropriately mentioned here as the crowning part of true solid happiness. And let us learn from this, that we should not only receive the doctrine of God with reverential and holy obedience, but embrace it with affection, for we can conceive of nothing more delightful and desirable than that God should undertake our salvation, and give testimony of this by stretching out his hand to bring us to himself. For this is the design with which the doctrine has been given to us, that amidst the thick darkness of this world, and the devious errors into which Satan misleads the children of men, the great Father of us all may by it cast a foregoing light upon our path before gathering us to the inheritance of heaven. We are to notice, that the part which was sustained by Moses and the Prophets according to divine appointment is here ascribed to God himself, for we only put due honor upon the doctrine of religion, and estim-

ate it at its proper worth when we rise to the consideration of God, who, in using the instrumentality of men, still claims to be considered our chief and only teacher. Thus its due majesty is assigned to the word from the person of its author. Again, he enhances the mercy shown by stating a comparison, intimating *that this had not been done for other nations* For if it be asked why God preferred one people to others, this pre-eminence will certainly lead us to gratuitous election as its source, since we will find that the children of Israel did not differ from others in any excellency attaching to themselves, but because God passed by others and condescended to adopt them into his favor.

PSALM 148

The more effectually to express how worthy God is to be praised in his works, he calls upon all creatures from above and below to sing his praises. He begins with angels, but immediately proceeds to address the brute creation and dumb elements, intimating, that there is no part of the world in which the praises of God are not to be heard, inasmuch as he everywhere gives proof of his power, goodness, and wisdom. He then comes to speak of men, whom God has constituted the proper heralds of his praises in this world. But as the unbelieving portion of them is both blind to the consideration of God's works, and dumb to his praises, the Psalmist at the close appeals to the children of Israel, who were privileged with a special discovery of God, as principal witnesses. [296]

Hallelujah.

296 Milton, in his Paradise Lost, (Lib. 5. line 53, etc.,) has elegantly imitated this Psalm, and put it into the mouth of Adam and Eve as their morning hymn in a state of innocency.

Psalm 148:1-6

1. Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens, praise him in the heights. **2.** Praise him, all ye his angels; praise him, all ye his armies. **3.** Praise him, ye sun and moon; praise him, ye shining stars. **4.** Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters above the heavens. **5.** Let them praise the name of Jehovah; for he commanded, and they were created. **6.** And he established them for ever; he hath set for them a decree for ever, and it shall not pass beyond.

1. *Praise Jehovah from the heavens* He seems here to include the stars as well as the angels, and, therefore, heaven itself, the air, and all that is gendered in it; for afterwards a division is made when he first calls upon angels, then upon the stars, and the waters of the firmament. With regard to the angels, created as they were for this very end — that they might be instant in this religious service, we need not wonder that they should be placed first in order when the praises of God are spoken of. Accordingly, in that remarkable vision which Isaiah describes, (Isaiah 6:3,) the cherubim cry out — "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts." And in several other places of Scripture the angels are represented as praising God by such ascription's. How, then, can zeal like theirs stand in need of exhortations? Or, if they require to be incited, what can be more unseemly than that we, who are so sluggish in the service, should assume the part of exhorting them to their duty? David, then, who did not equal the angels in zeal, but came far behind them, was not qualified to be an exhorter to them. But neither did this enter into his purpose; he would simply testify that it was the height of his happiness and desire to join in sacred concert with elect angels in praising God. And there is nothing unreasonable that, in order to stir himself up in the praises of God, he should call as companions upon the angels, although these run spontaneously in the service, and are fitter to lead the way. He calls them, in the second part of the verse — *the armies of God;* for they stand always ready to receive his orders. "Ten thousand times ten thousand surround his throne," as Daniel says, (Daniel 7:10.) The same name is applied also to the stars, both because they are remarkable for the order which maintains among them, and because they execute with inconceivable quickness the orders of God. But the angels are here called armies, upon the same account as elsewhere principalities and powers, inasmuch as God exerts his power by their hands.

3. *Praise him, ye sun and moon* This passage gives no countenance to the dream of Plato, that the stars excel in sense and intelligence. Nor does the Psalmist give them the same place as he had just assigned to angels, but merely intimates that the glory of God is everywhere to be seen, as if they sang his praises with an audible voice. And here he tacitly reproves the ingratitude of man; for all would hear this symphony, were they at all attent upon considering the works of God. For doth not the sun by his light, and heat, and other marvelous effects, praise his Maker? The stars when they run their course, and at once adorn the heavens and

give light to the earth, do they not sound the praises of God? but as we are deaf and insensible, the Psalmist calls upon them as witnesses to reprove our indolence. By the *heavens of heavens* he no doubt means the spheres. Eclipses, and other things which we observe, plainly show both that the fixed stars are above the planets, and that the planets themselves are placed in different orbits. [297] The excellency of this contrivance the Psalmist justly commends, speaking expressly of the heavens of heavens; not as if there were really more heavens than one, but to extol the matchless wisdom which God has shown in creating the heavens; for the sun, moon, and stars are not confusedly mixed together, but each has its own position and station assigned to it, and their manifold courses are all regulated. As under the name of *the heavens* he comprehends the air, or at least all the space from the middle region of the air upwards, he calls rains, *the waters above the heavens* There is no foundation for the conjecture which some have made, that there are waters deposited above the four elements; and when the Psalmist speaks of these waters as being above, he clearly points at the descent of the rain. It is adhering too strictly to the letter of the words employed, to conceive as if there were some sea up in the heavens, where the waters were permanently deposited; for we know that Moses and the Prophets ordinarily speak in a popular style, suited to the lowest apprehension. It would be absurd, then, to seek to reduce what they say to the rules of philosophy; as, for example, in the passage before us, the Psalmist notes the marvelous fact that God holds the waters suspended in the air, because it seems contrary to nature that they should mount aloft, and also, that though fluid they should hang in vacant space. Accordingly it is said elsewhere, that they are held there as enclosed in bottles. (Psalm 33:7.) The Psalmist has borrowed the form of expression from Moses, who says — "that the waters were divided from the waters." (Genesis 1:6.)

5. *Let them praise the name, etc.* As he speaks of things wanting intelligence, he passes to the third person, from which we infer that his reason for having spoken in the second person hitherto, was to make a deeper impression upon men. And he asks no other praise than that which may teach us that the stars did not make themselves, nor the rains spring from chance; for notwithstanding the signal proofs we constantly have before our eyes of the divine power, we with shameful carelessness overlook the great author. He says emphatically — *for He Himself created,* intimating that the world is not eternal, as wicked men conjecture, nor made by a concourse of atoms, but that this fair order of things which we see, suddenly sprang forth upon the commandment of God. And, speaking of the creation, he adds what is even more worthy of observation, that he gave that law to them which remains inviolable. For many, while they grant that the world was made by God, lapse from this into the senseless notion that now the order of nature stands of itself, and that God sits idle in

297 "Que les estoilles sont plus haut que les planetes, et qu'icelles planetes sont situees en divers cercles ou spheres." — *Fr.*

the heavens. The Psalmist very properly insists, therefore, that the works of God above us in the heavens were not only made by him, but even now move forward at his disposal; and that not only was a secret power communicated to them at first, but while they go through their assigned parts, their operation and ministry to their various ends is dependent upon God.

Psalm 148:7-10
7. Praise Jehovah! ye creatures from the earth, [298] dragons, [299] and all deeps. **8.** Fire and hail, snow and ice, breath of the storm doing his word. **9.** Mountains, and all hills; fruitful tree, and all cedars. **10.** Wild beasts, and all cattle; reptile, and winged fowl.

7. *Praise Jehovah*, *etc*. He now comes to the lower parts of the world; although deviating at the same time from the exact order, he mixes up such things as are produced in the air — lightning's, snow, ice, and storms. These should rather have been placed among the former class, but he has respect to the common apprehension of men. The scope of the whole is, that wherever we turn our eyes we meet with evidences of the power of God. He speaks first of *the whales*; for, as he mentions the *abysses* or *deeps* immediately afterwards, I have no doubt that by ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, *tanninim*, he means fishes of the sea, such as whales. It is only reasonable to think that matter for praising God should be taken from the sea, which is fraught with so many wonders. He then ascends to *hail, snows*, and *storms*, which he says *fulfill the word of God*; for it is not by an effect of chance that the heavens are clouded, or that a single drop of rain falls from the clouds, or that the thunders rage, but one and all of these changes depend upon the secret will of God, whether he will show his goodness to the children of men in irrigating the earth, or punish their sins by tempest, hail, or other calamities. The passage contains instruction of various kinds, as, for example, that when dearth impends, however parched the earth may be by long continued heat, God can promptly send rain which will remove the drought at his pleasure. If from incessant rains, on the other hand, the seed rot in the ground, or the crops do not come to maturity, we should pray for fair weather. If we are alarmed by thunder, we are taught to pray to God, for as it is he who sends it in his anger, so he can still all the troubled elements. And we are not to take up the narrow view of this truth which irreligious men advocate, that things in nature merely move according to the laws impressed upon them from the beginning, while God stands by idle, but are to hold firmly that God watches over his creatures, and that nothing can take place without his present disposal, as we have seen, Psalm 104:4 that

"he maketh the winds his messengers,
and his ministers a flaming fire."

298 "Laudate Iehovam e terra." — *Lat.* "Louez le Seigneur, vous *creatures* de la terre." — *Fr.*

299 "Ou, balenes." — *Fr. marg.* "Or, whales."

Psalm 148:11-14

11. Kings of the earth, and all peoples; princes, and all judges of the earth. **12.** Young men, and also virgins; old men, with children. **13.** Let them praise the name of Jehovah: for exalted is his name only, his praise is above the earth and the heavens. **14.** And he hath exalted the horn of his people: praise is to all his merciful ones, to the children of Israel, a people which is near to him. Hallelujah.

11. *Kings of the earth*, *etc.* He now turns his address to men, with a respect to whom it was that he called for a declaration of God's praises from creatures, both above and from beneath. As kings and princes are blinded by the dazzling influence of their station, so as to think the world was made for them, and to despise God in the pride of their hearts, he particularly calls them to this duty; and, by mentioning them first, he reproves their ingratitude in withholding their tribute of praise when they are under greater obligations than others. As all men originally stand upon a level as to condition, the higher persons have risen, and the nearer they have been brought to God, the more sacredly are they bound to proclaim his goodness. The more intolerable is the wickedness of kings and princes who claim exemption from the common rule, when they ought rather to inculcate it upon others and lead the way. He could have addressed his exhortation at once summarily to all men, as indeed he mentions *peoples* in general terms; but by thrice specifying *princes* he suggests that they are slow to discharge the duty, and need to be urged do it. Then follows a division according to age and sex, to show that all without exception are created for this end, and should unitedly devote their energies to it. As to *old men*, the more God has lengthened out their lives the more should they be exercised in singing his praises; but he joins *young men* with them, for though they have less experience from continued habit, it will be inexcusable if they do not acknowledge the great mercy of God in the vigor of their lives. In speaking of *girls* or *virgins*, the particle ⌧⌧, *gam, also*, is not merely expletive, but added to make the words more emphatical, conveying the truth that even the young women who are not so liberally educated as the male sex, being considered as born for domestic offices, will omit their duty if they do not join with the rest of the Church in praising God. It follows that all from the least to the greatest are bound by this common rule.

14. *And hath exalted the horn*, *etc.* As we saw in the former Psalm, that the perfections of God are to be seen more conspicuously in the Church than in the constitution of the world at large, the Psalmist has added this sentence, as to the Church being protected by the divine hand, and armed with a power against all enemies which secures its safety in every danger. By *the horn*, as is well known, is meant strength or dignity. Accordingly the Psalmist means that God's blessing is apparent in his Church and among his chosen people, inasmuch as it only flourishes and is powerful through his strength. There is a tacit compar-

ison implied between the Church of God and other hostile powers, for it needs divine guardianship as being exposed on all sides to attack. Hence the Psalmist infers that *praise is to all the merciful ones of God*, for they have ground given them in the singular goodness of his condescension both for self-congratulation and praise. In calling the children of Israel *a people near unto God,* he reminds them of the gracious covenant which God made with Abraham. For how came the nearness, except in the way of God's preferring an unknown despised stranger to all nations? Nor are we to seek the cause of the distinction elsewhere than in the mere love of God. Though all the world equally belongs to God, he graciously discovered himself to the children of Israel, and brought them near to him, strangers as they were from God, even as are the whole race of Adam. Hence the words of Moses —

"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, and distributed the peoples, he stretched forth his line to Jacob." (Deuteronomy 32:8.)

He is to be considered, therefore, as pointing out the cause why God hath extended such signal blessings to a single people, and a people poor and despised — his adoption of them to himself.

PSALM 149

If we may be allowed to compare this Psalm with the former ones, and the next, which is the last, the only difference is, that while the author of the Psalm, whoever he was, has hitherto spoken of God's special care and protection of his Church in connection with the common providential government of the world, here he speaks of his benefits to the Church exclusively. In the next Psalm mention is only made of the power of God in general.

Hallelujah.

Psalm 149:1-4

1. Sing ye to Jehovah a new song: his praise is in the congregation of the merciful. **2.** Let Israel rejoice in his Maker: let the sons of Zion rejoice their king. [300] **3.** Let them praise his name on the pipe, [301] on the timbrel [302] and the harp let them sing psalms to him. **4.** Because Jehovah hath taken pleasure in his people; he will glorify the poor unto salvation.

1. *Sing to Jehovah a new song.* This exordium proves what I have just said, that the exhortation now given is addressed only to God's people; for the singular goodness which is particularly extended to them affords more ample matter of praise. The probable conjecture is, that the Psalm was composed at the time when the people were begun to rejoice, or after they had returned to their native country from the Babylonish captivity. We will see from the context that a promise is given of recovery from their ruined condition. The object, I think, of the Psalmist, is to encourage them to expect the full and complete deliverance,

300 "The Jewish government was a *Theocracy,* which commenced at the time of the departure from Egypt; and continued in some degree till the coming of Christ, as had been foretold by Jacob, Genesis 49:10." — *Dimock.*

301 In our English Bible it is in the text, "in the dance;" and on the margin, "or with the pipe." ⌧⌧⌧⌧ *machol,* the Hebrew word employed, is often in our authorized version rendered "dance"; but this is not its meaning. It denotes, as Parkhurst states, "some fistular wind instrument of music, with holes, as a flute, pipe or fife, from ⌧⌧, *chal* to make a hole or opening." "I know no place in the Bible." Says Dr. Adam Clark, "where ⌧⌧⌧⌧, *mechol,* and ⌧⌧⌧⌧, *mechalath,* mean *dance* of any kind; they constantly mean some kind of pipe."

302 The Hebrew name for this kind of this musical instrument is ⌧⌧, *toph.* The timbrel, tympanum, or tambourine, was used chiefly by women, and was employed in choral dances, or occasions of religious or festal processions. Thus we read in Exodus 15:20, 21, "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." The principle of the ⌧⌧, *toph,* or timbrel was that of a prepared skin stretched upon a hoop or frame. There were various kinds or forms of this instrument. "Our common tambourine, with small cymbals inserted in the frame, also appears in some paintings, [of Egyptian and European antiquity,] and is now very common in Western Asia. We are told that the frame was either of metal or wood and that the ass's skin was usually employed for the covering. They were not always played by the naked hand; but were sometimes struck with small batons, or with a knotty whip with many thongs, instead of which, on particular festivals, a sprig of some tree or plant, considered suitable to the occasion, was sometimes employed." — *Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible.* The timbrel is evidently of oriental origin. From the reference to it in Genesis 31:27, where ⌧⌧ is translated "tabret," we learn that it was known in the time of Jacob, that is, ages previous to the existence of the great European nations of antiquity; and both the Greeks and Romans confessed that their instruments of this class were derived from Egyptians and Syrians. See volume 3

some prelude of which had been suddenly and unexpectedly given in the permission to return. As the Church was not fully restored at once, but was with difficulty and only after a long period brought to a state of vigor, comfort such as this was much needed. The Spirit of God would also furnish a remedy for evils which were afterwards to break out; for the Church had scarcely begun to respire when it was again harassed with various evils, and oppressed by the cruel tyranny of Antiochus, which was followed up by a dreadful dispersion. The Psalmist had good reason therefore for animating the godly to look forward for the full accomplishment of the mercy of God, that they might be persuaded of divine protection until such time as the Messiah should arise who would gather all Israel. He calls this *a new song,* as we have noticed elsewhere, to distinguish it from those with which the saints commonly and daily praised God, for praise is their continued exercise. It follows that he speaks of some rare and unusual benefit, demanding signal and particular thanksgiving. And I am disposed to think that whoever may have been the author of the Psalm, he alludes to that passage in Isaiah, (Isaiah 42:10,) "Sing unto the Lord a new song," when he speaks of the future restoration of the Church, and the eternal kingdom of Christ. In the second clause of the verse there is a promise implied. For though he proceeds to exhort the Lord's people to sing God's praises together, he hints along with this that the Church would coalesce again into one body, so as to celebrate God's praises in the solemn assembly. We know that so scattered were the Israelites, that the sacred songs ceased to be sung, as elsewhere they complain of being called upon to sing —

"How shall we sing the songs of the Lord in a strange land?" (Psalm 137:4.)

He bids them prepare therefore after this sad dispersion for holding their sacred assemblies again.

2. *Let Israel rejoice in his Maker.* He insists upon the same point, that the Lord's people should rest firmly persuaded that their family had not been chosen out in vain from the rest of the world, but that God would be mindful of his covenant, and not allow the mercies which he had extended to them to fail or become extinct. Although they had been temporarily deprived of the inheritance of the land of Canaan, which was the pledge of their adoption, the Psalmist calls God their *Maker, and king of the sons of Zion,* to remind them that when adopted to a pre-eminency above other nations, this was a species of new creation. So in Psalm 45:6, the Israelites are called "the work of God's hands," not merely because they were like other men created by him, but because he had formed them anew, and distinguished them with a new honor, that, of being separated front the whole human race. The name king has a wider signification, intimating that as this people was at first formed by God, so it was with the view of their being ever governed by his power. The musical instruments he mentions were peculiar to this infancy of the Church, nor should we foolishly imitate a practice which was intended only for God's ancient people. But the Psalmist confirms what has been already mentioned, that their religious assemblies which had been for

a time interrupted would soon be restored, and they would call upon the name of the Lord in the due order of his worship.

4. *For God hath taken pleasure in his people.* We have spoken elsewhere of the verb ⊠⊠⊠, *ratsah* here it means *free favor,* the Psalmist saying that it was entirely of his good pleasure that God had chosen this people to himself. From this source flows what is added in the second clause, that God would give a new glory of deliverance to the afflicted. In the Hebrew ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *anavim,* means *poor and afflicted ones,* but the term came afterwards to be applied to *merciful persons,* as bodily afflictions have a tendency to subdue pride, while abundance begets cruelty. The Psalmist accordingly mitigates the sadness of present evils by administering seasonable consolation, that God's people, when oppressed by troubles, might look forward with hope to the glorious deliverance which was yet unseen. The sum of the passage is — that God, who had fixed his love upon his chosen people, could not possibly abandon them to such miseries as they now suffered under.

Psalm 149:5-9
5. The merciful shall rejoice in glory; they shall shout for joy upon their couches. [303] **6.** The high praises of God are in their throat [304] and a two-edged sword is in their hand: **7.** To execute vengeance upon the nations, castigations upon the peoples: **8.** To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with iron fetters: **9.** To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor is to all his merciful ones. Hallelujah.

5. *They shall rejoice.* In making mention here of joy, jubilee, and the high praises of God, he shows still more clearly from the effects which it would produce, that he does not speak of a common benefit of God; for had not the deliverance of the people been of a remarkable kind, there would have been no occasion for such joy, and even triumph. And by these expressions he intimates that the people would not be brought back from exile to be immediately dispersed again, but to flourish in the enjoyment of every species of blessing. He on this account makes mention of *couches,* teaching them to expect daily rest under the divine protection. He declares that they would be furnished with arms and power, not only to ward off enemies, but to put them to flight on every side, so as to reduce to subjection kings and nations which formerly ruled over them. By *swords of a double-mouth,* or *two-edged,* are meant such as cut on both sides, for at that time swords had but one edge.

7. *To execute vengeance, etc*. Both during their exile and after their return from it, this might seem to be altogether incredible. Nor did it take place before the advent of Christ; for though the Machabaei and their posterity reduced the neighboring nations to subjection, this was but a faint prelude and earnest to direct the thoughts of the Lord's people to what was approaching. But as Haggai prophesied that the glory of the second Temple would be greater than of the first, so here there is promised a more prosperous state than had ever existed. (Haggai 2:9.) Reduced as the Jews were in numbers, and low as was the state of things among them, the Psalmist announces to all nations which opposed and troubled them, that they would have the ascendancy. As they were yet tributary, and dwelt at Jerusalem only by sufferance, they were called to exercise faith in a promise which, to the judgment of sense, might appear visionary, and to raise their thoughts to the infinite power of God,

303 The people of the East sat on couches in their private parties, banquets, etc., as well as reposed on them during night. The language here may, therefore, be expressive of the praise they would ascribe to God at their festal banquets and in their private companies. An exhortion has previously been given (Psalm 149:1) to praise God in the public assembly. Green supposes that the reference is to the couches on which they reclines when they partook of the eucharistical sacrifices.

304 "The original is ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠, in their throats. It is probable the Hebrew, when a living language, was extremely *guttural,* as the Arabian language now is." — *Fry.*

which triumphs over all worldly obstacles. The vengeance spoken of is such as the Israelites would take, not under the influence of private resentment, but by commandment of God; and this we mention that none may infer that they are allowed to take vengeance for personal injuries.

The next verse, where mention is made of *kings* and *nobles,* is an amplification; for had he only spoken of peoples and nations, this might have been restricted to the common people and men of low condition. Here is something much greater — that kings and others of noble rank would be dragged to punishment in chains. But it is to be remembered, as I have just hinted, that but a small part of this splendid prospect was realized until Christ appeared; for any small increase of prosperity which the people enjoyed under the Machabaei was not worthy of any consideration, except in so far as by this help God sustained the drooping spirits of the people up to Christ's advent. Here the prediction of Jacob is to be noticed —

"the scepter shall not depart from Judah, until Shiloh come." (Genesis 49:10.)

But the Machabaei sprung from another tribe. We must, infer, therefore, that the regular order was then interrupted, and that to make the prosperous state of the people to have been based upon their victories, is building a castle in the air. And God would appear designedly to have removed the government from the tribe of Judah, lest this success should intoxicate the minds of his people; for most of them, through pride in these signal victories, overlooked the true and substantial deliverance. As the Psalmist treats here of the perfection of the prosperity of the people, it follows that he refers to the Messiah, that their expectation and desire of him might never cease either in their prosperity or adversity.

9. *To perform the judgment, etc.* He qualifies what he had said in the previous verses, in which he might have appeared to arm the Lord's people for deeds of warlike cruelty. At first sight it might appear strange, that they who were called the merciful ones of God, should be sent out with drawn swords to commit slaughter, and pour out human blood; for what evidence was here of mercy? But when God himself is the author of the vengeance taken, it is just judgment, not cruelty. When mention is made of the *judgment written,* the Psalmist reminds the Jews that they were called to liberty by command of God — to that liberty which had been unjustly wrested from them by' foreigners and tyrants, and that they could not be blamed for executing judgment written. Any exposition of the passage is faulty which does not proceed upon this as being the Psalmist's design, that he would have the Jews to consider the divine mandate, not to proceed under the influence of private resentment, and to throw a rein over passion; saying upon the matter, that God's children may not execute vengeance but when called to it, there being an end of all moderation when men yield themselves up to the impulse of their own spirits. Another question might arise here by way of objection. Christ is said to have come without crying or lifting up his voice, that he might not break the bruised reed, (Matthew 12:20,) and he inculcates the same character upon his followers.

The answer is obvious, that Christ is also armed with an iron scepter, by which to bruise the rebellious, and is elsewhere described as stained with blood, as slaying his enemies on every side, and not being wearied with the slaughter of them. (Isaiah 63:2.) Nor is it surprising, considering the obstinacy which universally prevails in the world, that the mercy which is treated with such indignity should be converted into severity. Now the doctrine laid down in the passage admits of being rightly applied to our practice, in this way, that what is here said of the two-edged sword, applies more especially to the Jews, and not properly to us, who have not a power of this kind permitted; except, indeed, that rulers and magistrates are vested by God with the sword to punish all manner of violence; but this is something peculiar to their office. [305] As to the Church collective, the sword now put into our hand is of another kind, that of the word and spirit, that we may slay for a sacrifice to God those who formerly were enemies, or again deliver them over to everlasting destruction unless they repent. (Ephesians 6:17.) For what Isaiah predicted of Christ extends to all who are his members, —

"He shall smite the wicked with the word of his mouth,
and shall slay them with the breath of his lips."
(Isaiah 11:4.)

If believers quietly confine themselves within these limits of their calling, they will find that the promise of vengeance upon their enemies has not been given in vain. For when God calls us, as I have said above, to judgment written, he puts a restraint both upon our spirits and actions, so as that we must not attempt what he has not commanded. When it is said, in the close of the verse, that *this honor is to all the merciful ones of God,* he not only exhorts to the practice of piety, but gives us a support for our encouragement, lest we should think that we might be losers by exercising mercy and patience, as most men give vent to fury and rage, under the idea that the only way to defend their life is by showing the savageness of wolves. Although God's people, therefore, have nothing of the strength of the giant, and will not move a finger without divine permission, 'and have a calm spirit, the Psalmist declares, that they have an honorable and splendid issue out of all their troubles.

305 "Qui est ici dit du glaive trainchant des deux cotes, appartient specialment aux Juifs, et ne peut pas estre approprie an nous," etc. — *Fr.*

PSALM 150.

The argument of this Psalm is the same with that of the former.

Hallelujah.

Psalm 150:1-6

1. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. **2.** Praise him in, his might; praise him for the plenitude of his greatness. **3.** Praise him with sound of trumpet, [306] praise him with psaltry and harp. **4.** Praise him with timbrel [307] and pipe, [308] praise him upon chords, [309] and the organ. [310] **5.** Praise him upon cymbals of sound,

306 "The trumpets of the last Temple were probably formed after the ancient model; and as these are represented among the spoils of that Temple on the Triumphal Arch of Titus at Rome, we are enabled to see that they were long straight trumpets, of a form which has always been and continues to be common... Trumpets and horns are the only instruments concerning which any directions are given in the law. 'In the infancy of a state,' says Burney, 'a nation has but little leisure for cultivating music any otherwise than as it is connected with religious rites and the military art;' and it is thus that he accounts for the fact, that (with the exception of Miriam's timbrel) no instruments but horns and trumpets are noticed in the Law. And, indeed, it may be said that they are scarcely mentioned as *musical* instruments, but as suited to and employed for making signals, calls, and conveying instructions during the religious solemnities, and in the field of war... It is clear, however, that trumpets and cornets were introduced into the musical choirs in the time of David; while they still continued to be employed in their former service. The following particulars concerning the use of trumpets in the Temple will be useful, and are collected chiefly from Lightfoot's 'Temple Service.' The trumpets were sounded exclusively by the priests who stood not in the Levitical choir, but apart and opposite to the Levites, on the other side of the altar, both parties looking towards it—the priests on the west side, and the Levites on the east. The trumpets did not join in the concert; but were sounded during certain regulated pauses in the vocal and instrumental music "—*Illustrated Commentary upon the Bible.*.

307 See footnote 293, Psalm 149:3.

308 See footnote 292, Psalm 149:3.

309 The original word is ⊠⊠⊠⊠ "This word occurring nowhere else, it is impossible to ascertain what kind of instrument this was, but as Edwards, upon the authority of Rabbi Hannase makes, it a *stringed* instrument, and the word is probably derived from ⊠⊠⊠, *to number*, probably it was so called from the extraordinary number of strings which it had; and perhaps it was the *decachord*, mentioned in Psalm 33:2, which, having ten strings, might be called Minim, κατ ἐξοχὴν, as consisting of the greatest number of strings in use among the Jews." —*Dimock.*

310 The Hebrew name is ⊠⊠⊠, *ougab*. This instrument is equal in antiquity to the ⊠⊠⊠⊠, *kinnor*, both being mentioned in Genesis 4:21, as the invention of Jubal. These are the two first musical instruments the invention of which is recorded in Scripture, and the only ones mentioned before the deluge. Subsequently they are almost always mentioned in connection with each other. The *ougab* was not that complicated instrument which goes by the name of the *organ* in the present day. Calmet supposes it to have been a flute which consisted of a number of pipes, of unequal thickness and length, set close or joined together, which gave harmonious sound when blown into, by moving them successively under the lower lip. Such is the common opinion, and there seems no ground to dispute its correctness. This instrument was the small organ or *syrinx*, or *fistula Panis* of antiquity;

praise him upon cymbals of jubilation [311] **6.** Whatsoever breathes, let it praise God. Hallelujah.

1. *Praise God in his sanctuary.* This psalm in general commends the spiritual worship of God, which consists in sacrifices of praise. By the *sanctuary* there is little doubt that heaven is here meant, as is often the case elsewhere. The second clause is exegetical, for the same thing is repeated. But for sanctuary we read ⊠⊠⊠, *rekia,* that is, *the expanse of heaven,* to which is added the epithet of *power,* because there we have a proof of the matchless power of God, so that we cannot look to the heavens without being lost in admiration. As to the interpretation which some give — Praise God, ye angels who inhabit the heavens, and ye

its invention having been ascribed to Pan, the great sylvan god, who was usually figured with the instrument in his hands. According to the fable, he formed it of reeds which grew by the river, and played upon it while his goats were feeding on the banks; which shows that it was regarded as properly a pastoral instrument, and as such it seems to be mentioned by Job. (Job 21:11, 12.) The principle of its construction is so simple, that it is among the most widely diffused of musical instruments. It is in common use in the island of New Amsterdam, in the South Seas, as flutes and drums have been found in Otaheite and New Zealand, an uncontestable proof that these are instruments which tribes the most barbarous and the most remote from each other naturally invent. The number of tubes, as represented on ancient monuments, varies from seven to eleven.

311 Of the Hebrew musical instrument called ⊠⊠⊠, *tsiltel,* or "cymbal," as Calvin here renders it, and as it is rendered in the Septuagint and Vulgate, two kinds are here mentioned — ⊠⊠⊠⊠, "*tsiltelim*," or, "cymbals of sound," and "*tsiltelim*," or "*cymbals* of jubilation." The specific difference between these two sorts of the same instrument is not accurately marked. The latter were probably of a larger size than the farmer, or made of such a shape or of such metals as to emit a louder sound. The former are translated by French and Skinner, "the soft cymbal." The literal translation of the Hebrew is, "cymbals of hearing," i.e., say these critics, "cymbals which when struck do not overpower the voices of the singers." They translate the latter, "the loud cymbals." The ancient cymbals were two convex or hollow plates of brass or other metal, as silver or copper, made in the form of cups, which were held in each hand, and which being struck against each other produced a sharp clanging sound. Some, however, think that the word *tsiltzel* exclusively denotes the *sistrum*, and that cymbals, properly speaking, are denoted by the word ⊠⊠⊠⊠ *shalishim*, in 1 Samuel 18:6, which is, equally with the other, rendered *cymbala* by the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and which our authorized version translates "instruments of music." It is difficult to decide as to these two opinions; but it seems admitted on all hands that both cymbals and sistrums were in use among the Jews. The sistrum was a concave plate of sonorous metal, and of an oval configuration, crossed by bars of the same metal with reverted ends. These bars moved freely in the holes through which they passed, and when the instrument was shaken by the handle to which it was fixed, the reverted ends striking upon the body of the instrument produced the sound. It had generally three or four transverse bars. It was much used by the Egyptians in their religious services, and actual specimens of it of an ancient date have been discovered. See volume 3

men who dwell under the firmament, it is forced and unnatural; for the Psalmist, in order to awaken men who grow languid in God's praises, bids them lift their eyes towards the heavenly sanctuary. That the majesty of God may be duly reverenced, the Psalmist represents him as presiding on his throne in the heavens; and he enlarges upon the same truth in the second verse, celebrating his power and his greatness, which he had brought under our notice in the heavens, which are a mirror in which they may be seen. If we would have our minds kindled, then, to engage in this religious service, let us meditate upon his power and greatness, which will speedily dispel all such insensibility. Though our minds can never take in this immensity, the mere taste of it will deeply affect us. And God will not reject such praises as we offer according to our capacity.

3. *Praise him with sound of trumpet.* I do not insist upon the words in the Hebrew signifying the musical instruments; only let the reader remember that sundry different kinds are here mentioned, which were in use under the legal economy, the more forcibly to teach the children of God that they cannot apply themselves too diligently to the praises of God — as if he would enjoin them strenuously to bring to this service all their powers, and devote themselves wholly to it. Nor was it without reason that God under the law enjoined this multiplicity of songs, that he might lead men away from those vain and corrupt pleasures to which they are excessively addicted, to a holy and profitable joy. Our corrupt nature indulges in extraordinary liberties, many devising methods of gratification which are preposterous, while their highest satisfaction lies in suppressing all thoughts of God. This perverse disposition could only be corrected in the way of God's retaining a weak and ignorant people under many restraints, and constant exercises. The Psalmist, therefore, in exhorting believers to pour forth all their joy in the praises of God, enumerates, one upon another, all the musical instruments which were then in use, and reminds them that they ought all to be consecrated to the worship of God.

6. *Whatever breathes, etc.* As the word ⊠⊠⊠, *neshamah,* means *breath,* or *blowing,* and whatever is animate, or breathes, the words may be extended to every kind of living creatures, as we have seen in the preceding psalms that the declaration of God's praises is assigned even to things wanting intelligence. But as men exclusively are often meant under the name of "flesh," so we may very well suppose that the words have reference here to men, who, although they have vital breath in common with the brute creation, obtain by way of distinction the name of breathing, as of living creatures. I am led to think this for the following reason: As yet the Psalmist has addressed himself in his exhortations to the people who were conversant with the ceremonies under the law, now he turns to men in general, tacitly intimating that a time was coming when the same songs, which were then only heard in Judea, would resound in every quarter of the globe. And in this prediction we have been joined in the same symphony with the Jews, that we may worship God with constant sacrifices of praise,

until being gathered into the kingdom of heaven, we sing with elect angels an eternal hallelujah.

A NEW TRANSLATION OF
THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

PSALMS 1—35
PART FIRST. [312]

312 According to the Hebrew division, Part 1 extends from Psalm 1 to Psalm 41 inclusive.

PSALM 1

1 Blessed *is* the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly; And in the way of sinners doth not stand; And in the seat of scoffers doth not sit:

2 But in the law of the Lord *is* his delight; And in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree planted near rivers of waters, Which shall yield its fruit in its season, And whose leaf shall not fade; And all that he doeth shall prosper.

4 Not so the ungodly: But they are like the chaff, which scatter doth the wind.

5 Therefore shall not stand the ungodly in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

6 For know doth Jehovah the way of the righteous; But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

PSALM 2

1 Why tumultuously rise do the Gentiles, And the peoples murmur in vain?

2 Confederated have the kings of the earth, And the princes have assembled together, Against Jehovah and against his Christ.

3 "Let us break asunder their bonds, "And cast away from us their yoke."

4 He who dwelleth in heaven shall laugh; The Lord shall deride them.

5 Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, And in his hot displeasure he shall vex them.

6 "I have anointed my king, "Upon Zion, the mountain of my holiness."

7 I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said to me, "My Son art thou; I, this day, have begotten thee.

8 "Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, "And for thy possession the uttermost parts of the earth.

9 "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;" As the vessel of a potter thou shalt dash them in pieces."

10 And now, O ye kings! understand; Be instructed, O ye judges of the earth!

11 Serve Jehovah with fear, Rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, And ye perish from the way, When shall be kindled in a short time his wrath. Blessed are all who trust in him.

PSALM 3

A Psalm of David, when he fled from the face of Absalom his son

1 O Lord! how are my oppressors multiplied! Many rise up against me,

2 Many say to my soul, "There is no help for him in God." Selah.

3 And thou, O Jehovah! art a shield for me; My glory, and he that exalteth my head.

4 With my voice to the Lord have I cried, And he heard me from the mountain of his holiness. Selah.

5 I lay down and slept; I awaked, because the Lord sustains me.

6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, Who on all sides have set their camps against me.

7 Arise, O Lord l Save me, O my God! For thou hast smitten all my enemies upon the cheekbone; The teeth of the ungodly thou hast broken.

8 To the Lord belongeth salvation; Upon thy people *is* thy blessing. Selah.

PSALM 4

To the Chief Musician on Neginoth. A Psalm of David

1 When I cry, answer me, O God of my righteousness! In distress thou hast enlarged me; Have pity upon me, and hear my prayer.

2 O ye sons of men! how long my glory will ye try to put to shame? Will ye love vanity, will ye seek after lying? Selah.

3 But know that chosen hath Jehovah the merciful man for himself: Jehovah will hear when I cry unto him.

4 Tremble and ye shall not sin; Discourse in your heart upon your bed, and be silent. Selah.

5 Sacrifice the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust in the Lord.

6 Many say, "Who will show us good?" Lift thou up on us the light of thy countenance, O Jehovah!

7 Thou hast given joy to my heart More than *theirs* in the time that their corn and their wine are increased.

8 In peace [*as if*] with a multitude I will sleep and take rest, [313] For thou, O Jehovah! in safety hast placed me, [*though*] alone.

313 This line is freely rendered. For the literal translation, see the text as given in the commentary.

PSALM 5

To the Chief. Musician upon Nehiloth. A Psalm of David

1 My words do thou give ear to, O Jehovah! Attend to my speech.

2 Hearken to the voice of my cry, my King and my God! For to thee will I pray.

3 O Jehovah! in the morning do thou hear my voice; In the morning will I direct to thee and will watch.

4 For not a God taking pleasure in wickedness art thou; There shall not dwell with thee evil.

5 There shall not stand the foolish before thine eyes; Thou hatest all that commit iniquity.

6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak falsehood: The man of bloods and the deceitful man abominate shall Jehovah.

7 And I, in the multitude of thy mercy, will enter into thy house; I will worship in thy holy temple in thy fear.

8 O Jehovah! lead me in thy righteousness, because of my adversaries; Make straight before my face thy way.

9 For there is not in their mouth uprightness; Their inward part is deep depravity; A sepulcher that is open is their throat; With their tongues they deal deceitfully.

10 Cause them to err, O God! Let them fall from their counsels; In the multitude of their transgressions destroy them; For they have rebelled against thee.

11 And rejoice let all those who trust in thee, For ever let them exult; and cover thou them, And let those delight in thee that love thy name.

12 For thou shalt bless the righteous, O Jehovah! With thy good will as with a shield thou shalt encompass them.

PSALM 6

To the Chief Musician on Neginoth, upon the Eighth. A Psalm of David

1 O Jehovah! do not in thy anger rebuke me, And do not in thy wrath chastise me.

2 Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah! for I am weak; Heal me, O Jehovah! for affrighted are my bones.

3 And my soul is exceedingly afraid: And thou, O Jehovah! — how long? —

4 Return, O Lord! deliver my soul; Save me for the sake of thy mercy.

5 For there is not in death any remembrance of thee; In the grave who shall acknowledge thee?

6 I have become wearied with my groaning; I make to swim every night my bed; With my tears my couch I water.

7 Waxed dim for vexation hath mine eye; It hath become old among all my persecutors.

8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; For heard hath the Lord the voice of my weeping.

9 Heard hath the Lord my supplication; The Lord my prayer will receive.

10 Put to shame and confounded greatly be all my enemies; Let them turn back, and be ashamed suddenly.

PSALM 7

Shiggaion of David, which he sung to Jehovah, upon the words
of Cush the Benjamite

1 O Jehovah, my God! in thee do I trust: Save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:

2 Lest He seize, as a lion, upon my soul, And tear it in pieces while there is none to deliver it.

3 O Jehovah, my God! if I have done this, If there be iniquity in my hands,

4 If I have rewarded to him that was at peace with me evil, And have not delivered him that afflicted me without cause;

5 Pursue let the enemy my soul and take it, And let him cast down to the earth my life, And my glory in the dust let him hold down. Selah

6 Arise, O Jehovah! in thy anger; Lift up thyself against the fury of my enemies; And awake thou for me to the judgment which thou hast ordained.

7 And the congregation of peoples shall be round about thee: And on account of this, do thou on high return.

8 Jehovah shall judge the peoples: Judge me, O Jehovah! according to my righteousness, And according to the integrity which is in me.

9 Let come to an end, I pray, the malice of the wicked; And direct thou the righteous man: For he proves the hearts and the reins, the righteous God.

10 My shield is in God, Who saves the upright in heart.

11 God judgeth the righteous man, And him who despiseth God, daily.

12 If he turn not, his sword he will whet; His bow he hath bent, he hath made it ready.

13 And for it he hath prepared the instruments of death; He shall make fit his arrows for the persecutors.

14 Behold! he shall travail to bring forth iniquity, And he hath conceived wickedness, And he shall bring forth falsehood.

15 A pit he hath digged, and hollowed it out; And he hath fallen into the ditch which he hath made.

16 Return shall his wickedness upon his own head, And upon his own crown his violence shall descend.

17 I will praise Jehovah, according to his righteousness; And I will sing to the name of Jehovah, Most High.

PSALM 8

To the chief Musician upon Hagittith. A Psalm of David

1 O Jehovah, our Lord! How wonderful is thy name in all the earth, To set thy glory above the heavens!

2 Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast founded *thy* strength, because of thy adversaries, To put to flight the enemy and the avenger.

3 When! see thy heavens, the works of thy fingers; The moon and the stars which thou hast arranged:

4 What is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him lower a little than God, And with glory and honor thou hast crowned him.

6 Thou hast set him over the works of thy hands: All things thou hast put under his feet.

7 Sheep and oxen, all of them, And also the beasts of the fields;

8 The fowl of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, And whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

9 O Jehovah, our Lord! How wonderful is thy name in all the earth!

PSALM 9

To the chief Musician upon Hagittith. Almuth Laben. A Psalm of David

1 I will praise Jehovah with my whole heart; will recount all thy marvelous works.

2 I will rejoice and exult in thee; I will celebrate in Psalms thy name, O thou Most high!

3 When turned are my enemies backward, They fall and are put to flight at thy presence.

4 For thou hast maintained my judgment and my cause; Thou hast sat upon the throne a righteous judge.

5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen; Thou hast destroyed the ungodly; Their name thou hast blotted out for ever and ever.

6 O thou enemy! come to an end are desolations for ever; And cities thou hast destroyed; Perished has their memory with them.

7 And Jehovah for ever sitteth: His throne for judgment he hath prepared.

8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness; He shall judge the peoples in rectitude.

9 And Jehovah will be a place of defense to the poor, And a protection in seasonable times in trouble.

10 And trust in thee shall those who know thy name: For thou forsakest not those who seek thee, O Jehovah!

11 Sing psalms to Jehovah, who dwelleth in Zion, Proclaim among the peoples his doings;

12 For in requiring blood, it he hath remembered: He hath not forgotten the cry of the poor.

13 Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah! See my affliction from those who persecute me, O thou that liftest me up from the gates of death;

14 That I may recount all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Zion; That I may exult in thy salvation.

15 Sunk are the heathen into the pit which they have made; In the net which they have hid taken are their own feet.

16 Known is Jehovah by executing judgment: In the work of his own hands the wicked is snared. Higgaion Selah.

17 Turned shall be the wicked into hell: All the nations that forget God.

18 For not for ever shall be forgotten the poor; The hope of the humble shall not perish for ever.

19 Arise, O Jehovah! let not man prevail: Let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20 Put, O Jehovah! fear in them, That the heathen may know that mortal men they are. Selah.

PSALM 10

1 Why, O Jehovah! standest thou afar off? And winkest at seasonable times in trouble?

2 In his pride the ungodly doth persecute the poor; Let them be caught in the devices which they imagine.

3 For praise himself doth the ungodly on account of the desire of his own soul; And the violent man blesseth himself: He despiseth Jehovah.

4 The ungodly, in the pride of his countenance doth not inquire; All his devices say, "There is not a God."

5 Prosperous are his ways at all times; High are thy judgments before him; At all his enemies he puffeth.

6 He saith in his heart, "I shall not be moved from generation to generation," Because he is not in adversity,

7 Of cursing his mouth is full, and of deceit, and of malice: Under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.

8 He will sit in the ensnaring places of the villages; In his lurking places will he murder the innocent: His eyes against the poor will take their aim.

9 He will lie in wait in secret, as a lion in his den; He will lie in wait to catch the poor; He will catch the poor by drawing him into his net.

10 He will crouch low, he will cast himself down; Then shall fall by his strengths an army of the afflicted.

11 He hath said in his heart, "Forgotten it hath God; "He hideth his face, that he may not see it for ever."

12 Arise, O Jehovah, God! lift up thy hand: Do not forget the poor.

13 Why do the wicked despise God? He saith in his heart, "Thou wilt not require it."

14 Thou hast seen *it*; For mischief and oppression thou considerest, That thou mayest take them into thy own hand: Upon thee shall the poor leave; To the orphan thou wilt be an helper.

15 Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man; Thou shalt seek his wickedness, and shalt not find it.

16 Jehovah is King for ever and ever; Perished are the heathen out of his land.

17 The desire of the needy thou hast heard, O Jehovah! Thou wilt direct their heart; Hear shall thine car:

18 That thou mayest judge the fatherless and the poor, That the man *who* is of earth may terrify no more.

PSALM 11

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David

1 In Jehovah do I put my trust: How then say ye to my soul, "Flee ye into your mountain as a bird?"

2 Surely behold! the ungodly shall bend the bow, They have made ready their arrows upon the string, shoot in secret at the upright in heart.

3 Truly, the foundations are destroyed: The righteous, what hath he done?

4 Jehovah is in the palace of his holiness; Jehovah in heaven *hath* his throne; His eyes behold, his eyelids consider the children of men.

5 Jehovah will approve the righteous man; But the ungodly and him who loveth iniquity, hate doth his soul.

6 He will rain upon the ungodly snares, Fire and brimstone, and a storm of whirlwinds: This is the portion of their cup.

7 For the righteous Jehovah loveth righteousness; His countenance approveth the upright.

PSALM 12

To the Chief Musician upon the Eighth. A Psalm of David

1 Save me, O Jehovah! for failed hath the merciful man, For wasted away are the faithful from among the children of men.

2 Deceit doth every one speak with his neighbor; With lips of flatteries, with a double heart do they speak.

3 Let Jehovah cut off all lips of flatteries, The tongue that great things doth speak:

4 Those who have said, "By our tongues we will be strengthened; "Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"

5 "Because of the spoiling of the needy, "Because of the groaning of the poor, "Now will I arise," say will Jehovah, "I will set in safety him for whom *the wicked man* layeth snares."

6 The words of Jehovah are pure words; Silver melted in an excellent crucible of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou, O Jehovah! wilt keep them; Thou wilt preserve him from this generation for ever.

8 On every side the ungodly walk; When they are exalted, reproach is to the children of men.

PSALM 13

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David

1 How long, O Jehovah! wilt thou forget me for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul? And have sorrow in my heart daily? How long exalted shall be my enemy over me?

3 Look upon me, answer me, O Jehovah, my God! Enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep in death;

4 Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him;" And those who afflict me rejoice if I should fall.

5 But as for me, in thy goodness I trust; Exult shall my heart in thy salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

PSALM 14

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm Of David

1 The fool hath said in his heart, "There is no God;" They have corrupted [*all good order*,] they have done abominable work. There is none that doeth good.

2 Jehovah from heaven looked down Upon the children of men, To see whether there were any that did understand, And seek after God.

3 Every one of them hath gone aside, Together putrid have they become: There is none that doeth good, not even one.

4 Have they no knowledge all these workers of iniquity? Who eat up my people as they eat bread. Upon the Lord they do not call.

5 There did they tremble with fear, For God is in the generation of the righteous.

6 The counsel of the poor ye deride, Because Jehovah is his hope.

7 Who shall give from Zion salvation to Israel? When turn back shall Jehovah the captivity of his people, Rejoice shall Jacob, and exult shall Israel.

PSALM 15

A Psalm of David

1 O Jehovah! who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? Who shall rest in the mountain of thy holiness?

2 He who walketh in integrity and doeth righteousness, And who speaketh truth in his heart,

3 He who detracteth not with his tongue, Who doeth not to his companion evil, And a calumnious report doth not raise up against his neighbor.

4 Despised in his eyes is the off cast; But those who fear the Lord he honoreth; When he hath sworn to his own hurt he doth not change.

5 His money he doth not put out to usury; And a present upon the innocent he doth not accept: He who doeth these things shall not be moved for ever.

PSALM 16

Michtam. A Psalm Of David

1 Keep me, O God! *For* in thee do I trust.

2 Thou shalt say to Jehovah, "My Lord thou art; "My well doing *extendeth* not to thee."

3 To the saints who are on the earth, And to the excellent; all my delight is in them.

4 Multiplied shall be their sorrows who offer to a stranger; I will not taste their libations of blood, Nor will I take their names in my lips.

5 Jehovah is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup; Thou maintainest my lot.

6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant *places*; Yea, an inheritance that is goodly hath fallen to me.

7 I will magnify Jehovah, who giveth me counsel; Even in the nights instruct me do my reins.

8 I have set Jehovah before me continually; Since he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore glad is my heart, rejoice doth my tongue; Also my flesh dwelleth in confidence.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave; Nor wilt thou make thy Holy One to see the pit.

11 Thou wilt make known to me the way of life; Fullness of joy *is* in thy countenance; Pleasures *are* at thy right hand for evermore.

PSALM 17

A Prayer of David

1 Hear, O Jehovah! my righteousness; Attend to my cry; Hearken to my prayer, which is not in lips of deceit.

2 From the presence of thy countenance let my judgment go forth Let thine eyes behold uprightness.

3 Thou hast proved my heart; Thou hast visited *it* by night; Thou hast examined *it*, thou shalt not find *any thing in it*; My thought shall not pass beyond my mouth.

4 As for the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have taken heed of the ways of the destroyer.

5 Uphold my steps in thy paths, That my footsteps may not slide.

6 I have called upon thee, surely thou wilt hear me, O God! Incline thy ear to me, and hear my speech.

7 Make marvelous thy mercies, O thou Preserver of those who trust [*in thee*,] From those that exalt themselves against thy right hand.

8 Keep me as the apple, the daughter of the eye; In the shadow of thy wings hide me,

9 From the face of the ungodly who endeavor to destroy me — Of my enemies who in my soul besiege me.

10 In their own fat they have enclosed themselves; With their mouth they have spoken haughtily.

11 In our steps they have now encompassed me; eyes they have set to east down to the ground.

12 He is like a lion, he desireth to seize his prey, And like a lion's whelp which lurketh in secret places.

13 Arise, O Jehovah! confront him, lay him prostrate; Deliver my soul from the ungodly man by thy sword

14 From men by thy hand, O Jehovah! — From men who are of long duration, Whose portion is in life, Whose belly thou fillets with thy secret, goods: Filled to the full are their children with them, And their residue they leave to their babes.

15 As for me in righteousness I shall behold thy face; I shall be satisfied when I shall awake with thy likeness.

PSALM 18

To the Chief Musician. Of the servant of Jehovah, David, who spake to Jehovah the words of this song, in the day that Jehovah delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. And he said,

1 I will love thee, O Jehovah! my strength;

2 Jehovah my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; My God, my rock, I will hope in him: My shield and the horn of my salvation, my refuge.

3 Upon the praised Jehovah will I call; And from my enemies I shall be saved.

4 Encompassed me had the cords of death. The torrents of ungodliness had affrighted me.

5 The cords of the grave had encompassed me; Prevented me had the snares of death.

6 In my distress I called upon Jehovah, And to my God I cried: And he heard from his temple my voice, And my cry before him came, [*even*] into his ears.

7 Then shake and tremble did the earth; And the foundations of the mountains were troubled and shaken, Because he was wroth.

8 There ascended smoke out of his nostrils, And fire *proceeding* from his mouth consumed; Coals were kindled by it.

9 And he bowed the heavens and descended; And thick darkness *was* under his feet.

10 And he rode upon a cherub and flew; And was carried upon the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness his hiding place; Round about him his pavilion was dark waters, And the clouds of the skies.

12 At the brightness *which was* before him his clouds passed away, [*There were*] hailstorm, and coals of fire.

13 And thunder in the heavens did Jehovah, And the Most High sent forth his voice; [*There were*] hailstorm and coals of fire.

14 And he sent out his army and scattered them; And lightnings he multiplied, and put them into confusion.

15 And seen were the abysses of the waters, And disclosed were the foundations of the world, At thy rebuke, O Jehovah! At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

16 He sent from on high, he took me; He drew me from waters great.

17 He delivered me from my enemy [*that was*] strong, And from my adversary; Because they were stronger than I.

18 They had prevented me in the day of my calamity; And Jehovah was a support for me.

19 And he brought me forth into a wide place; He rescued me because he wished well to me.

20 Rewarded me hath Jehovah according to my righteousness; According to the purity of my hands he hath repaid me;

21 Because I have kept the ways of Jehovah, And have not impiously departed from my God;

22 Because all his judgments *I have had* before me, And his statutes I have not removed from me.

23 And I have been upright with him, And have kept me from my iniquity.

24 And repaid me hath Jehovah according to my righteousness According to the purity of my hands before his eyes.

25 With the merciful thou wilt deal mercifully, With a man of uprightness thou wilt show thyself upright.

26 With the pure thou wilt be pure, And with the perverse thou wilt deal perversely.

27 For thou the afflicted people wilt save, And the haughty eyes thou wilt east down.

28 For thou shalt light my lamp, O Jehovah! My God shall enlighten my darkness.

29 For by thee I shall break through the wedge of a troop, And by my God I shall leap over a wall.

30 As for God perfect is his way; The word of Jehovah [*is*] refined; A shield is He to all who confide in him.

31 For who is God besides Jehovah? And who is strong except our God?

32 It is God who hath girded me with strength, And hath made perfect my way.

33 He maketh my feet like *those* of hinds, And upon my high places he hath set me.

34 He traineth my hands to the battle, And broken will be a bow of steel by my arms.

35 And thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation, And thy right hand hath sustained me, And thy clemency hath increased me.

36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, And my ankles shall not totter.

37 I will pursue my enemies and will seize them; Nor will I return until I have consumed them.

38 I have afflicted them, and they were not able to rise; They have fallen under my feet.

39 Thou hast girded me with might for the battle; Thou hast bowed down my enemies under me.

40 And of my enemies thou hast given me the neck, And [*as for*] my haters I will destroy them.

41 They shall cry aloud, and *there shall be* no Savior *for them*; To Jehovah, but he shall not answer them.

42 And I will bruise them to powder as dust before the wind; As the mire of the streets I will tread upon them.

43 Thou shalt deliver me from the contentions of the people; Thou shalt make me head of the nations; A people whom I have not known shall serve me.

44 At the hearing of the ear they shall obey me; The children of strangers shall lie to me;

45 The children of strangers shall lose courage, And tremble from within their places of concealment.

46 Let Jehovah live and blessed *be* my strength, And let the God of my salvation be exalted:

47 The God who giveth vengeance for me, And subdueth peoples under me.

48 My deliverer from my enemies: Yea, from those who had risen up against me thou hast lifted me up: From the man of violence thou hast rescued me.

49 Therefore will I praise thee, O Jehovah! among the Gentiles, And to thy name will I sing.

50 Who worketh great deliverances for his king, And showeth mercy to his anointed, [even to] David, And to his seed for ever.

PSALM 19

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David

1 The heavens recount the glory of God; And the works of his hands proclaim doth the expanse.

2 Day unto day poureth forth speech; And night unto night publisheth knowledge.

3 There is no speech and no language, Where is not heard their voice.

4 Through all the earth hath gone forth their writing, And to the extremity of the world their words: For the sun he hath set a tabernacle in them,

5 And he as a bridegroom goeth forth from his chamber; He exulteth as a strong man to run *his* course.

6 From *one* extremity of the heavens *is* his going forth, And his circuit to the utmost limits thereof, And no *person* is hidden from his heat.

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of Jehovah is faithful, instructing in wisdom the babes;

8 The statutes of Jehovah *are* right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;

9 The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever; The judgments of Jehovah are truth, they are justified together.

10 More desirable [*are they*] than gold, and much fine gold; And sweeter than honey, and the dropping of honeycombs.

11 Moreover, thy servant is made circumspect by them; And in their observance the reward *is* great.

12 His errors who can understand? From my hidden *sins* cleanse thou me.

13 Likewise from presumptuous sins restrain thou thy servant, That they may not have dominion over me; Then upright shall I be and clean from much wickedness.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable Before thee, O Jehovah! my strength and my Redeemer.

PSALM 20

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm Of David

1 May Jehovah hear thee in the day of trouble!

2 May he send help to thee from the sanctuary! And out of Zion sustain thee!

3 May he be mindful of all thy offerings! And thy holocaust may he make flit! Selah.

4 May he give to thee according to thy heart! And all thy counsel may he fulfill!

5 That we may exult in thy salvation, And in the name of our God erect a banner, When Jehovah shall fulfill all thy petitions.

6 Now I have known that Jehovah hath saved his anointed; He will hear him from the heavens of his sanctuary, In the mightiness of the salvation of his right hand.

7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses; But the name of Jehovah our God we will remember.

8 They are bowed down and fallen; But we are risen up and stand erect.

9 O Jehovah! do thou save; Let the King hear us in the day that we call upon him.

PSALM 21

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm Of David

1 O Jehovah! in thy strength rejoice shall the king, And in thy salvation how greatly shall he exult!

2 The desire of his heart thou hast given him, And what he uttered with his lips, thou hast not denied *him*. Selah.

3 For thou shalt prevent him with blessings of good; Thou shalt place upon his head a crown of gold.

4 Life he asked from thee; Thou hast given him length of days for ever and ever.

5 Great *is* his glory in thy salvation: Splendor and beauty thou hast put upon him.

6 For thou hast set him [*to be*] blessings for ever: Thou hast gladdened him with joy before thy countenance.

7 For the king trusteth in Jehovah; And through the goodness of the Most High, he shall not be moved

8 Find out shall thy hand all thy enemies; Thy right hand shall find out thy haters.

9 Thou shalt put them as in a furnace of fire in the time of thy wrath, O Jehova! In his wrath he shall overwhelm them, And consume them shall the fire.

10 Their fruit from the earth thou wilt destroy, And their seed from among the sons of men.

11 For they have spread out against thee evil; They have devised against thee a stratagem which they could not accomplish.

12 For thou wilt set them as a butt; On thy strings thou shalt make ready *thy arrows* against their faces.

13 Be thou exalted, O Jehovah! in thy strength, *Then* we will sing and celebrate in psalms thy power.

PSALM 22

To the Chief Musician. Upon the hind of the morning. A Psalm Of David

1 My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me? [*Why art thou*] far from my help, from the words of my roaring?

2 O my God! I cry by day, and thou dost not hear: And in the night, and am not silent.

3 Yet thou art holy, Inhabiting the praises of Israel.

4 In thee trust did our fathers: They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5 To thee they cried, and were saved: In thee they trusted, and were not put to shame.

6 But I *am* a worm, and not a man; The reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 All who see me scoff at me: They thrust out the lip, they shake the head.

8 "He hath devolved," *say they*, "upon Jehovah, *his* cause, let him rescue him, "Let him deliver him, since he hath a favor for him."

9 Surely it is thou who didst take me out of the womb, Causing me to confide upon the breasts of my mother.

10 Upon thee I was cast from the womb: From the belly of my mother my God art thou.

11 Depart not far from me, for trouble is near, For there is no helper.

12 Encompassed me have bulls [*that are*] strong, The bulls of Bashan have beset me.

13 They have opened upon me their mouth, As a lion ravening and roaring.

14 Like water I have flowed, [314] And disjointed have been [315] all my bones: My heart hath been [316] like wax, It hath been [317] melted in the midst of my bowels.

15 Dried up as a potsherd hath been [318] my strength, And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; And to the dust of death thou hast brought me.

16 For encompassed me have dogs; The assembly of the wicked have surrounded me: They have pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I will count all my bones; As for them they look and gaze upon me.

18 They divide my garments among them; Upon my vesture they cast the lot.

19 And thou, O Jehovah! be not far from me; *Thou who art* my strength, to my aid hasten.

20 Rescue from the sword my soul; From the hand of the dog my only one.

21 Save me from the mouth of the lion, And from the horns of unicorns do thou hear me.

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314 "I am poured out." — *Fr.*

315 "Are." — *Fr.*

316 "Is." — *Fr.*

317 "Is." — *Fr.*

318 "Is." — *Fr.*

22 I will declare thy name to my brethren; In the midst of the assembly will I praise thee.

23 *Saying*, "Ye who fear Jehovah praise him: "All ye the seed of Jacob glorify him: "And stand in awe of him, all ye the seed of Israel.

24 "For he hath not despised nor disdained the poor; "Nor hath he hidden his face from him; "And when he cried to him, he heard him."

25 From thee shall proceed my praise in the congregation great; My vows will I pay before them that fear him.

26 Eat shall the poor, and be satisfied; They shall praise Jehovah who seek him; Your heart shall live for ever.

27 Remember and turn to Jehovah shall all the ends of the earth; And prostrate themselves before his face shall all the tribes of the Gentiles.

28 For Jehovah's is the kingdom, That he may have dominion among the Gentiles.

29 Eat and worship shall all the fat ones of the earth: Before his face shall bow all who are going down to the dust; And he who his own soul doth not quicken.

30 *Their* seed shall serve him, It shall be registered to the Lord for a generation.

31 They shall come and shall declare his righteousness, To a people that shall be born, because he hath done [*this*.],

PSALM 23

A Psalm of David

1 Jehovah is my shepherd, therefore I shall not want any thing.

2 In pastures of grass he maketh me to lie down; To waters gently flowing he leadeth me.

3 My soul he restoreth: He leadeth me by the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear evil, because thou art with me; Thy staff and thy crook they comfort me.

5 Thou wilt prepare before me a table in the presence of my persecutors; Thou wilt anoint with oil my head; My cup overfloweth.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for a length of days.

PSALM 24

A Psalm of David

1 Jehovah's is the earth, and the fullness thereof; The world, and those who dwell therein.

2 For he upon the seas hath founded it, And upon the floods he hath arranged it.

3 Who shall ascend into the mountain of Jehovah? Who shall stand in the place of his holiness?

4 He who is clean in hands and pure in heart, Who hath not lifted up to vanity his soul, And hath not sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive blessing from Jehovah, And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of those who seek him, Of those who seek thy face, O Jacob! Selah.

7 Lift up, O ye gates! your heads, And be ye lifted up, ye doors everlasting! And enter shall the King of Glory.

8 Who is this King of Glory? Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in power. [319]

9 Lift up, O ye gates! your heads, Lift up, I say, ye doors everlasting! *And* enter shall the King of Glory.

10 Who is this King of Glory? Jehovah of armies — He is the King of Glory. Selah.

319 In the French version it is "mighty in battle."

PSALM 25

Of David

1 To thee, O Jehovah! my soul have I lifted up.

2 O my God! in thee have I hoped: Let me not be put to shame, Let not my enemies rejoice over me.

3 Yea none who wait on thee shall be put to shame: They shall be ashamed who deal perfidiously without cause.

4 Thy ways, O Jehovah! make me to know, Thy paths teach thou me.

5 Direct me in thy truth, and teach me; For thou art the God of my salvation; For thee I have waited all the day.

6 Remember thy compassions, O Jehovah! And thy loving-kindnesses; for they have been from everlasting.

7 The transgressions of my youth, and my iniquities do not thou remember According to thy clemency remember thou me, For the sake of thy goodness, O Jehovah!

8 Good and upright *is* Jehovah, Therefore he will teach sinners in the way.

9 He will guide the poor in judgment, And will teach the poor his way.

10 All the ways of Jehovah are mercy and truth, To those who keep his covenant and his testimony.

11 For the sake of thy name, O Jehovah! Be merciful to my iniquity, for great is it.

12 Who is the man that feareth Jehovah? He will teach him in the way which he should choose.

13 His soul in good shall dwell, And his seed shall inherit the land.

14 The counsel of Jehovah is to those who fear him, That he may make known to them his covenant.

15 My eyes are continually towards Jehovah, For he will bring out of the net my feet.

16 Have respect to me, take pity upon me, For solitary and poor am I.

17 The afflictions of my heart are enlarged; Out of my distresses do thou bring me.

18 Behold my affliction and my travail, And take away all my sins.

19 Behold my enemies, for they are multiplied; And with a violent hatred they hate me.

20 Guard my soul, and rescue me, That I may not be ashamed; For I have trusted in thee.

21 Let integrity and rectitude preserve me; Because I have waited for thee.

22 Redeem O God! Israel from all his troubles.

PSALM 26

Of David

1 Judge me, O Jehovah: Because in my integrity I have walked, And in Jehovah have trusted, I shall not stumble.

2 Prove me, O Jehovah! and try me, Examine my reins and my heart.

3 For thy goodness *is* before my eyes; Therefore I have walked in thy truth.

4 I have not sat with men of vanity, And with crafty men I will not go in.

5 I hate the assembly of transgressors, And with the wicked I will not sit.

6 I will wash in purity my hands, And will encompass thy altar, O Jehovah!

7 To cause to be heard the voice of praise, And to tell of all thy marvelous deeds.

8 O Jehovah! I have loved the habitation of thy house, And the place of the dwelling of thy glory.

9 Gather not with ungodly men, my soul, Nor with men of bloods my life.

10 For in their hands *is* maliciousness, And their right hand is full of bribes.

11 But as for me in my integrity I will walk: Redeem me, and have mercy upon me.

12 My foot hath stood in uprightness: In the congregations will I bless thee, O Jehovah!

PSALM 27

Of David

1 Jehovah is my light and my salvation, Whom shall I fear? Jehovah *is* the strength of my life, Of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When approach against me did the wicked, To devour my flesh — My oppressors and my enemies against me — They stumbled and fell.

3 If there should encamp against me a camp, My heart shall not fear: If there should rise against me war, In this shall I have confidence.

4 One thing have I requested from Jehovah — This will I follow after — That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of Jehovah, To survey his temple.

5 For he shall hide me in his pavilion in the day of evil; He shall conceal me in the secret [*recess*] of his tent, Upon a rock he will set me.

6 And now he shall exalt my head Above my enemies who surround me: And I will sacrifice in his tabernacle sacrifices of triumph; I will sing and will celebrate in psalms Jehovah.

7 Hear, O Jehovah! my voice with which I cry; Have mercy upon me and answer me.

8 To thee my heart hath said, "Seek ye my face;" Therefore thy face, O Jehovah! will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face from me; Cast not away in wrath thy servant: My strength thou hast been, do not desert me, And do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

10 When my father and my mother shall forsake me, Jehovah shall receive me.

11 Teach me, O Jehovah! thy way, And lead me in the path of rectitude because of my enemies.

12 Do not deliver me to the desire of my oppressors, For risen up against me have false witnesses, And he who uttereth violence.

13 Unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah, in the land of the living —.

14 Wait thou on Jehovah; Be strong, and he will comfort thy heart, And wait thou on Jehovah.

PSALM 28

Of David

1 Unto thee, O Jehovah! will I cry; O my strength! hold not thy peace from me Lest if thou shouldst be silent to me, I then become like those who descend into the grave.

2 Hear the voice of my prayers when I cry to thee, When I lift up my hands to the sanctuary of thy holiness.

3 Draw me not away with ungodly men, And with the workers of iniquity, Who speak peace [320] with their neighbors, When in their hearts is malice.

4 Give them according to their works, And according to the wickedness of their doings: According to the work of their hands give them, Render their reward to them.

5 Because they do not consider the doing of Jehovah, Nor the work of his hands, Let him destroy them and not build them up.

6 Blessed *be* Jehovah! For he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7 Jehovah *is* my strength and my shield; In him trusted hath my heart, and I have been helped: Therefore exult shall my heart, And with my song will I celebrate him.

8 Jehovah *is* strength to them, And the strength of the salvations of his Anointed *is* He.

9 Save thy people, and bless thy inheritance; Feed them and exalt them for ever.

320 *i.e.* Courteously, peaceably.

PSALM 29

A Psalm of David

1 Ascribe to Jehovah: ye sons of the mighty — Ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength.

2 Ascribe to Jehovah the glory of his name; Worship before Jehovah in the brightness of his sanctuary.

3 The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters; The God of glory thundereth; Jehovah is upon the waters great.

4 The voice of Jehovah is in strength, The voice of Jehovah is in majesty.

5 The voice of Jehovah breaketh the cedars; Break, I say, doth Jehovah the cedars of Lebanon.

6 And he maketh Lebanon to leap like a calf, And Sirion like the son of the unicorns.

7 The voice of Jehovah striketh out flames of fire.

8 The voice of Jehovah maketh the desert to tremble. Jehovah maketh to tremble the desert of Kadesh.

9 The voice of Jehovah maketh the hinds to bring forth, And discovereth the forests, And all *meanwhile* in his temple speak his praise.

10 Jehovah over the flood presideth, Preside, I say, doth Jehovah [*as*] King for ever.

11 Jehovah strength to his people will give; Jehovah will bless his people with peace.

PSALM 30

A Psalm of a Song at the dedication of the house of David

1 I will exalt thee, O Jehovah! for thou hast raised me up, And hast not made glad my enemies over me.

2 O Jehovah, my God! I have cried to thee, And thou hast healed me.

3 O Jehovah! thou hast brought up from the grove my soul; Thou hast quickened me from among those who descend into the pit.

4 Sing to Jehovah, O ye his meek ones! And acknowledge the memorial of his holiness.

5 For *there is only* a moment in his anger, *But* life in his favor: In the evening will lodge weeping, And in the morning shall come exultation.

6 But as for me I had said in my tranquillity, "I shall not be moved for ever."

7 O Jehovah! in thy good pleasure Thou hast established strength to my mountain; Thou didst hide thy face, I was confounded.

8 O Jehovah! to thee I cried, And to my Lord I made supplication.

9 What profit shall there be in my blood, When I descend into the pit? Celebrate thee shall the dust? Shall it proclaim thy truth?

10 Hear, O Jehovah! and have mercy upon me; O Jehovah! be thou a helper to me.

11 Thou hast turned my mourning into dancing for me; Thou hast loosed my sackcloth, And girded me with gladness.

12 That celebrate thee in psalms may my glory, and not be silent: O Jehovah, my God! for ever will I celebrate thee.

PSALM 31

To the Chief Musician,. A Psalm of David

1 In thee, O Jehovah! have I trusted, Let me not be put to shame for ever: In thy righteousness deliver me.

2 Incline to me thy ear, Speedily do thou rescue me; Be to me for a rock of strength, For a house of defense to save me.

3 For my rock, and my fortress *art* thou: And for the sake of thy name thou wilt direct and guide me.

4 Extricate me from the net, which they have hidden for me, For thou art my strength.

5 Into thy hand I will commend my spirit; For thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah! God of truth.

6 I hate all those who regard lying vanities; But as for me in Jehovah I have trusted.

7 I will exult and rejoice in thy goodness; Because thou hast looked upon my affliction: Thou hast known in distresses my soul:

8 And thou hast not shut me up in the hand of the enemy: *But* thou hast set at large my feet.

9 Have pity upon me, O Jehovah! for trouble is to me: My eye hath consumed away for vexation; my soul and my belly.

10 My life hath riffled through grid; And my years with groaning: My strength hath sunk through my sorrow, And my bones have moldered away.

11 On account of all my enemies I was a reproach, Yea to my neighbors exceedingly, And a terror to my acquaintances; And those who saw me abroad fled from me.

12 I was forgotten as a dead man from the heart; I became like a vessel [*that is*] broken.

13 For I have heard the slander of many: Fear *hath seized* me on every side, While they consult together against me, And to take away my life do devise.

14 But as for me, in thee have I trusted, O Jehovah! I have said, "My God art thou."

15 In thy hand are my times; Rescue me from the hand of my enemies, And from those who persecute me.

16 Cause to shine upon thy servant thy face, Save me in thy goodness.

17 O Jehovah! let me not be put to shame, For I have called upon thee: Let the wicked be put to shame, Let Gem be silent in the grave.

18 Let the lips of lying be put to shame, Which speak against the righteous a hard thing in pride and scorn.

19 How great is thy goodness, Which thou hast hidden for those who fear thee! Which thou hast performed for those who confide in thee, Before the sons of men!

20 Thou shalt hide them in the hidden place of thy presence, From the prides of man; Thou shalt conceal them *as* in a tent, From the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed be Jehovah! For he hath made wonderful his goodness towards me, As in a city fortified.

22 But as for me, I had said in my fear, "I am cast away from before thy eyes:" Yet truly thou hast heard the voice of my supplications, When I cried unto thee.

23 Love Jehovah, all ye meek ones of his! The faithful preserve doth Jehovah, And he repayeth plentifully him who behaveth proudly.

24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, All ye who hope in Jehovah.

PSALM 32

Of David. Giving instruction

1 Blessed are those to whom is remitted iniquity, And whose transgression is covered.

2 Blessed is the man to whom Jehovah doth not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is not guile.

3 When I kept silence, waste away did my bones, And when I wailed all the day.

4 For by day and night heavy upon me was thy hand; Turned into the drought of summer was my greenness. Selah.

5 My sin I have acknowledged to thee, And my iniquity I have not hid. I said, "I will confess against myself my wickedness to Jehovah;" And thou didst remit the guilt of my sin. Selah.

6 On this account, pray to thee shall every *man*, that is meek, In the time of finding thee: So that in a flood of many waters, To him they shall not come near.

7 Thou art a hiding-place to me; From trouble thou shalt preserve me; With songs of deliverance thou shalt encompass me. Selah.

8 I will instruct thee, And teach thee the way wherein thou shouldest walk: I will counsel thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not like a horse, *or* like a mule, Which have not understanding: With bit and bridle his jaws thou shalt bind, Lest they kick against thee.

10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: But the man who hopeth in Jehovah goodness shall encompass.

11 Rejoice in Jehovah, and exult, ye righteous! Sing all ye *who are* upright in heart.

PSALM 33

1 Exult, ye righteous! in Jehovah: For to the upright comely is praise.

2 Celebrate Jehovah upon the harp; Upon the nablure, [321] and instrument of ten strings, sing psalms to him

3 Sing to him a song that is new; Ardently sing with shouting.

4 For right *is* the word of Jehovah, And all his works are in faithfulness.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: Of the goodness of Jehovah fill is the earth.

6 By the word of Jehovah the heavens were established, And by the breath of his mouth all their host.

7 He gathered together as an heap the waters of the sea; He laid up as in treasure houses the deeps.

8 Let all the earth fear Jehovah; Of him let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe.

9 For he spake, and it was; He commanded, and it stood.

10 Jehovah scattereth the counsel of the Gentiles, He rendereth fruitless the imaginations of the peoples.

11 The counsel of Jehovah for ever shall stand, The thoughts of his heart from age to age.

12 Blessed is the people to whom Jehovah is their God, The people whom he hath chosen for: in inheritance to himself.

13 From heavens looked down hath Jehovah, He hath beheld all the sons of Adam.

14 From the dwelling place of His throne, He hath looked on all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 He who hath fashioned together their hearts, Who understandeth all their works.

16 There is not a king saved by the multitude of an host, Nor a giant rescued by greatness of strength.

17 Fallacious is a horse for safety, And by the greatness of his strength he will not deliver.

18 Behold! the eye of Jehovah is upon those who fear him, [*Upon those*] who hope in his mercy;

19 To rescue from death their souls, To keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waiteth for Jehovah: Our help and our shield is he.

21 Surely in him rejoice shall our heart, Because in his holy name we will trust.

22 Let thy mercy be upon us, O Jehovah! According as we have trusted in thee.

321 "La viole." — Fr.

PSALM 34

Of David when he changed his countenance before Abimelech, who expelled him, and he departed

1 I will bless Jehovah at all times: Continually his praise *shall be* in my mouth.

2 In Jehovah make her boast shall my soul: Hear shall the humble and be glad.

3 Magnify? Jehovah with me, And let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought. Jehovah, and he answered me, And from all my fears he delivered me.

5 They shall look to him, and shall flow to him, And their faces shall not he ashamed.

6 This poor man cried,: and Jehovah heard him, And from all his distresses saved him.

7 Encamp doth the angel of Jehovah about those who fear him, And will deliver them.

8 Taste ye and see that good is Jehovah: Blessed is the man who trusteth in him.

9 Fear Jehovah, ye saints of his; For nothing is lacking to those who fear him.

10 The young lions suffer want and are famished: But those who fear Jehovah shall not want any good thing.

11 Come ye children, hearken to me, The fear of Jehovah I will teach you.

12 Who is the man that desireth life, Loving days in which he may see good?

13 Keep thy tongue from evil, And thy lips from speaking deceit.

14 Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it.

15 The eyes of Jehovah *are* upon the righteous, And his ears [*are open*] to their cry.

16 The face of Jehovah is upon those who do evil, To blot out from the earth their remembrance.

17 They cried, and Jehovah heard *them*, And from all their distresses he delivered them.

18 Near is Jehovah to the broken in heart; The contrite in spirit he will save.

19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous; But from them all deliver him will Jehovah.

20 He keepeth all his bones: One of them is not broken.

21 That malice shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous shall be destroyed.

22 Redeem doth, Jehovah the soul of his servants, And they shall not perish who confide in him.

PSALM 35

Of David

1 Plead, O Jehovah! with those who plead with me, Fight against those who fight against me.

2 Lay hold on shield and buckler, And rise up to my aid.

3 Draw out the spear, and stop my ears against my persecutors: Say to my soul, "Thy salvation am I."

4 Let those be confounded and put to shame Who seek my soul, Let those be turned back and be abashed Who devise my hurt.

5 Let them be as chaff before the wind? And let the angel of Jehovah drive them.

6 Let their way be darkness and slipperiness; And let the angel of Jehovah pursue them:

7 For without a cause they have hid for me the pitfall of their net, [322] Without a cause they have digged a pit for my soul.

8 Let there come upon him confusion of which he is not aware; And let the net which he hath hidden catch him; With confusion let him fall into it.

9 And my soul hath exulted in Jehovah, It shall rejoice in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say, "O Jehovah! who is like to thee, "Rescuing the poor from him who is too strong for him, "The poor and wretched from his spoiler?"

11 Rise up do witnesses [*that are*] violent; Things which I have not known they ask me.

12 They repay me evil for good, To the bereaving of my soul.

13 But as for me, in their sickness my clothing was sackcloth: I afflicted by fasting my soul; And my prayer upon my own bosom was turned.

14 As if he had been a friend, as if a brother to me, I behaved myself *towards him*: As he who mourneth heavily for his mother I humbled myself.

15 But they at my halting rejoiced, they were assembled together: Assembled together, I say, against me, were the abjects whom I had not known: They have torn with their lips and have not been silent.

16 Among perfidious jesters at feasts, They gnash upon me with their teeth.

17 O Lord! how long wilt thou behold it? Rescue my soul from their violence, From the lions my only one.

18 I will celebrate thee in the congregation great: Among people many I will praise thee.

19 Let not those rejoice over me, who unjustly are my enemies; Nor let those who hate me without a cause wink with the eye.

20 For peace they speak not;

21 They have opened against me their mouth; They have said, "Aha! aha! seen *it* hath our eye."

322 That is the pitfall in which the net was placed to catch the victim.

22 Thou hast seen *it also*, O Jehovah: Be not silent, O Lord! be not far from me.

23 Arouse thyself, and awake for my judgment, My God! and my Lord! to my cause.

24 Judge me according to thy righteousness, O Jehovah, my God! And let them not rejoice over me.

25 Let them not say in their heart, "Aha! our soul!" Let them not say "We have destroyed him."

26 Let those be ashamed and confounded together, Who rejoice at my calamity; Let those be clothed with shame and ignominy, Who magnify themselves against me.

27 *But* let those shout and rejoice, who favor my righteousness: And let them say continually, "Magnified be Jehovah! "Who loveth the peace of his servant."

28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness; All the day of thy praise.

PSALMS 36—66

PSALM 36

To the Chief Musician. Of the servant of Jehovah, [even] of David

1 Ungodliness saith to the wicked man in the midst of my heart, There is no fear of God before his eyes.

2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, Until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

3 The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit, He teaseth to understand that he may do good.

4 Iniquity he meditates upon his bed; He setteth himself in a way not good; Evil he doth not abhor.

5 O Jehovah! unto the heavens is thy mercy, Thy truth even unto the clouds.

6 Thy justice is like the great mountains, Thy judgments are a great deep. Man and beast, thou preservest, O Jehovah!

7 How precious is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the sons of men in the shadow of thy wings shall trust.

8 They shall be fully satisfied with the fatness of thy house; And of the river of thy pleasures thou shalt cause them to drink.

9 For with thee is the fountain of life, And in thy light shall we see light.

10 Extend thy mercy to those who know thee, And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 Let not the foot of pride come upon me; And the hand of the ungodly let it not remove me.

12 There fallen are the workers of iniquity; They are thrust down and shall not be able to stand. [323]

323 In the French version it is "rise."

PSALM 37

Of David

1 Vex not thyself because of the wicked, Nor be envious on account of the workers of iniquity.

2 For like the grass quickly shall they be cut down; And as the green herb they shall wither.

3 Trust thou in Jehovah, and do good; Dwell in the land, and be fed in truth.

4 And delight in Jehovah, And he will grant thee the request of thy heart.

5 Devolve upon Jehovah thy ways, And trust in him, and he will bring it to pass.

6 And he will bring forth as the light thy righteousness, And thy judgments as the noonday.

7 Be silent to Jehovah, and wait for him; Vex not thyself at him who prospereth in his way, At the man who committeth wickedness.

8 Cease from anger, forsake wrath, Vex not thyself so as to commit sin.

9 For the wicked shall be cut off; But those who wait for Jehovah shall inherit the earth.

10 Yet a little while, and the ungodly shall not be; And thou shalt give attention to his place, and shalt not find *him*

11 But the meek ones shall inherit the earth, And shall be delighted in the abundance of peace.

12 Plot doth the ungodly against the righteous, And gnasheth against him with his teeth.

13 The Lord shall laugh at him, For he seeth that coming is his day.

14 *Their* sword draw do the ungodly, And their bow they bend, To lay prostrate the poor and needy, To slay those who are upright in the way.

15 *But* their sword shall enter into their own heart, And their bow shall be broken.

16 Better is a little to the righteous man, Than the wealth of the ungodly who are great.

17 For the arms of the ungodly shall be broken; But Jehovah sustaineth the righteous.

18 Know doth Jehovah the days of the upright, And their inheritance for ever shall be.

19 They shall not be put to shame in the time of adversity; And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 For the ungodly shall perish, And the enemies of Jehovah like the fattest of lambs shall be consumed; Into smoke they shall be consumed.;

21 Borrow doth the ungodly man, and doth not repay; But the righteous man is compassionate and giveth.

22 For those who are blessed of him shall inherit the earth, And those who are cursed of him shall be cut off.

23 By Jehovah the steps of a man are directed, And his way he will love.

24 When he shall fall he shall not be bruised, For Jehovah putteth under [*him*] his hand.

25 Young I have been, I have also grown old; And yet I have not seen the righteous man forsaken, Nor his seed begging for bread.

26 Daily he is compassionate and lendeth, And his seed is for blessing.

27 Depart from evil and do good, And dwell for ever.

28 For Jehovah loveth judgment, And doth not forsake his meek ones; For ever shall they be preserved: And the seed of the ungodly shall be cut off.

29 The righteous shall inherit the earth, And shall dwell for ever upon it.

30 The mouth of the righteous shall speak wisdom;

31 The law of his God is in his heart; Slide not shall his steps.

32 Watch doth the ungodly the righteous man, And seeketh to put him to death.

33 Jehovah will not leave him in his hand, Nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait for Jehovah, and keep his way, And he shall exalt thee to inherit the earth: When the ungodly shall be cut off thou shalt see it.

35 I have seen the ungodly man robust, [324] And spreading himself like a green bay tree;

36 And he passed away, and to I he was not; And I sought for his place, and he was not found.

37 Mark the perfect man, and consider the upright; For the end of such a man is peace.

38 But transgressors shall be destroyed together: The end of the ungodly shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous is from Jehovah: *He will* be their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And help them shall Jehovah, and deliver them: He shall deliver them from the wicked: He shall save them, because they trust in him.

324 In French version the word is "terrible," which is the idea of the original Hebrew term.

PSALM 38

A Psalm of David: to bring to remembrance

1 O Jehovah! do not in thy fury rebuke me, And in thy wrath do not chasten me.

2 For thy arrows go down in me, And descend upon me doth thy hand.

3 There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thy wrath, Nor peace in my bones because of my sin.

4 For my iniquities have passed over my head, Like a burden that is weighty, they are too heavy for me.

5 Putrid [*and*] corrupt have my wounds become, Because of my foolishness.

6 I am bowed down, I am brought low exceedingly; Day by day a mourner I do walk:

7 For my reins are filled with a burning heat; Nor is there soundness in my flesh.

8 I am enfeebled and broken exceedingly: I have roared through the disquietude of my heart.

9 O Lord! before thee is all my desire, And my groaning from thee is not hidden,

10 My heart hath throbbed, forsaken me hath my strength; And the light of my eyes, it also is gone from me.

11 My friends and my companions aloof from my stroke have stood, And my kinsmen afar off have stood.

12 And they have laid snares who sought for my soul; Arid those who sought my hurt have threatened mischiefs; And deceits daily do they meditate.

13 But as for me, like a deaf man I hear not; And *I am* like a dumb man who openeth not his mouth.

14 And I was as a man who doth not hear, And in whose mouth there are no reproofs.

15 For on thee, O Jehovah! do I wait: Thou wilt answer *me*, O Lord, my God!

16 For I said, "Lest they should rejoice over me:" At the slipping of my foot against me they magnified themselves,

17 Surely as for me I am ready to halt; And my sorrow is before me continually.

18 Surely my iniquity I declare; I am in consternation because of my sin.

19 But my enemies are living; [325] they are strong; And those are become mighty who hate me wrongfully.

20 And they who requite me evil for good are against me, Because I follow [*what is*] good.

21 Forsake me not, O Jehovah, my God! Be not far from me.

22 Hasten to my help, O Lord, my salvation!

325 Calvin has inadvertently omitted in his Latin version to translate the word ⊠⊠⊠ "living." But he translates it in his French version.

PSALM 39

To the Chief Musician, Jeduthun. A Psalm of David

1 I said "I will take heed to my ways, "That I sin not with my tongue: "I will keep my mouth with a muzzle, "While the ungodly man standeth before me."

2 I was dumb not uttering a word; I held my peace [*even*] from good; And my sorrow was stirred.

3 My heart became hot within me; In my musing a fire did burn; I spake with my tongue.

4 Cause me to know, O Jehovah! my end, And the number of my days, That I may know of what duration I am.

5 Behold! as an handbreadth thou hast made my days, And my duration is as nothing before thee: Surely altogether vanity is every mart while he standeth.

6 Surely in a shadow man walketh; [Selah. Surely in vain is he disquieted: They heap together, and know not who shall gather.

7 And now what do I wait for, O Lord? My hope is towards thee.

8 From all my sins deliver thou me: The reproach of the foolish make me not.

9 I was dumb; I will not open my mouth, Because thou hast done it.

10 Remove from me thy stroke: By the blow of thy hand I have failed.

11 With rebukes for iniquity thou chastisest man; And causest to waste away as a moth his beauty: Surely vanity *is* every man. Selah.

12 Hear my prayer, O Jehovah! And to my cry give ear; At my tears be not silent; For a stranger am I before thee, A sojourner like all my fathers.

13 Let me alone, that I may recover strength, Before I depart and be no more.

PSALM 40

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David

1 I have patiently waited for Jehovah, And he inclined to me, and heard my cry.

2 And he drew me out of the roaring pit, Out of the mire of clay, And set upon a rock my feet; He hath established my steps.

3 And he hath put in my mouth a song [that is] new, *Even* praise to our God: See shall many and shall fear, And shall trust in Jehovah.

4 Blessed is the man who maketh Jehovah his confidence, And hath not respected the proud, Nor those who turn aside to lying.

5 Many, O Jehovah, my God! are thy wonderful works which thou hast done; And thy thoughts towards us it is impossible to reckon up in order to thee: I will declare and speak [*of them;*] [But] they are more than can be told.

6 Sacrifice and oblation thou hast not taken pleasure in: *But* my ears hast thou made fit: [326] Burnt-offering and sin-offering thou hast not required.

7 Then I said, "Behold! I come; "In the volume of the book it is written of me,

8 "That I may do thy pleasure, O my God! "I have desired *to do it*, "And thy law is in the midst of my bowels."

9 I have proclaimed thy righteousness in the assembly great: Behold my lips I will not restrain; O Jehovah! thou knowest it.

10 Thy righteousness I have not hidden within my heart; Thy truth and thy salvation I have declared: I have not concealed thy goodness and thy truth in the assembly great.

11 O thou, Jehovah! withhold not thy compassions from me; Let thy goodness and thy truth continually preserve me.

12 For encompassed me have evils innumerable; Laid hold upon me have my iniquities, *yea in so great number* that I cannot see them: They are more in number than the hairs of my head; *And* my heart hath failed me.

13 Let it please thee, O Jehovah! to deliver me; O Jehovah! to my aid make haste.

14 Let them be put to shame and confounded together Who seek after my soul to destroy it; Let them be turned backward and put to shame Who seek after my hurt.

15 Let them be destroyed for a reward of their shame, Who have said to me, "Aha! aha!"

16 Let all those exult and rejoice in thee who seek thee; And let those say continually, "May Jehovah be magnified" — "Those who love thy salvation.

17 But as for me *I am* poor and needy. Jehovah hath regarded me; My help and my deliverer *art thou*: O thou, my God! delay not.

326 In the Latin version it is "aptasti;" and in the French, "tu as perce."

PSALM 41

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David

1 Blessed is he who judgeth wisely of the poor: In the day of evil Jehovah will deliver him.

2 Jehovah will keep him, and preserve him alive: He shall be blessed upon the earth: And thou will not give him up to the desire of his enemies.

3 Jehovah will support him upon the bed of sorrow: All his bed thou hast turned in his sickness.

4 I have said, "O Jehovah! have mercy upon me; " "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee."

5 My enemies have spoken evil of me, "When will he die, and perish shall his name?"

6 And if he come to see me falsely doth he speak; His heart gathereth iniquity to itself': When he goeth abroad he speaketh [*it*.]

7 Together against me do all my haters whisper; Against me do they devise evil for me, [*saying*,]

8 "An evil deed of Belial cleaveth fast to him; "And he who lieth shall not rise again."

9 Even the man of my peace in whom I trusted, Who eateth of my bread, hath lifted up against me the heel.

10 Do thou *then*, O Jehovah! have mercy upon me; Raise me up, and I will recompense them.

11 By this I have known that I have been acceptable to thee, Because my enemy shall not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, in my integrity thou wilt uphold me, And wilt establish me before thy face for ever.

13 Blessed *be* Jehovah, the God of Israel, For ever and ever. Amen and Amen.

PART SECOND. [327]

PSALM 42

To the Chief Musician. A lesson of instruction to the Sons of Korah

1 As the hart crieth for the fountains of waters, So my soul crieth for thee, O God!

2 Thirsted hath my soul for God, for the living God: When shall I come to appear before the face of God?

3 To me have my tears been *for* bread, by day and night, While it is said to me daily, "Where is thy God?"

4 When these things I remember, I pour out within me my soul, Because I had gone with the procession, Leading them even to the house of God, With the voice of exultation and praise, — The multitude dancing for joy.

5 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul! And why art thou disquieted within me? Wait thou for God; for I shall yet give him thanks, [*For*] the salvations of his countenance.

6 O my God! my soul within me is cast down, When I remember thee from the land of Jordan and of Hermonim, From the mountain Mizar.

7 Deep unto deep calleth at the noise of thy waterspouts: All thy waves and all thy billows over me have gone.

8 By day command will Jehovah his loving-kindness, And by night his song *shall be* with me, And prayer to the God of my life.

9 I will say to God, my Rock, "Why hast thou forgotten me? "Why mourning do I go because of the oppression of *my* enemy?"

10 [*It is as*] a wound in my bones when my enemies reproach me, Saying to me daily, "Where is thy God?"

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet give thanks to him, The salvations of my countenance, and my God.

327 According to the Hebrew division, Part 2 extends from Psalm 42 to Psalm 72 inclusive.

PSALM 43

1 Judge me, O God! and plead my cause: From a people without mercy, from a man deceitful and wicked deliver me.

2 For thou *art* the God of my strength; Why art thou estranged from me? Why mourning do I go because of the oppression of the enemy?

3 Send forth thy light and thy truth; Let them direct me, let them conduct me, To the mountain of thy holiness, and to thy tabernacles.

4 And I will go to the altar of God, To the God of the joy of my rejoicing; And I will celebrate thee upon the harp, O God, my God!

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul! And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet celebrate him, *Who is* the salvation of my countenance and my God.

PSALM 44

To the Chief Musician. Of the sons of Korah. Giving instruction

1 O God! with our ears we have heard, Our fathers have told us, The work which thou hast done in their days, In the days of old.

2 Thou with thy hand hast expelled the heathen, and planted them: Thou hast wasted the peoples and multiplied them:

3 For not by their own sword acquired they the land, And their own arm did not save them; But thy right hand and thy arm, and the light of thy countenance, Because thou wast favorable to them.

4 Thou, even thou, *art* my King; O God! command salvations for Jacob.

5 Through thee our adversaries with the horn we have pushed; In thy name we have trampled under foot those who rise up against us.

6 For not in my bow will I trust, And my sword will not save me.

7 Surely thou hast saved us from our enemies, And our haters thou hast put to shame.

8 In God we will boast all the day, And thy name for ever shall we praise. Selah.

9 Nevertheless thou hast abhorred us and put us to shame, And thou goest not forth *any more* with our armies.

10 Thou hast made us to turn back from him that afflicteth us, And our haters have spoiled *us* for themselves.

11 Thou hast given us as sheep for food; And among the heathen thou hast scattered us.

12 Thou hast sold thy people, and not become rich, And thou hast not increased the price of them.

13 Thou hast made us a reproach to our neighbors, A scorn and derision to those who are round about us.

14 Thou hast made us a byword among the heathen, A shaking of the head among the peoples.

15 Daily *is* my reproach before me, And the shame of my face hath *quite* covered me,

16 Because of the voice of him who reproacheth and revileth, Because of the face of the adversary and avenger.

17 All this is come upon us, and we have not forgotten thee, Nor dealt perfidiously in thy covenant;

18 Not turned back hath our heart, Nor declined have our steps from thy path.

19 Although thou hast crushed us in the place of dragons, And covered us with the shadow of death.

20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, And have spread forth our hands to a God that is strange;

21 Shall not God search out this? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

22 Surely for thy sake we are killed daily; We are accounted as sheep [*appointed*] for slaughter.

23 Arise, why sleepest thou, O Lord? Awake, do not forget *us* for ever.

24 Wherefore thy face dost thou hide? Wilt thou forget our misery and our affliction?

25 For humbled to the dust is our soul; Cleave to the earth doth our belly.

26 Arise for our help, And redeem us for the sake of thy loving-kindness.

PSALM 45

To the Chief Musician. Upon the lilies. Of the sons of Korah. Giving instruction. A Song of loves

1 Boiling over is my heart to speak a goodly theme, Speak shall I myself of my works concerning the King: My tongue is as the pen of a swift writer.

2 Thou art fair above the sons of men; Diffused is grace on thy lips; Because God hath blessed thee for ever.

3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O mighty one! With majesty and glory.

4 And in thy majesty prosper thou; Ride forth upon the word of truth, and meekness and righteousness; And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things:

5 Thy arrows *are* sharp (so that the people fall under thee) In the hearts of the enemies of the king.

6 Thy throne, O God! *is* for ever and ever; The scepter of rectitude *is* the scepter of thy kingdom.

7 Thou lovest righteousness and hatest impiety; Because anointed thee hath God, thy God, With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

8 Myrrh, and aloes and cassia [*are*] *in* all thy garments, Out of the ivory palaces, whence they have made thee glad.

9 The daughters of kings [*were*] among thy maids of honor; Stand did thy consort at thy right hand in gold of Ophir.

10 Hearken, O daughter! and consider and incline thy ear; And forget thy people, and the house of thy father.

11 And enamored shall be the King with thy beauty; For he *is* thy Lord, and thou shalt worship him.

12 And the daughter of Tyre [*shall come*] with a present; Thy favor entreat shall the rich among the people.

13 All glorious is the daughter of the King within; Of garments embroidered with gold *is* her clothing.

14 In raiment of needle-work she shall be brought to the King; Her virgins that follow her, her companions shall be brought to thee.

15 They shall be brought with joy and exultation; They shall enter into the palace of the King.

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children; Thou shalt make them princes in all the earth.

17 I will make thy name to be remembered throughout all generation; Therefore celebrate thee shall the peoples for ever and ever.

PSALM 46

To the Chief Musician. Of the sons of Korah. Upon Alamoth. A Song

1 God is to us a protection and strength; A help in troubles he is found exceedingly.

2 Therefore we will not fear when moved shall be the earth, And fall shall the mountains into the heart of the sea.

3 [*When*] roar and rage tempestuously shall the waters thereof; [*When*] shake shall the mountains with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 The streams of her river shall make glad the city of God, The Sanctuary of the tabernacles of the Most High.

5 God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: Help her will God at the dawn of the morning.

6 Rage did the peoples, moved were the kingdoms: He uttered his voice, melt did the earth.

7 Jehovah of armies *is* with us; A fortress for us *is* the God of Jacob. Selah.

8 Come ye, consider the works of Jehovah, What desolations he hath wrought in the earth.

9 He maketh to cease battles, even to the ends of the earth; He breaketh the bow, he shattereth in pieces the arms; The chariot he burneth with fire.

10 Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth.

11 Jehovah of armies is with us; A fortress for us *is* the God of Jacob. Selah.

PSALM 47

To the Chief Musician. Of the sons of Korah. Upon Alamoth. A Song

1 O all ye peoples! clap the hand; Shout unto God with the voice of exultation;

2 For Jehovah *is* high, terrible, A great king over all the earth.

3 He hath put in order the people under us, And the nations under our feet.

4 He hath chosen for us our inheritance, The glory of Jacob, whom he hath loved. Selah.

5 Gone up is God with a shout, Jehovah with the sound of a trumpet.

6 Sing psalms to God, sing psalms; Sing psalms to our King, sing psalms;

7 For king of all the earth is God; Sing praises, all ye who understand!

8 The kingdom he hath obtained over the heathen; God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

9 The princes of the peoples are assembled together To the people of the God of Abraham: For to God belong the shields of the earth: He is greatly exalted.

PSALM 48

A Song of a Psalm. Of the sons of Korah

1 Great is Jehovah and to be praised greatly In the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, The mountain of Zion, on the sides of the north, The city of the great King.

3 God in her palaces is known for a defense.

4 For behold! the kings assembled, They passed away together.

5 They themselves saw, so they marveled; They were frightened, they fled precipitately,

6 Fear seized upon them there, Pain as of one in travail.

7 By the east wind thou breakest in pieces the ships of Tarshish.

8 As we have heard, so have we seen In the city of Jehovah of Hosts, In the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah

9 We have waited, O God! for thy mercy In the midst of thy temple,

10 As *is* thy name, O God! So *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth: Of righteousness full is thy right hand.

11 Rejoice shall Mount Zion, Exult shall the daughters of Judah, Because of thy judgments.

12 Encompass Zion, and walk round about her. Number the towers thereof,

13 Set your heart to her walls, Exalt her towers, That ye may make report to the generations to come.

14 For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.

PSALM 49

To the Chief Musician. Of the sons of Korah. A Psalm

1 Hear this all ye peoples; Give ear all ye inhabitants of the world:

2 Both ye sons of Adam, and ye sons of men, Rich and poor together.

3 My mouth shall speak of wisdoms, And the meditation of my heart is of understanding.

4 I will incline to a parable my ear: I will open upon the harp my enigma.

5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil? The iniquity of my heel shall compass me about.

6 They trust in their wealth, And in the multitude of their riches do glory.

7 The brother shall not be able to redeem; None shall give to God the price of his redemption.

8 And precious shall be the redemption of their soul, And *their* continuance for ever:

9 That he should still live for ever, And not see the grave.

10 For he shall see that wise men die, Together the fool and the brutish person shall perish, And leave to strangers their wealth.

11 Their inward thought is [*how to make*] their houses [*to continue*] for ever, Their dwelling-places from generation to generation: They have called out their names upon the earth.

12 And man in honor shall not abide; He hath become like the beasts: they perish.

13 This their way *is* foolishness in them, And their posterity in their saying will acquiesce. Selah.

14 Like sleep in the grave they are laid; Death shall feed them; And have dominion over them shall the upright in the morning, And their strength shall wax old; The grave *shall receive* them from their dwelling.

15 But God shall redeem my soul from the hand of the grave; For he hath taken me up. Selah.

16 Be not thou afraid when a man shall become rich, When increased shall be the glory of his house;

17 For he shall not at his death carry all away: Descend not after him shall his glory:

18 For his soul in his lifetime he will bless, And they shall praise thee when thou doest well to thyself.

19 He shall come to the age of his fathers, Even for ever he shall not see the light.

20 Man *is* in honor, and will not understand: He hath become like the beasts: they shall perish.

PSALM 50

A Song, of Asaph

1 The God of gods, Jehovah hath spoken, And called the earth From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

2 Out of Zion, the Perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

3 Come shall our God, and shall not keep silence; A fire before him shall devour, And round about him a tempest shall rage exceedingly.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above, And to the earth, to judge his people.

5 "Gather together to me my meek ones, (*will he say*), "Those who strike a covenant with me over sacrifices."

6 And declare shall the heavens his righteousness: For God is judge himself. Selah.

7 "Hear, O my people! and I will speak; "O Israel! and I will announce to thee: "God, [*even*] thy God am I.

8 "Not for thy sacrifices will I reprove thee; "And thy burnt-offerings *are* before me continually.

9 "I will not take out of thy house a calf, "*Nor* out of thy folds he-goats:

10 "For mine are all the beasts of the forest, "The cattle upon a thousand hills.

11 "I know all the birds of the mountains; "And the wild beasts of the field are at my command.

12 "If I am hungry, I will not tell thee: "For mine is the world and the fullness thereof.

13 "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, "And the blood of goats will I drink?

14 "Sacrifice unto God praise, "And pay unto the Most High thy vows.

15 "Call upon me in the day of trouble; "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

16 "But unto the wicked said hath God, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, "[*Or*] that thou shouldest take my covenant into thy lips?

17 "Also thou hatest correction, "And castest my words behind thee.

18 "If thou seest a thief, thou wilt run with him, "And with adulterers is thy portion.

19 "Thy mouth thou puttest forth to evil, "And thy tongue frameth deceit,

20 "Thou wilt sit against thy brother; "Thou wilt speak against the sons of thy mother; "Thou wilt set forth slander.

21 "These things thou hast done, and I kept silence; "Thou thoughtest that I would be like thyself': "I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

22 "Now consider this, ye who forget God, "Lest I seize upon you and there be none to deliver.

23 "He who sacrificeth praise will glorify me: "And he who ordereth his way to him will I show the salvation of God."

PSALM 51

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba

1 Have pity upon me, O God! according to thy mercy; According to the multitude of thy compassions blot out my iniquities.

2 Multiply to wash me from my sin, And from my wickedness do thou cleanse me.

3 For my sins I know, And my wickedness is before me continually.

4 Against thee, against thee only, have I sinned, And that which was displeasing in thy sight have I done; That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, And be pure in giving judgment.

5 Behold in iniquity I was born, And in sin conceive me did my mother.

6 Behold, truth thou hast loved in the inmost parts, And in secret, wisdom thou hast made me know.

7 Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; And exult shall the bones which thou hast broken.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, And all my iniquities blot out.

10 A heart [*that is*] clean create in me, O God! And a spirit [*that is*] right renew in my inward parts.

11 Cast me not away from thy face, And the Spirit of thy holiness take not from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, And with a free spirit uphold me.

13 I will teach transgressors thy ways, the ungodly to time shall be converted.

14 Deliver me from bloods, O God! O God of my salvation! And sing aloud shall my tongue of thy righteousness.

15 O Lord! my lips do thou open, And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

16 For thou wilt not accept a sacrifice; Though I should give a burnt-offering, it would not please thee.

17 The sacrifices of God are an afflicted spirit: A heart afflicted and contrite, O God! thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure to Zion; Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou accept the sacrifices of righteousness, The burnt-offering and oblation; [328] Then shall come upon thy altar calves.

328 In the French Version it is "the whole oblation."

PSALM 52

To the Chief Musician. A lesson of instruction of David: when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said to him, that David had come into the house of Abimelech

1 Why dost thou glory in thy wickedness, O mighty man? The goodness of God *continueth* daily.

2 Thy tongue reckoneth up mischiefs, Like a razor [*that is*] sharp working deceitfully.

3 Thou lovest wickedness more than goodness; Falsehood more than to speak righteousness. Selah.

4 Thou lovest all words of deceit, O thou tongue of guilefulness!

5 Likewise God shall destroy thee for ever: He shall lay hold on thee and pluck thee out of thy tabernacle, And root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

6 See it also shall the righteous ones, and shall fear, And at him they shall laugh.

7 Behold! the man who made not God his strength; And trusted in the abundance of his riches, And was strong in his wickedness.

8 But as for me *I shall be* like an olive-tree [*that is*] green in the house of God: I have trusted in the goodness of God for ever and ever.

9 I will celebrate thee for ever, because thou hast done [*it*:] [329] I will wait on thy name, For it is good in the presence of thy meek ones.

329 In the French Version it is "because thou shalt have executed *this vengeance.*"

PSALM 53

To the Chief Musician, upon Mahalath. A lesson of instruction ofDavid

1 The fool hath said in his heart, "There is not a God:" They have corrupted [*all good order*,] they have done abominable work: There is none who doeth good.

2 God from heaven looked down upon the sons of men, To see if there was any who did understand, Who did seek after God.

3 Every one of them hath gone back; They have all together become corrupt: There is none that doeth good, not even one.

4 Have they no knowledge, all *these* workers of iniquity? Eating my people [*as*] they eat bread: Upon Jehovah they have not called.

5 There were they afraid with fear, where there was not fear; For scattered hath Jehovah the bones of him that encampeth against thee: Thou hast put them to shame because God hath despised them.

6 Who shall give out of Zion deliverance to Israel? When bring back shall God the captivity of his people, Rejoice shall Jacob, exult shall Israel.

PSALM 54

To the Chief Musician, on Neginoth. A lesson of instruction of David. When the Ziphims came and said to Saul, "Doth not David hide himself with us?"

1 O God! by thy name save me, And by thy strength judge me.

2 O God! hear my prayer, Give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers have risen up against me, And terrible ones have sought after my soul: They have not set God before them. Selah.

4 Behold! God is a helper to me; The Lord is with those who uphold my soul.

5 He shall repay evil to my adversaries: In thy truth cut them off.

6 Willingly will I sacrifice to thee; I will celebrate thy name, O Jehovah! for it is good.

7 For out of all trouble he hath delivered me; And [*punishment*] upon my adversaries mine eye hath seen.

PSALM 55

To the Chief Musician on Neginoth. A lesson of instruction of David

1 Give ear, O God! to my prayer, And hide not thyself from my supplication.

2 Attend to me, and answer me: I will wail in my address, and will become tumultuous.

3 By reason of the voice of the enemy — Under the oppression of the ungodly; For they cast upon me iniquity, In wrath they set themselves against me.

4 My heart trembleth within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.

5 Fear and trembling are come upon me, And horror hath overwhelmed me.

6 And I said, "Who will give me wings like a dove? "I will fly away and be at rest.

7 "Lo! I will flee far away, "I will repose in the desert. Selah.

8 "I will hasten my escape from the tempestuous whirlwind."

9 Destroy, O Lord! divide their tongue: For I have seen oppression and strife in the city.

10 By day and night they go round it upon the walls thereof: And labor and sorrow are in the midst of it.

11 Wickedness [330] is in the midst of it; And fraud and deceit depart not from the streets thereof.

12 Truly it was not an enemy who reproached me, For [*then*] I could have borne [*it*:] *It was* not an adversary who magnified himself against me, For [*then*] I would have hid himself from him.

13 But thou, a man according to my own rank, My guide, and my familiar friend.

14 We sweetly exchanged our secret thoughts; Into the house of God we walked in company.

15 Let death seize upon them, Let them descend into the grave alive; For wickedness [331] *is* I, their dwelling, in the midst of them.

16 As for me, to God; will I cry, And Jehovah shall save me.

17 In the evening, and the morning, and at noonday Will I pray, and cry aloud; And he shall hear my voice.

18 He hath redeemed into peace my soul From the battle which was against me: For many were with me.

19 Hear shall God, and shall afflict them, Even he who sitteth from ancient time. Selah. Because they have no changes, And fear not God.

20 He hath set his hands against those who were at peace with him: He hath broken his covenant.

21 Smoother than butter are the words of his mouth, And *in* his heart *is* war; Softer are his words than oil, And [*yet*] they *are* darts.

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330 Literally, "wickedness."

331 Ibid

22 Cast upon Jehovah whatever blessings thou askest from him, [332] And he shall feed thee; He shall not suffer for ever the righteous man to stagger.

23 Thou, O God! shalt cast them into the pit of corruption: The men of blood and deceit shall not live out half their days: But as for me, I will hope in thee.

332 A free translation is here given. See the Commentary for the literal rendering.

PSALM 56

To the Chief Musician upon, the silent dove in distant places. Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, For swallow me up doth man; He daily assaulting doth oppress me.

2 Swallow me up do *my* enemies daily: Truly many *strive* to oppress me, *O Jehovah*, Most High!

3 In the day when I was afraid, I in thee did trust.

4 In God I will praise his word; In God have I trusted; I will not fear what flesh can do to me.

5 Every day my words disquiet me; Against me *are* all their thoughts for evil.

6 They assemble together, they hide themselves, My heels they watch, Because they desire my soul.

7 In *their* iniquity *they think* there is escape for them: In *thy* wrath the peoples thou wilt cast down, O God!

8 My wanderings thou numbereth, even thou: Put my tears into thy bottle; Are they not in thy register?

9 Then my enemies shall be turned back in the day when I cry: This I know, because God is with me.

10 In God will I praise [*his*] word; In Jehovah will I praise [*his*] word.

11 In God have I trusted; I will not fear what man can do to me.

12 Upon me, O God! are thy vows, I will render praises to thee.

13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death: Hast thou not *also delivered* my feet from falling? That I may walk before God in the light of the living.

PSALM 57

To the Chief Musician. Destroy not. Michtam of David. When he fled from the face of Saul in the cave

1 Have mercy upon me, O God! have mercy upon me; For in thee my soul doth trust; And in the shadow of thy wings will I hope, Until iniquity pass away.

2 I will cry to God Most High, Who perfecteth [*his work*] towards me.

3 He shall send from Heaven, And shall save me from the reproach of him who swalloweth me up: Send forth shall God his mercy and his truth.

4 My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie among those who are set on fire, — Among the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, And their tongue a sword [*that is*] sharp.

5 Be thou exalted above the heavens, O God! Above all the earth thy glory.

6 A net they have prepared for my steps: Bowed down is my soul: They have digged before me a pit, *But* they have fallen into it. Selah

7 Prepared *is* my heart, O God! prepared *is* my heart: I will sing, and chant psalms.

8 Awake my tongue, awake nablum [333] and harp: I will awake at dawn of day.

9 I will celebrate thee, among the peoples, O Lord! I will sing psalms to thee among the nation:

10 For great unto the heavens is thy goodness, And unto the clouds thy truth.

11 Be thou exalted, above the heavens, O God! Above all the earth thy glory.

333 "Psaltery" in the French version.

PSALM 58

To the Chief Musician. Destroy not. Michtam of David

1 Do ye indeed, O ye congregation! speak righteousness? Uprightly do ye judge? O ye sons of men!

2 Yea rather in *your* heart wickedness ye plot, On the earth violence your hands weigh out.

3 Estranged are the ungodly from the womb, They have gone astray from their birth speaking falsehood.

4 They have poison like the poison of a serpent, [*They are*] like the deaf adder which stoppeth her ear;

5 Which listeneth not to the voice of the enchanter, — Of him who exerciseth enchantment skillfully.

6 O God! break their teeth in their mouth: The jawbones of the lions break, O Jehovah!

7 Let them melt away like water, let them be gone: Let them bend their bow, and let their arrows be as if broken.

8 Like a snail which melteth away let them vanish; Like the untimely birth of a woman which doth not see the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel the fire of the bramble, *Like* flesh yet raw as a whirlwind he shall carry him away.

10 Rejoice shall the righteous when he seeth the vengeance; His hands he shall wash in the blood of the ungodly.

11 And men [334] shall say, "Truly there is fruit for the righteous, "Truly there is a God who judgeth in the earth."

334 Literally "man."

PSALM 59

To the Chief Musician. Destroy not. Michtam of David. When Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him

1 Deliver me from my enemies, O my God! from those who rise up against me set me on high.

2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, And from men of bloods save me:

3 For lo! they have laid snares for my soul; Gathered together against me have the strong men; Not [*for*] my sin, nor [*for*] my wickedness, O Jehovah!

4 Without *any* iniquity *of mine* they have run and prepared themselves. Awake and come to meet me, and behold.

5 And thou, O Jehovah, God of armies! the God of Israel! Awake to visit all the nations; Do not have compassion upon any who transgress wickedly. Selah.

6 They will return at evening; They will make a noise like a dog, And go round about the city.

7 Behold they will prate with their mouth; Swords are in their lips; "For who," *say they*, "will hear?"

8 But thou, O Jehovah! shalt laugh at them; Thou shalt hold in derision all the nations.

9 His strength with thee I will put in trust; For God is my fortress.

10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me; God will make me see my desire upon my enemies.

11 Slay them not, lest my people should forget; Make them to wander by thy power; And bring them down, O Lord, our shield!

12 The sin of their mouth, the words of their lips: Let them be taken in their pride: of cursing and lying let them speak.

13 Consume, in thy fury consume them, that they may be no more; And let men know that God ruleth in Jacob, Even to the ends of the earth. Selah. [335]

14 And they will return at evening; They will bark like a dog, And go round about the city.

15 They will wander up and down for food; If they be not satisfied they will even stay all night.

16 But as for me, I will sing of thy strength, I will praise in the morning thy mercy; For thou hast been a fortress to me, And a refuge in the day of my trouble.

17 My strength is with thee, I will sing psalms; For God *is* my fortress, the God of my mercy.

335 In the French version the reading is — "And let men know even unto the ends of the earth, That God ruleth in Jacob. Selah."

PSALM 60

To the Chief Musician upon Shushan Eduth. Michtam of David to teach. When he fought against the Syrians of Mesopotamia and against the Syrians of Zobah; and when Joab, having returned, smote of the Edomites in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand

1 O God! thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us; Thou hast been angry, O return to us!

2 To tremble thou hast made the earth; Thou hast caused it to open wide; Heal the breaches thereof for it shaketh.

3 Thou hast showed to thy people a hard thing, Thou hast made us drunk with the wine of stupefaction.

4 Thou hast given to those who fear thee a banner, That it may be displayed before *thy* truth. Selah.

5 That thy beloved ones may be delivered, Save with thy right hand and hear me.

6 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, And the valley of Succoth I will measure.

7 Mine *shall be* Gilead, and mine *shall be* Manasseh; And Ephraim *shall be* the strength of my head; Judah, my lawgiver.

8 Moab *shall be* the pot for my washing; Over Edom will I cast my shoe; O Palestina! triumph thou over me.

9 Who will bring me into the city fortified? Who will lead me into Edom?

10 Wilt not thou, O God! who hadst cast us off? [*thou*] O God! [*who*] didst not go forth with our armies?

11 Grant us relief from trouble, For vain *is* the help of man.

12 Through God we shall do valiantly: And he it is who shall tread down our adversaries.

PSALM 61

To the Chief Musician upon Neginoth. A Psalm of David

1 Hear, O God! my cry, Attend to my prayer.

2 From the end of the earth to thee will I cry, when vexed is my heart: To the rock which is higher than I thou shalt lead me.

3 For thou hast been a hope to me, A tower of strength from the face of the enemy.

4 I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever; I will be safe under the covert of thy wings. Selah.

5 For thou, O God! hast heard my vows: Thou hast given an inheritance to those who fear thy name.

6 Days upon days to the king thou shalt add, His years *shall be* as many generations.

7 He shall dwell for ever in the presence of God: Mercy and truth do thou prepare: thou shalt preserve him.

8 So will I sing unto thy name for ever, That I may perform my vows every day.

PSALM 62

To the Chief Musician upon Jeduthun. A Psalm of David

1 Nevertheless towards God silent is my soul: From him is my salvation.

2 Nevertheless he is my reek and my salvation, My fortress: *therefore* I shall not be moved greatly.

3 How long will ye continue to lay snares against a man? Ye shall be slain all of you: As an inclining wall shall ye be, and a fence that is shaken.

4 Yet from his elevation they consult to east him down: They delight in falsehood: With their mouth they bless, And in their hearts they curse. Selah.

5 Nevertheless towards God be thou silent O my soul: For from him *is* my expectation.

6 Nevertheless he *only is* my rock, and my salvation: My fortress; I shall not fall.

7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength; my hope *is* in God.

8 Hope in him at all times, O ye people! Pour out before his face your hearts: God *is* our hope. Selah.

9 Nevertheless vanity are the sons of Adam; A lie the sons of men: When put all together in a balance they are found lighter than vanity itself. [336]

10 Trust not in oppression and robbery; be not vain: [*Upon*] riches if they abound set not your heart.

11 Once God hath spoken; Twice this I have heard, "That power belongeth to God;" And to thee, O Lord! *belongeth* mercy; Truly thou wilt render to every man according to his work.

336 The free translation of the French version is here adopted. The literal rendering of the Hebrew text is, "In the scales in going up they [*are lighter]* than vanity together." To this Calvin strictly adheres in his Latin version.

PSALM 63

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judea

1 O God! my God art thou; Early will I seek thee: Thirsted for thee hath my soul, Longed for thee hath my flesh, In this land [*that is*] inhospitable and dry, without water.

2 Thus in the sanctuary have I beheld thee, To see thy power and thy glory.

3 Because better *is* thy mercy than life, My lips shall praise thee.

4 Thus will I bless thee in my life; In thy name I will lift up my hands.

5 As with marrow and farness satisfied shall be my soul, And with lips of rejoicing shall my mouth praise *thee*

6 Surely I will remember thee upon my bed; In the watches *of the night* I will meditate upon thee;

7 Because thou hast been a help to me: And in the shadow of thy wings I will shout for joy.

8 Cleaved hath my soul to [*literally after*] thee; Sustain me shall thy right hand.

9 And they whilst they seek to destroy my soul, Shall go into the lowest parts of the earth.

10 They shall east him down to the edge of the sword: The portion of foxes they shall be.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God, And glory shall every one who sweareth by him: For stopped shall be the mouth of those who speak falsehood.

PSALM 64

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David

1 Hear, O God! my voice in my prayer: From fear of the enemy preserve my life.

2 Hide me from the counsel of malignant men — From the assembly of tire workers of iniquity.

3 For they have sharpened as a sword their tongue; They have directed for their arrow a bitter word.

4 To shoot in secret at the innocent man: Suddenly they will shoot and not fear.

5 They encourage themselves in an impious action; They talk together of secretly laying snares; They say, "Who shall see them?"

6 They have searched out iniquities, They have accomplished a searching search: And the inward part of each of them and the heart [*is*] deep.

7 But God shall shoot at them an arrow; Suddenly shall they be wounded.

8 And they shall make their own tongue fall upon themselves, And flee away shall all who see them.

9 And see shall all men, and shall declare the work of God, And his doing they shall understand.

10 Rejoice shall the righteous in Jehovah, and they shall hope in him; And glory shall all the upright in heart.

PSALM 65

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. A Song

1 For thee waiteth praise, O God! in Zion; And to thee performed shall be the vow.

2 O thou who hearest prayer! To thee shall all flesh come.

3 Words of iniquity [337] have prevailed against me: Our crimes thou shalt expiate.

4 Blessed is he whom thou wilt choose, and cause to approach to thee; He shall dwell in thy courts: We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house — Of the sanctuary of thy palace.

5 Terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation! The hope of all the ends of the earth, And of the far off places of the sea.

6 Establishing the mountains by his power, [338] Being girded with might.

7 Stilling the noise of the seas, And the noise of their waves, the tumults of the nations.

8 And afraid shall be the dwellers in the ends *of the earth* at thy signs; The outgoings of the morning and evening thou shalt make to shout for joy.

9 Thou hast visited the earth, and watered her; Thou hast abundantly enriched her: The river of God is full of waters: Thou wilt prepare their corn, For so thou hast prepared her.

10 Her furrows thou dost saturate, Thou makest the rain to fall into her ridges, With showers thou dost moisten her, Her buddings thou dost bless.

11 Thou crownest the year with thy beneficence, And thy paths will drop fatness.

12 They drop upon the dwellings of the wilderness; And with gladness the hills shall be girded.

13 Clothed are the pastures with flocks; And the valleys are covered with corn; They shout for joy, they also sing.

337 Literally, "iniquities."

338 In the French version it is "by the power."

PSALM 66

To the Chief Justice,. A Song of a Psalm

1 Shout joyfully to God all the earth,

2 Sing the glory of his name, Make glorious his praise.

3 Say unto God: "How terrible art thou in thy works! "Through the greatness of thy power shall thy enemies feign submission unto thee.

4 "All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing to thee, "They shall hymn thy name." Selah.

5 Come ye, and see the works of God: He is terrible in his doing towards the sons of men.

6 He turned the sea into dry *land*; Through the river [339] they passed on foot; There we were glad in him.

7 He ruleth by his might over the world; [340] His eyes upon the nations are fixed: The rebels shall not exalt themselves. Selah.

8 Bless, O ye people! our God, And resound the voice of his praise.

9 Who hath brought our souls into life, And hath not suffered our feet to fall.

10 For thou hast proved us, O God! Thou hast tried us as silver is tried:

11 Thou hast brought us into the net Thou hast laid restraint upon our loins;

12 Thou hast made man to ride over our heads; We have come into fire and water; And thou hast brought us into a place of abundance.

13 I will come into thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay thee my vows,

14 Which my lips have uttered, And my mouth hath spoken in my affliction.

15 Burnt-offerings of fat *lambs* I will offer to thee with incense of rams; I will bring bullocks with goats. Selah.

16 Come, hear, and I will tell all you who fear God, What he hath done for my soul.

17 To him with my mouth I cried, And I have exalted him with my tongue.

18 If I have regarded iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear me.

19 But truly heard me hath God; He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer, Nor his mercy from me.

339 That is, the Jordan. See Joshua 4:23

340 "Dominatur seculo." — *Lat.* "Il domine sur le monde." — *Fr.*

PSALMS 67—92

PSALM 67

*To the Chief Musician on Neginoth. A Psalm [*or*] Song*

1 May God have compassion upon us, and bless us; May he cause his countenance to shine upon us. Selah.

2 That thy way may be known upon the earth, Among all nations thy salvation.

3 Let the peoples praise thee, O God! Let all the peoples celebrate thee.

4 Let the peoples rejoice and exult, For he shall judge the peoples with rectitude, And the nations upon earth thou shalt guide. Selah.

5 Let the peoples celebrate thee, O God! Let all the peoples celebrate thee:

6 The earth hath given *her* increase; God [*even*] our own God will bless us.

7 God will bless us; And fear him shall all the ends of the earth.

PSALM 68

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm [or] Song of David

1 Arise shall God: scattered shall be his enemies; And flee from before his face shall those who hate him.

2 As smoke is driven away thou shalt drive them away; As wax melteth before the fire, perish shall the ungodly from before the face of God.

3 But the righteous shall rejoice, They shell exult before God, And leap for joy.

4 Sing ye unto God, sing psalms to his name; Exalt him who rideth upon the clouds whose name is Jah, And exult before him.

5 The father of the orphans, and the judge of the widows, *Is* God in the habitation of his holiness.

6 God who causeth the solitary to dwell in a family, Who bringeth forth those who are bound with chains: But rebels shall dwell in a dry land.

7 O God! when thou well test forth before thy people, When thou marchedst through the wilderness; Selah:

8 The earth was moved, Also the heavens dropped at the presence of this God: Sinai at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 A liberal rain thou shalt make to fall, O God! upon thy inheritance, And when it is weary thou refreshest it.

10 Thy congregation shall dwell therein: Thou wilt provide in thy goodness for the poor, O God!

11 The Lord shall give the word To the women who announce the great army.

12 Kings of armies shall flee — shall flee; And she who dwelleth within the house shall divide the spoils.

13 Though ye should lie among the pots, *in the ashes*, *Yet shall ye be as* the wings of the dove covered with silver, And *which* behind is *as* fine yellow gold.

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, It was white in Salmon.

15 The mountain of God, the mountain of Bashan, The mountain of heights, the mountain of Bashan.

16 Why leap ye, ye mountains of heights? The mountain in which it hath pleased God to dwell: Yea dwell *in it* will Jehovah for ever.

17 The chariots of God [*are*] twenty thousand thousands of angels: The Lord *is* among them, In the sanctuary as in Sinai.

18 Thou hast ascended on high; Thou hast led captive captivity; Thou hast received gifts among men; Yea even [*among*] rebels, That Jehovah God might dwell *in the midst of his people*

19 Blessed *be* God day by day: *This* God will load us with deliverances. Selah.

20 Our God *is* the God of salvations; And to Jehovah Lord *belong* the issues of death.

21 Surely God shall wound the head of his enemies, The crown of the hair of him who walketh in his wickedness.

22 The Lord hath said: "From Bashan I will bring back; "I will bring back from the depths of the sea:

23 "That thy foot may be stained with blood, "The tongue of thy dogs even in that of thy enemies."

24 They have seen thy goings, O God!— The goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.

25 Before went the singers; [*Then*] followed the players on instruments; In the midst [*were*] the damsels striking the timbrels.

26 In the congregations bless ye God, [*Even*] the Lord, *ye who* are of the fountain of Israel!

27 There *was* little Benjamin their ruler, The princes of Judah in their assembly, The princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphthali.

28 Commanded hath thy God thy strength; Strengthen, O God! what thou hast wrought in us.

29 From thy temple upon Jerusalem To thee shall kings bring presents.

30 Destroy the company of spearmen, The assembly of bulls, with the calves of the peoples, Treading with their feet upon pieces of silver: Scatter thou the peoples that in wars delight.

31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall speedily stretch forth her hands to God.

32 O ye kingdoms of the earth! sing unto God: Sing psalms to the Lord. Selah.

33 To him who rideth upon the heavens of heavens *which are* of old: Lo! he shall send forth in his voice a voice of strength,

34 Ascribe ye strength to God over Israel; His majesty and his strength [*are*] in the clouds.

35 Terrible art thou, O God! out of thy holy places: The God of Israel himself shall give strength and might to his people. Blessed *be* God!

PSALM 69

To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim. Of David

1 Save me, O God! For entered have the waters even to my soul.

2 I am sunk into deep mire where there is no standing place; I am come into the depths of waters, And the floods of water have overflowed me.

3 I am weary with crying, Hoarse is my throat become therewith; Failed have my eyes with waiting for my God.

4 More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause: Increased are those who desire to destroy me, [*even*] my lying adversaries: That which I took not by violence, then I restored it.

5 O God! thou knowest my foolishness, And my faults from thee are not hidden.

6 Let not those be ashamed in me that wait for thee, O Lord, Jehovah of armies! Let not those be put to shame in me who seek thee, O God of Israel!

7 For on thy account I have suffered reproach; Shame hath covered my face.

8 A stranger I have been to my brethren, And an alien I am become to the children of my mother.

9 For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up; And the reproaches of those who reproached thee have fallen upon me.

10 And I wept, my soul fasted; And that was for a reproach to me.

11 And I made my garment sackcloth; And I was to them for a jest.

12 Defame me do those who sit in the gate; And *I am* the songs of those who drink intoxicating liquor.

13 But as for me my prayer [*is*] to thee, O Jehovah! *In the* time of *thy* favor, O God! In the multitude of thy mercy answer me, In the truth of thy salvation.

14 Rescue me from the mire that I may not sink; That I may be delivered from my adversaries, And from the depths of waters.

15 Let not the flood of waters overflow me; And let not the deep swallow me up; And let not the pit dose its mouth upon me.

16 Answer me, O Jehovah! for good *is* thy mercy: In the multitude of thy compassions look upon me.

17 And hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am afflicted: Hasten! answer me!

18 Draw near to my soul, redeem it: On account of my adversaries deliver me.

19 Thou knowest my reproach, and my confusion, and my ignominy: Before thee *are* all my adversaries.

20 Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am afflicted; And I looked for some one to show compassion, but there was none; For comforters, but I found *them* not.

21 And they put into my meat gall, And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

22 Let their table be before them for a snare; And their prosperity for a net;

23 Darkened let be their eyes, that they may not see; And cause their loins continually to tremble.

24 Pour out upon them thy wrath; And let the fury of thy indignation take hold of them.

25 Let their palace be desolate; In their tents let there not be a dweller.

26 For him whom thou hast smitten they have persecuted; And to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded they have added.

27 Add iniquity to their iniquity; And let them not enter into thy righteousness.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; And with the righteous let them not be written.

29 But as for me I am poor and sorrowful: Thy salvation shall exalt me.

30 I will praise the name of God in a song, And I will magnify him with thanksgiving.

31 And this will please Jehovah More than a young bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 Seen it have the afflicted, And they shall rejoice at it who seek God; And live shall your heart.

33 For hearkened hath Jehovah to the afflicted; And his prisoners he hath not despised.

34 Praise him let heaven and earth; The seas and whatever creepeth in them.

35 For God will save Zion, And will build the cities of Judah; And they shall dwell there, And possess it by inheritance.

36 And the seed of his servants shall inherit it; And they who love his name shall dwell in it.

PSALM 70

To the Chief Musician. Of David. To call to remembrance

1 O God! to deliver me, O Jehovah! to my aid, hasten.

2 Let those be ashamed and confounded who seek after my soul; Let those be turned backward and put to confusion who desire my hurt.

3 Let those be destroyed for a reward of their shame, Who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"

4 Exult and rejoice in thee let all who seek thee; And let those say, "For ever may God be magnified" — Those who love thy salvation.

5 But as for me I am poor and needy: O God! hasten to me: My help and my deliverer art thou: O Jehovah! delay not.

PSALM 71

1 In thee, O Jehovah! do I put my trust, Let me not be put to shame for ever.

2 In thy righteousness deliver me, and rescue me; Incline to me thy ear, and save me.

3 Be thou to me for a rock of strength, Into which I may enter at all times: Thou hast given commandment to save me; For my tower and my fortress art thou.

4 O my God! deliver me from the hand of the ungodly man, — From the hand of the wicked and violent men.

5 For thou art my expectation, O Lord Jehovah! My trust from my youth.

6 Upon thee have I been sustained from the womb; Out of my mother's bowels thou art he who took me: Of thee is my praise continually.

7 As a prodigy I have been to the great ones, And yet thou art my strong confidence.

8 Filled shall be my mouth with thy praise, Daily with thy glory.

9 Cast me not off in the time of my old age: In the declining of my strength forsake me not.

10 For my enemies have spoken concerning me, And those who watch for my soul have consulted together,

11 Saying, "God hath forsaken him; "Follow after him, and ye shall take him; "For there is none to deliver *him*."

12 O God! be not far from me: O my God! to my aid hasten.

13 Let those be put to shame, let those fail who are the adversaries of my soul: Let those be covered with reproach mid shame who seek my hurt.

14 But as for me continually will I hope, And will add to all thy praise.

15 My mouth shall tell of thy righteousness, Daily of thy salvation; For I know not the number *thereof*

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord Jehovah! I will remember thy righteousness alone.

17 O God! thou hast taught me from my youth; And unto this time will I announce thy wonders.

18 And therefore [341] in old age and gray hairs, O God! forsake me not, Until I have declared thy strength to the generation, To all who are to come thy might.

19 And thy righteousness, O God! is very high: For thou hast done great things: O God! who is like to thee?

20 Thou hast made me to see troubles many and grievous, *But* being turned thou wilt quicken me, And from the depths of the earth, being turned thou wilt raise me up.

21 Thou wilt multiply my greatness; And being turned thou wilt comfort me.

341 Literally, "moreover." But see the Commentary.

22 Moreover, I, even I, will sing to thee on instruments of music; [342] For thy truth, O my God! I will sing psalms to thee upon the harp, O Holy One of Israel!

23 Exult shall my lips, when I sing psalms to thee; And my soul which thou hast redeemed.

24 Also my tongue daily shall declare thy righteousness; For they are put to shame, for they are disgraced, who seek my hurt.

342 "In organo musico." — *Lat.* "Avec irgyes de musique." — *Fr.* The Hebrew is ⊠⊠⊠-⊠⊠⊠⊠ *bichli-nebel,* "which is the instrument of the nebel, *or* psaltery."

PSALM 72

Of Solomon

1 O God! thy judgments give to the King, And thy righteousness to the son of the King

2 He shall judge thy people in righteousness, And thy poor ones in judgment.

3 Bring forth shall the mountains peace to the people, And the hills in righteousness.

4 He shall judge the poor ones of the people; He shall save the children of the afflicted; And shall break in pieces the calumniator.

5 They shall fear thee with the sun; And before the moon the generation of generations shall fear thee.

6 He shall descend as rain upon the mown grass; As the showers which water the earth.

7 Flourish in his days shall the righteous; And abundance of peace until there be no more moon.

8 And he shall have dominion from sea to sea, And from the river even to the ends of the earth.

9 Before him shall bow the inhabitants of the desert, And his enemies shall lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles a present shall bring: The kings of Sheba and Seba a gift shall offer *to him*

11 And all kings shall prostrate themselves before him; All nations shall serve him.

12 For he shall deliver the poor who crieth *to him*, And the needy who hath no helper.

13 He will have compassion upon the indigent and the poor one, And the souls of the poor ones he will save.

14 From fraud and violence he will redeem their souls, And precious shall be their blood in his eyes.

15 And he shall live, and there shall be given to him of the gold of Sheba, And prayer shall be made for him continually; Daily shall he be blessed.

16 There shall be *sown* an handful of corn in the earth on the top of the mountains; The fruit thereof shall be shaken like [*that*] of Lebanon. And they shall go forth from the city as a plant of the earth.

17 His name shall be for ever; In presence of the sun propagated shall be his name: And bless themselves in him shall all nations, And blessed they shall call him.

18 Blessed be Jehovah God! the God of Israel! [343] Who doeth wonderful things alone.

19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever; And let all the earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

20 Finished are the prayers of David, the son of Jesse.

343 In the French versions this line reads — "Blessed be the Lord *God* of Israel, the God of gods."

PART THIRD [344]

PSALM 73

A Psalm of Asaph

1 Yet God is good to Israel, To those who are right in heart.

2 As for me, wellnigh slipped had my feet, My steps were almost gone:

3 For I was envious at the foolish, On seeing the prosperity of the ungodly.

4 For there are no bands to their death, And vigorous is their strength.

5 In the [*common*] trouble of man they are not; And with other men they are not scourged.

6 Therefore encompass them as a chain doth pride; Covered them hath the raiment of violence.

7 Their eye projecteth through fatness; They have passed beyond the thoughts of their heart.

8 They break forth, and talk wickedly of extortion: From on high do they speak.

9 They have set against the heaven their mouth, And their tongue walketh through the earth.

10 On this account his people will return hither, And waters of a full cup will be wrung out to them.

11 And they say, "How doth God know? " "And is there knowledge in the Most High?"

12 Behold these are the ungodly, and [*yet*] they are in quiet for ever: They heap up riches.

13 Surely in vain I have purified my heart, And washed every day my hands:

14 And I have been scourged every day, And my chastisement [*has been*] every morning.

15 If I have said, "I will speak thus," Behold! the generation of thy children: I have transgressed.

16 And although I applied my mind to know this, A pain fill thing it was in mine eyes,

17 Until I entered into the sanctuaries of God, *And* understood their end.

18 Surely in slippery places thou hast set them; Thou shalt east them down into destructions.

19 How have they been destroyed as in a moment! They have perished, they have been consumed with terrors.

20 As it were a dream after a man is awakened; O Lord! in awaking, their image thou wilt render contemptible.

21 For in a ferment was my heart, And in my reins I was pierced.

22 And I myself [*was*] foolish and knew not *any thing*; As the beasts have I been before thee.

23 Nevertheless *I have been* continually with thee; Thou hast held my right hand.

344 According to the Hebrew division, Part 3 extends from Psalm 73 to Psalm 89 inclusive

24 With thy counsel thou shalt guide me; And at length to glory thou shalt take me.

25 Whom have I in heaven *but thee*? And another with time I have not desired on the earth.

26 Failed have my flesh and my heart; *But* the strength of my heart and my portion *is* God for ever.

27 For lo! those who depart from thee shall perish: Thou hast destroyed every one who goeth a whoring from thee.

28 As for me, to draw near to God is good for me: I have put in the Lord Jehovah my trust, That I may tell of all thy works.

PSALM 74

An Instruction of Asaph

1 Wherefore, O God! hast thou cast us off for ever? [*Why*] smoketh thy wrath against the flock of thy pastures?

2 Remember thy congregation which thou hast possessed of old; [345] *Which* thou hast redeemed, the rod of thy inheritance, This Mount Zion in which thou hast dwelt.

3 Lift up thy strokes to desolations perpetual, Against every enemy who doeth mischief to the sanctuary.

4 Roared *like lions* have thy adversaries in the midst of thy sanctuaries; They have set up their signs *for* signs.

5 He was renowned as doing an excellent work Who lifted up the axes upon the thick trees. [346]

6 And now the carved works thereof together, With the hatchet and with hammers they break in pieces.

7 They have set on fire thy sanctuaries; Leveling it with the ground, they have polluted the dwelling-place of thy name.

8 They have said in their heart, "Let us destroy them altogether." They have burned all the tabernacles of God in the land.

9 Our signs we see not; There is no longer a prophet, Nor is there with us one who knoweth how long! —

10 How long, O God! shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?

11 How long wilt thou withdraw thy hand, and thy right hand? In the midst, of thy bosom consume them.

12 But God *is* my king from the beginning, Working salvations in the midst of the earth.

13 Thou didst divide [347] by thy power the sea; Thou didst break the heads of dragons in the waters.

14 Thou didst break the head of the leviathan; Thou gavest him *for* food to *thy* people in the wilderness.

15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the torrent: Thou didst dry up mighty rivers.

16 Thine is the day; thine also is the night: Thou hast ordained the light and the sun.

17 Thou hast fixed all the boundaries of the earth: The summer and the winter thou hast made.

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345 In French version it is, "which thou hast acquired of old."

346 From the obscurity of the literal translation of the Latin version, the free reading of the French version is adopted in these two lines.

347 Literally "break."

18 Remember this: the enemy hath reproached Jehovah; And a worthless people hath done despite to thy name.

19 Give not to the beast the soul of thy turtle dove: The congregation of thy poor ones forget not for ever.

20 Have regard to *thy* covenant; For filled are the dark places of the earth with the abodes of violence.

21 Let not the afflicted one return ashamed; Let the poor and needy one praise thy name.

22 Arise, O God! plead thy own cause: Remember thy reproach, *which is done thee* by the foolish man daily.

23 Forget not the voice of thy adversaries: The tumult of those who rise up against thee ascendeth continually.

PSALM 75

To the Chief Musician. Destroy not. A Psalm of Asaph. A song

1 We will celebrate thee, O God! we will celebrate *thee*; And near is thy name: they will declare thy wonders.

2 When I shall have taken the congregation, I in uprightness will judge.

3 Dissolved is the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof: will establish the pillars of it. Selah.

4 I said to the fools, "Act not foolishly;" And to the ungodly, "Raise not up the horn."

5 Raise not up on high your horn; And speak not with a stiff neck.

6 For neither from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the wilderness are exaltations.

7 For God is judge: tie bringeth low, and he setteth up.

8 For a cup *is* in the hand of Jehovah, and the wine is turbid; It is full of mixture, and he shall pour forth of it. Surely the dregs thereof they shall wring out;. And drink *of it* shall all the wicked of the earth.

9 But as for me I will publish for ever, I will sing psalms to the God of Jacob.

10 And all the horns of the ungodly I will break; But exalted shall be the horns of the righteous.

PSALM 76

To the Chief Musician on Neginoth. A Psalm of Asaph. A Song

1 Known in Judah is God; In Israel great is his name.

2 And in Salem was his tabernacle, And his dwelling-place in Zion.

3 There he broke the arrows of the bow, The shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

4 More glorious, more terrible *art* thou Than the mountains of prey.

5 Spoiled were the stout in heart, They slept their sleep: And none of the men of might have found their hands.

6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob! Cast into a deep sleep were the chariot and the horse.

7 Thou *art* terrible [*even*] thou; And who shall stand before thy face when thou art angry?

8 From the heavens thou hast made judgment to be heard: The earth was afraid and was still,

9 When God arose to judgment, To save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

10 Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee, The remainder of wrath thou wilt restrain.

11 Vow and pay to Jehovah your God: Let all who are round about him bring a present to the terrible one.

12 He will cut off the spirit of princes: *He is* terrible to the kings of the earth.

PSALM 77

To the Chief Musician upon Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph

1 My voice [*I lifted up*] to God, and I cried; My voice [*I lifted up*] to God, and he heard me.

2 In the day of my affliction the Lord I sought: My hand in the night was stretched out and relaxed not; Refuse consolation did my soul.

3 I will remember God, and will be disquieted; I will meditate, and oppressed with sorrow shall be my spirit. Selah.

4 Thou hast held the watches of my eyes: I am troubled, and will not speak.

5 I have recounted the days of old, The years of ages past.

6 I will call to remembrance my song in the night: With my heart I will meditate, And search diligently shall my spirit.

7 For ever will the Lord east off? And will he be favorable no more?

8 Gone for ever is his mercy? Fail doth his oracle from generation to generation?

9 Forgotten to be merciful hath God? Hath he shut up in anger his compassions? Selah.

10 And I said my disease [*is only for a season*;] The years of the right hand of the Most High [*I will wait for.*]

11 I will remember the works of God; Surely I will remember thy wonders from the beginning.

12 And I will meditate on all thy works, And on thy doings I will muse.

13 O God! in the sanctuary *are* thy ways: What god *is* so great as God?

14 Thou art the God who doest wonders; Thou hast made known among the peoples thy strength.

15 Thou hast redeemed by [*thy*] arm thy people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

16 See thee did the waters, O God! see thee did the waters; They were afraid; also tremble did the deeps.

17 The clouds poured out waters; The heavens gave forth a voice: Also thine arrows went abroad.

18 The voice of thy thunder was in the circuit, The lightnings illumined the world; The earth trembled and was shaken.

19 In the sea are thy ways, And thy paths in the great waters; And thy footsteps are not known.

20 Thou leadest like sheep thy people By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

PSALM 78

A lesson of Instruction [of] Asaph

1 Give ear, O my people! to my law: Incline your ears to the words of my month.

2 I will open in a parable my mouth; I will utter enigmas from ancient Sae.

3 What we have heard and known, And our' fathers have related to us,

4 We will not conceal from their children to the generation to come, Recounting the praises of Jehovah and his might, And the wonders which he hath done.

5 And he established a testimony in, Jacob, And a law he appointed in Israel; For he commanded our fathers To make them known to their children;

6 That the generations to come might know them, *That* the children to be born might arise, And declare *them* to their children.

7 That they might set in God their hope, And not forget the works of God; But that his commandments they might observe,

8 And not be as their fathers, A generation rebellious and provoking; A generation which set not their heart might, And whose spirit was not faithful towards God.

9 The children of Ephraim, armed [*and*] shooting with the bow, Were turned back in the day of battle.

10 They kept not the covenant of God, And in his law they refused to walk.

11 And they forget his works, And the wonders which he had shown them.

12 In the sight of their fathers he wrought marvelously; In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

13 He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through, And made the waters to stand as an heap.

14 And he led them by a cloud in the day; And all the night by the light of fire.

15 He clave the rocks in the wilderness, And made them to drink in great deeps.

16 And he brought forth streams from the rock, And made the waters to descend like rivers.

17 Yet they continued still to sin against him, To provoke the Most High in the wilderness.

18 And they tempted God in their heart, By asking food for their soul.

19 And they spake against God: They said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?"

20 Behold! he smote the reek, and gush out did the waters; And rivers overflowed. "Can he give bread also? "Will he prepare flesh for his people?"

21 Therefore Jehovah heard and was wroth: And a fire was kindled in Jacob: And wrath also ascended against Israel;

22 Because they believed not in God, And trusted not in his salvation.

23 But he had commanded the clouds from above, And the doors of heaven he had opened,

24 And had rained down upon them manna for food, And the corn of heaven he had given them:

25 The bread of the mighty ones man had eaten: Meat he had sent them to the full.

26 He caused to blow an east wind in the heavens; And he raised up by his power the south wind.

27 And he rained upon them flesh as dust, And as the sand of the sea leathered fowl;

28 And he caused *it* to fall in the midst of his camp, Round about his tabernacles.

29 And they did eat and were filled exceedingly, And their desire he brought to them.

30 They were not estranged from their desire: The meat was still in their mouth,

31 When the wrath of God ascended against them, And slew their fat ones, And brought low the chosen of Israel.

32 In all these *things* they sinned still, And believed not his wonders.

33 And he consumed in vanity their days, And their years in haste.

34 When he slew them, they sought him; They returned, and hastened early to God.

35 And they remembered that God was their Rock, And *that* the Most High God was their Redeemer.

36 And they flattered [*him*] with their mouth, And with their tongue they lied to him:

37 But their heart was not right before him, And they were not faithful in his covenant.

38 Yet he *who is* compassionate expiated their iniquity, And did not destroy them: And he multiplied to turn away his anger, And did not stir up all his indignation.

39 And he remembered that they were flesh; A breath that passeth, and returneth not.

40 How often did they provoke him in the desert, [*And*] grieve him in the wilderness!

41 And they returned and tempted God, And the Holy One of Israel they limited.

42 They remembered not his hand In the day that he redeemed them from the oppressor,

43 When he set in Egypt his signs, And his miracles in the field of Zoan.

44 When he turned into blood their rivers; And their streams, that they might not drink of them.

45 He sent among them a mixture which devoured them; And the frog which destroyed them.

46 And he gave to the caterpillar their fruit; And their labors to the locusts. [348]

47 And he destroyed with hail their vine, And their wild fig-trees with hailstones.

48 And he gave lip to the hail their cattle, And their flocks to thunderbolts.

49 He sent upon them the fierceness of his wrath, Fury, anger, and affliction, A mission of evil angels.

50 He made a path for his anger: He kept not from death their soul, And their cattle to the pestilence he shut up.

348 In the French version it is "to the grasshopper."

51 And he smote all the firstborn in Egypt: The beginning of [*their*] strength in the tents of Ham.

52 And he made to go forth like sheep his people, And led them like a flock in the wilderness.

53 And he conducted *them* in safety, and they were not afraid: And their enemies cover did the sea.

54 And he brought them to the border of his holiness, This mountain, *which* his right hand acquired.

55 And he expelled from before their face the heathen; And made them to fall into the lot of all inheritance; And caused to dwell in their tents the children of Israel.

56 But they tempted and provoked God Most High, And his testimonies they kept not.

57 And they turned back and dealt perfidiously like their fathers: They started aside like a bow that is deceitful.

58 And they provoked him to anger with their high places; And with their graven images they moved him to anger.

59 Hear it did God, and was wroth, And he abhorred exceedingly Israel.

60 And he forsook the habitation of Shiloh, The tabernacle where he dwelt among men.

61 And he gave into captivity his strength, And his beauty into the hand of the enemy.

62 And he shut up to the sword his people, And with his own inheritance was wroth.

63 Their chosen devour did the fire, And their virgins were not applauded.

64 Their priests by the sword did fall; And their widows made no lamentation.

65 But the Lord awoke as one asleep, As a mighty man who crieth out by reason of wine.

66 And he smote his enemies behind; Everlasting disgrace he put upon them.

67 And he rejected the tabernacle of Joseph, And the tribe of Ephraim he chose not:

68 But he chose the tribe of Judah, The mountain of Zion, which he loved:

69 And built like high places his sanctuary, Like the earth which he hath founded for ever.

70 And he chose David his servant, And took him from the folds of sheep:

71 From following the suckling ewes he took him, To feed Jacob his people, And Israel his inheritance:

72 And he fed them in the integrity of his heart, And by the prudence of his hands he guided there.

PSALM 79

A Psalm of Asaph

1 O God! come have the heathen into thy inheritance; They have polluted the temple of thy holiness; They have laid Jerusalem in heaps. [fowls of the heavens;

2 They have given the dead bodies of thy servants for food to the fowls of the heavens; The flesh of thy meek ones to the beasts of the earth.

3 They have shed their blood like water around Jerusalem: And there was not *one* to bury *them*

4 We have been a reproach to our neighbors; A scorn and a derision to those who are around us.

5 How long, O Jehovah! wilt thou be wroth for ever? Burn like fire shall thy jealousy?

6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen who have not known thee, And upon the kingdoms which upon thy name do not call:

7 For they have devoured Jacob, And his dwelling they have laid waste.

8 Remember not against us former iniquities: Make haste, let thy compassions prevent us; For we are afflicted exceedingly.

9 Help us, O God of our salvation! for the glory of thy name; And deliver us, and be merciful to our sins, for the sake of thy name.

10 Wherefore should the heathen say, "Where is their God?" Let be made known among the heathen in our sight The vengeance of the blood of thy servants which is shed.

11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thy face: According to the greatness of thy arm, Reserve the children of death: [349]

12 And recompense our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom, Their reproach with which they have reproached thee, O Jehovah!

13 And we thy people, and the sheep of thy pastures, Will confess to thee for ever; From generation to generation declaring thy praise.

349 "That is," says Jebb, "let there be some spared out of those who are marked out for death by their enemies."

PSALM 80

To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim Eduth. A Psalm of Asaph

1 O Shepherd of Israel, give ear! Who leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou who sittest between the cherubim, shine forth.

2 Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, Stir up thy strength, and come for our salvation.

3 Turn us again, O God! and cause to shine thy face, And we shall be safe.

4 O Jehovah God of armies! How long wilt thou be incensed against the prayer of thy people?

5 Thou hast fed us with bread of tears; And hast given us tears to drink in great measure.

6 Thou hast made us a strife to our neighbors: And our enemies laugh *at us* among themselves.

7 O God of armies! turn us again, And cause to shine thy face upon us, And we shall be safe.

8 A vine out of Egypt thou hast brought: Thou hast expelled the heathen, and planted it,.

9 Thou hast cleansed *the ground* before it: Thou hast rooted its roots, And it hath filled the land.

10 Covered were the mountains with its shadow, And its branches *were like* the cedars of God.

11 It sent forth its branches to the sea, And to the river its shoots.

12 Why then hast thou broken down its hedges, So that tear it in pieces do all who pass by the way?

13 Wasted it hath the boar out of the forest; And the wild beast of the field hath eaten it up.

14 O God of armies! return, I beseech *thee*, Look down from heaven, and behold, And visit this vine,

15 And the vineyard which planted hath thy right hand, And [*look*] upon the shoot [350] *which* thou hast strengthened for thyself.

16 It is burnt with fire; it is cut down; At the rebuke of thy countenance they perish.

17 Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, Upon the son of man whom thou hast strengthened for thyself,

18 And we will not go back from thee: Thou shalt quicken us, and upon thy name we will call.

350 "Shoot" is the rendering in the French version, the word being "provin." In the Latin version it is "filium," "son," the literal translation of the Hebrew text.

19 O Jehovah, God of armies! turn us again; Cause to shine thy face, And we shall be safe.

PSALM 81

To the Chief Musician upon Gittith. Of Asaph

1 Exult to God our strength: Shout for joy to the God of Jacob.

2 Take a song, and bring forth the timbrel, The harp of pleasantness with the nablum. [351]

3 Sound the trumpet [352] at the new moon; At the time appointed on the day of our sacrifice.

4 For a statute to Israel *is* this, A judgment to the God of Jacob.

5 For a testimony in Joseph he set it, When he went forth over the land of Egypt! A language which I understood not I heard.

6 "I removed from the burden his shoulder: "His hands from the pots were removed.

7 "In trouble thou didst cry, and I rescued thee: "I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: "I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

8 "Hear, O my people! and I will protest to thee: "O Israel! if thou wilt hearken to me.

9 "Let there not be in thee a strange god: "Neither worship thou a foreign god.

10 "I *am* Jehovah thy God, "Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt: "Open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it.

11 "But my people hearkened not to my voice, "And Israel would have none of me.

12 "And I gave them up to the hardness of their heart: "They shall walk in their own counsels.

13 "O if my people had hearkened to me! "*If* Israel in my ways had walked!

14 "Soon their enemies I would have brought low, "And against their adversaries I would have turned my hand:

15 "The haters of Jehovah would have lied to him, "And their time should have been for ever:

16 "And I would have fed them with the fat of corn: "And from the rock with honey I would have satisfied thee."

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351 Psaltery. — *Fr.*

352 We follow here the French version. In the Latin version, instead of "trumpet" it is "harp," which is evidently incorrect.

PSALM 82

A Psalm of Asaph

1 God sitteth in the assembly of God: In the midst of the gods he will judge.

2 How long will ye judge unjustly? And the faces of the ungodly will ye lift up? Selah.

3 Judge the poor and the orphan; The helpless and the destitute justify ye.

4 Rescue the poor one and the afflicted one: From the hand of the ungodly ones deliver *them*

5 *But* they know not, neither do they understand *any thing*: In darkness they walk, *Although* moved are all the foundations of the earth.

6 As for me, I have said, "Ye are gods, "And children of the Most High all of you:

7 "Surely as a man ye shall die; "And as one [*of the people*,] O princes! ye shall fall."

8 Arise, O God! judge the earth: For thou shalt inherit all nations.

PSALM 83

A Song [or] Psalm, of Asaph

1 O God! keep not silence with thyself; Hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God!

2 For behold! thy enemies make a tumult: And those who hate thee have lifted up the head.

3 Against thy people they have craftily formed a design, And have consulted against thy hidden ones.

4 They have said, "Come and let us cut them off from being a nation; "And let there be no remembrance of the name of Israel any more."

5 For they have consulted with the heart together; Against thee a covenant they have made.

6 The tents of Edom, and of the Ishmaelites; Of Moab and of the Hagarenes.

7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; The Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre.

8 Also Assur is associated with them: They have been an arm to the sons of Lot. Selah.

9 Do to them as to the Midianites, As to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook Kishon.

10 They perished at Endor; They became manure for the earth.

11 Make them, [*even*] their princes, like Oreb, and like Zeeb; And like Zebah, and like Zalmunna, all their princes.

12 Who have said, "Let us take in possession for ourselves "The habitations of God."

13 O my God! make them like a whirling ball; Like stubble before the wind.

14 As fire burneth a forest, And as the flame kindleth the mountains,

15 So pursue them with thy tempest, And with thy whirlwind terrify them.

16 Fill their faces with shame; That they may seek thy name, O Jehovah!

17 Let them be ashamed, and terrified for ever; [353] And let them be confounded, and perish.

18 And let them know that thou, even thou, art, thy name Jehovah, Thou alone the Most High over all the earth.

353 In the French version it is "greatly."

PSALM 84

To The Chief Musician Upon Gittith. A Psalm of the sons of Korah

1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Jehovah of armies!

2 Long, yea, even faint doth my soul after the courts of Jehovah: My heart and my flesh leap for joy towards the living God.

3 Also the sparrow hath found a house for herself, And the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may place her young ones: O thine altars! thou Jehovah of armies! my King and my God!

4 Blessed *are* those who dwell in thy house: Continually they will be praising thee. Selah.

5 Blessed *is* the man whose strength is in thee; The ways [*are*] in their heart.

6 They passing through the valley of weeping, will together make it a fountain; Also the cisterns the rain will cover.

7 They will journey from strength to strength; Seen will be the God of gods in Zion.

8 O Jehovah, God of armies! hear my prayer: Hearken, O God of Jacob! Selah.

9 Our shield do thou behold, O God! And look upon the face of thy Christ.

10 For better is one day in thy courts than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, Than dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

11 For a sun and shield *is* Jehovah God *to us*; Grace and glory give will Jehovah; He will not withhold *any* good from those who walk uprightly.

12 O Jehovah of armies! Blessed *is* the man who confideth in thee.

PSALM 85

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah

1 Thou hast been favorable, O Jehovah! to thy land: Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

2 Thou hast taken away the iniquity of thy people: Thou hast covered all their sins. Selah

3 Thou hast turned away all thy anger: Thou hast drawn back the fury of thy indignation.

4 Turn us, O God of our salvation! And relax thy anger against us.

5 Wilt thou for ever be angry with us? Wilt thou prolong thy wrath from age to age?

6 Wilt not thou being turned *to us* quicken us? And thy people will rejoice in thee.

7 Show us, O Jehovah! thy mercy; and thy salvation grant unto us.

8 I will hear what God Jehovah will speak: Surely he will speak peace to his people and to his meek ones, And they will not return to folly.

9 Surely near to those who fear him is his salvation, That dwell may glory in our land.

10 Mercy and truth shall meet together; Righteousness and peace shall kiss [*each other.*]

11 Truth out of the earth shall spring up; And righteousness from heaven shall look down.

12 Likewise Jehovah will give that which is good: And our land shall yield her increase.

13 Righteousness before him shall go; And shall set in the way her steps.

PSALM 86

A Prayer of David

1 Incline, O Jehovah, thy ear, answer me; For poor and needy *am* I.

2 Keep my soul, for I am meek: O thou, my God! save thy servant who trusteth in thee.

3 Have compassion upon me, O Jehovah! For to thee do I cry daily.

4 Gladden the soul of thy servant; For to thee, O Lord! my soul I lift up.

5 For thou, O Lord! *art* good, and gracious, Plenteous in mercy to all who call upon thee.

6 Listen, O Jehovah! to my prayer, Attend to the voice of my supplications.

7 In the day of my trouble I will cry to thee: For thou wilt answer me.

8 There is none like unto thee, O Lord! among the gods; And *there* is none [*who can work*] according to thy works.

9 All the nations which thou hast made shall come, And shall worship before thy face, O Lord! And glory they shall give to thy name:

10 For great art thou, And doing wonders, thou God alone.

11 Show me, O Jehovah! thy ways; I will walk in thy truth: Unite my heart to fear thy name.

12 I will celebrate thee, O Lord my God! with my whole heart; And I will glorify thy name for ever;

13 For thy mercy hath been great towards me; And thou hast delivered my soul from the lower grave.

14 O God! the proud have risen up against me, And a company of mighty men have sought after my soul; And they have not set thee before them.

15 And thou, O Lord! [*art*] a God compassionate and gracious; Slow to anger; and plenteous in mercy and truth.

16 Look to me, and have pity upon me: Give thy strength to thy servant, And save the son of thy handmaid.

17 Make with me a sign for good: And see shall my adversaries and be ashamed; For thou, O Jehovah! hast secured me and comforted me.

PSALM 87

A Psalm [or] Song of the sons of Korah

1 His foundations [*are*] in the holy mountains.

2 Love doth Jehovah the gates of Zion More than all the tabernacles of Jacob.

3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God! Selah.

4 I will make mention of Rahab, and Babel among those who know me: Behold the Philistines, and Tyre, with Ethiopia, He is born there! Selah.

5 And of Zion it shall be said, "Man and man is born in her; "And the Most High himself will establish her."

6 The Lord will recount when he writeth the peoples, "He is born there." Selah.

7 And the singers as the players upon instruments: All my springs *are* in thee.

PSALM 88

A Song of a Psalm of the sons of Korah. To the Chief Musician, upon Machalath, to make humble. An instruction of Heman the Ezrahite

1 O Jehovah! God of my salvation! By day I cry, by night before thee.

2 Come into thy presence let my prayer; Incline thy ear to my cry;

3 For filled with troubles is my soul; And my life to hell [354] hath drawn near.

4 I am counted with those who go down to the sepulcher, [355] I have been as a man who hath no strength:

5 Free among the dead, As the slain lying in the grave, Whom thou rememberest no more, And who from thy hand are cut off.

6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, In thick darkness, in the deeps.

7 Upon me lieth heavy thy indignation; And with all thy waves thou hast afflicted me. Selah.

8 Thou hast removed my acquaintances from me: Thou hast made me abominations to them: I am shut up that I cannot go forth.

9 My eye mourneth because of my affliction; I invoke thee, O Jehovah! daily: I stretch out to thee my hands.

10 Wilt thou for the dead do a miracle? Shall the dead rising up praise thee? Selah.

11 Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? Thy truth in destruction?

12 Shall thy wonders be known in darkness? And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

13 But as for me to thee, O Jehovah! have I cried, And in the morning my prayer shall prevent thee.

14 Wherefore, O Jehovah! wilt thou reject my soul? [*Wherefore*] wilt thou hide thy face from me?

15 Afflicted am I, and ready to die from my youth; I have suffered thy terrors by doubting.

16 Passed over me hath thy fierce wrath: Thy terrors have cut me off.

17 They have encompassed me as waters daily; They have surrounded me together.

18 Thou hast removed from me lover and companion; And my acquaintances are darkness.

354 "To the grave." — *Fr.*

355 "To the pit." — *Fr.*

PSALM 89

An Instruction of Ethan, the Ezrahite

1 The mercies of Jehovah for ever will I sing: From generation to generation will I celebrate thy truth with my mouth.

2 For I have said, For ever Mercy shall be built up: The heavens thou shalt establish; thy truth [*is*] in them.

3 "I have made a covenant with my chosen: "I have sworn to David my servant:

4 "For ever will I establish thy seed, "And I will build up from age to age thy throne." Selah.

5 And celebrate shall the heavens thy wondrous work, O Jehovah! Also thy truth in the congregation of the saints.

6 For who in the clouds can be compared to Jehovah? Who is like unto Jehovah among the sons of the gods?

7 God is terrible exceedingly in the assembly of the saints, And to be feared above all who are around him.

8 O Jehovah, God of armies! who *is* a strong God like thee? And thy truth is round about thee.

9 Thou governest the pride of the sea: When rise up do the waves thereof, thou restrainest them.

10 Thou hast overthrown Egypt as a wounded mail; With the arm of thy strength thou hast scattered thy enemies.

11 Thine are the heavens, thine also is the earth: The world, and the fullness thereof thou hast formed. [356]

12 The north and the south thou hast created: Tabor and Hermon in thy name shall exult.

13 Thou hast an arm of might: Thou wilt strengthen thy hand, Thou wilt exalt thy right hand.

14 Righteousness and judgment *are* the seat of thy throne: Mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

15 Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound! O Jehovah! in the brightness of thy countenance they shall walk.

16 In thy name shall they exult daily; And in thy righteousness shall they glory:

17 For the glory of their strength art thou; And in thy favor exalted shall be our horn.

18 For to Jehovah *is* our buckler; And to the Holy One of Israel *is* our King.

19 Then thou spakest in vision to thy meek ones, And saidst, "I have laid help upon a Mighty One; "I have exalted one chosen from among the people.

356 In the French version it is "thou hast founded."

20 "I have found David my servant; "With the oil of my holiness have I anointed him.

21 "Therefore, my hand shall be established with him: "Yea, my arm shall strengthen him.

22 "The enemy shall not exact upon him, "Nor shall the son of iniquity afflict him.

23 "And I will break in pieces before his face his oppressors; "And those who hate him I will smite.

24 "And my truth and my mercy *shall be* with him: "And in my name exalted shall be his horn.

25 "And I will set in the sea his hand, "And in the rivers his right hand.

26 "He shall cry to me, 'My Father art thou, "'My God, the Rock of my salvation.'

27 "Also I myself my firstborn will make him, "Higher than the kings of the earth.

28 "And for ever will I keep for him my mercy, "And my covenant shall stand firm with him.

29 "And I will establish for ever his seed, "And his throne as the days of heaven.

30 "If forsake shall his children my law, "And in my judgments shall not walk;

31 "If my ordinances they shall profane, "And my statutes they shall not keep;

32 "Then will I visit with my rod their transgressions, "And with stripes their iniquity.

33 "But my mercy will I not withdraw from him; "Nor will I be false in my truth.

34 "I will not profane my covenant, "And that which is gone forth from my lips I will not alter.

35 "Once have I sworn by my holiness, "If to David I lie —

36 "His seed for ever shall endure; "And his throne as the sun before me.

37 "As the moon it shall be established for ever, "And [*as*] a faithful witness in the heaven." Selah.

38 But thou, even thou, hast abhorred and rejected *him*; Thou hast been wroth with thy anointed.

39 Thou hast made to cease the covenant of thy servant; Thou hast profaned to the earth his crown.

40 Thou hast broken down all his walls; Thou hast made his fortresses a ruin.

41 Plundered him have all who pass by the way: He hath been a reproach to his neighbors.

42 Thou hast exalted the right hand of his oppressors; Thou hast made glad all his adversaries.

43 Also thou hast blunted the edge of his sword, And hast not made him to stand in battle.

44 Thou hast effaced his splendor, And his throne to the ground thou hast east down.

45 Thou hast shortened the days of his youth; Thou hast covered him with disgrace. Selah.

46 How long, O Jehovah! wilt thou hide thyself for ever? Burn like fire shall thy indignation?

47 Remember how short-lived I am! [357] Wherefore in vain shouldst thou have created all the sons of men?

48 What man shall live, and shall not see death? *And* shall deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

49 Where *are* thy former compassions, O Lord? Thou hast sworn to David in thy truth.

50 Remember, O Lord! the reproach of thy servants: I have sustained in my bosom all *those* [*reproaches*] of the mighty peoples,

51 With which thy enemies have reproached thee, O Jehovah! With which they have reproached the footsteps of thy Messiah.

52 Blessed *be* Jehovah for evermore. Amen and Amen!

357 Literally, "of what age I am."

PART FOURTH. [358]

PSALM 90

A Psalm of Moses, the man of God

1 O Lord! a dwelling-place thou hast been to us from generation to generation.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, And [*before*] thou hadst formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

3 Thou shalt turn man to destruction, And shalt say, "Return ye sons of Adam."

4 For a thousand years in thy sight *are* as yesterday when it is past, And *as* a watch in the night.

5 Thou overflowest them; [359] they will be a sleep: In the morning as grass he shall grow.

6 In the morning he (*or* it) shall flourish and grow: At the evening he (*or* it) shall be cut down, and shall wither.

7 For we fail by thy anger, And by thy indignation are we affrighted.

8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

9 For all our days are passed away in thy indignation: We have spent our years as if a thought.

10 In the days of our years *there are* seventy years; And if through strength, eighty years, Yet is their pride [*but*] grief and labor; For it passeth by quickly, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thy anger? And according to thy fear is thy wrath.

12 Teach us so to number our days, And we shall apply our heart to wisdom.

13 Return, O Jehovah! how long? Be pacified towards thy servants.

14 Satiate us early with thy goodness, And we will exult and rejoice all our days.

15 Make us joyful according to the days of our affliction; *According* to the years in which we have seen evil.

16 Let thy work appear towards thy servants, And thy glory upon their children.

17 And let there be the beauty of the Lord our God upon us; And the work of our hands direct thou upon us; Yea, the work of our hands direct thou.

358 According to the Hebrew division, Part 4 extends from Psalm 90 to Psalm 106 inclusive.

359 In the French version it is, "Thou carriest them away as do floods of water."

PSALM 91

1 He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, Under the shadow of the Almighty shall abide.

2 I will say to Jehovah, "*Thou art* my hope and my fortress:" *He is* my God; I will hope in him.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, From the noxious pestilence:

4 With his wings he shall protect thee; And under his feathers thou shalt be safe; *Thy* shield and *thy* buckler *shall be* his truth.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid at the terror of the night; At the arrow which flieth by day;

6 At the destruction which in darkness walketh: At the pestilence which wasteth at noon-day.

7 There shall fall at thy side a thousand, And ten thousand at thy right hand: To thee it shall not come nigh.

8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, And the reward of the ungodly thou shalt see.

9 Because thou, O Jehovah! *art* my protection; The Most High thou hast made thy refuge.

10 There shall not befall thee [*any*] evil, And the plague shall not come nigh thy tabernacle:

11 For to his angels he hath given charge concerning thee, To keep thee in all thy ways.

12 Upon their hands they shall bear thee, Lest thou dash against a stone thy foot.

13 Over the lion and asp thou shalt walk; Thou shalt tread upon the young lion and dragon.

14 Because on me he hath reposed, I will deliver him; I will exalt him because he hath known my name.

15 He will call upon me, and I will answer him: With him will I be in trouble; I will deliver him, and will glorify him.

16 With length of days will I satisfy him, And will show him my salvation.

PSALM 92

1 It is good to give thanks to Jehovah, To sing psalms to thy name, O Most High!

2 To proclaim in the morning thy goodness, And thy truth in the night.

3 Upon the psaltery, and upon the nablum, [360] Upon higgaion with the harp. [361]

4 For thou hast made me glad, O Jehovah! in thy works; In the works of thy hands I will exult.

5 How magnificent are thy works, O Jehovah! Exceeding deep are thy thoughts.

6 The man that is foolish shall not know them, Neither shall he who is void of wisdom understand them.

7 When the wicked flourish as the grass, And all the workers of iniquity spring up, [*It is*] that they may perish for ever.

8 But thou *art* exalted for evermore, O Jehovah!

9 For lo! thine enemies, O Jehovah! For lo! thine enemies shall perish; Scattered shall be all the workers of iniquity:

10 But thou shalt exalt my horn like *that* of the unicorn. I am anointed with fresh oil.

11 And mine eye shall see [*ruin*] on my oppressors: [*Of destruction*,] on those who rise up against me — On those who trouble me hear shall my ears.

12 The righteous as the palm tree shall flourish, As the cedar in Lebanon he shall be multiplied.

13 Planted in the house of Jehovah, In the courts of our God, they shall flourish.

14 Still shall they bud forth in old age; Fat and green shall they be;

15 That they may proclaim that upright is Jehovah, my Rock, And *that* there is no iniquity in him.

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360 In the French version it is "le manichordion," which Randle Cotgrave translates "an (old fashioned) Clavicord."

361 In the French version this line reads, — "With the song upon the harp."

PSALMS 93—118

PSALM 93

1 Jehovah hath reigned, He hath put on glory, Put on hath Jehovah strength; He hath girded himself: Also he hath established the world, It shall not be moved.

2 Fixed is thy throne; [*Even as*] from that time [362] thou art, and from eternity. [363]

3 Raised have the floods, O Jehovah! Raised have the floods their voice; Raise shall the floods their waves.

4 By reason of the voices [364] of the great waters Terrible are the waves of the sea: Terrible on high is Jehovah.

5 Thy testimonies are verified exceedingly; To thy house *is* glory; The holiness of Jehovah *is* for length of days.

362 "From that time," that is, from the creation of the world mentioned in the previous verse.

363 In explaining this verse, Calvin expresses his approbation of a translation somewhat different: — "As from eternity thou art,

Even so thy throne hath been erected (or prepared) from that time."

364 "A vocibus." — *Lat.* "A cause du bruit." — *Fr.*

PSALM 94

1 O Jehovah! God of vengeances! O God of vengeances! shine forth.

2 Lift up thyself; O judge of the earth! Render a reward to the proud.

3 How long shall the ungodly, O Jehovah! How long shall the ungodly triumph?

4 They pour forth, they speak hard things, Extol themselves do all the workers of iniquity.

5 Thy people, O Jehovah! they break in pieces; And thy inheritance they afflict:

6 The widow, and the stranger they slay, And the orphans they put to death.

7 And they have said, "God shall not see, "The God of Jacob shall not know.."

8 Understand, ye stupid among the people! And ye fools! when will ye be wise?

9 He who planted the ear shall not He hear? He who formed the eye, shall not He see?

10 He who chastiseth the nations, shall not He correct? He who teacheth man knowledge?

11 Jehovah knoweth the thoughts of men that they are vain.

12 Blessed *is* the man whom thou hast instructed, O God! And out of thy law hast taught;

13 To give him rest from days of evil, Whilst there is digged for the ungodly [*man*] a pit.

14 Surely Jehovah will not cast off his people, And his inheritance he will not forsake.

15 For return shall judgment unto righteousness, And [*follow*] after him shall all the upright in heart.

16 Who will rise up for me against my adversaries? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?

17 Unless Jehovah had been a help to me, My soul had well-nigh dwelt in silence.

18 If I said, "Slidden hath my foot," Thy goodness, O Jehovah! hath sustained me.

19 In the multitude of my thoughts, Within me thy comforts cheer my soul.

20 Shall the throne of iniquities have fellowship with thee, Framing molestation for law?

21 They will gather together against the soul of the righteous, And the blood of the innocent they will condemn.

22 But Jehovah hath been to me for a fortress; And my God for the rock of my confidence:

23 And he shall retribute upon them their own iniquity, And in their wickedness he shall destroy them; Destroy them shall Jehovah our God.

PSALM 95

1 Come let us exult to Jehovah; Let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his face with praise, In psalms let us shout for joy unto him.

3 For a great God *is* Jehovah, And a great King, above all gods.

4 For in his hand *are* the deep places of the earth; And the heights of the mountains are his.

5 For his is the sea, and he made it; And the dry land his hands formed.

6 Come ye, let us worship, and fall down; Let us kneel before the face of Jehovah, our Maker.

7 For he *is* our God, And we [*are*] the people of his pastures, And the flock of his hand; To-day, if his voice ye will hear,

8 Harden not your heart, as in Meribah; As in the day of Massah in the desert,

9 When tempt me did your fathers; They proved me, though they had seen my work.

10 Forty years I strove with this generation, And said, "They are a people erring in heart, "And they have not known my ways."

11 Wherefore I swear in my wrath, "If they shall enter into my rest —"

PSALM 96

1 Sing ye to Jehovah a song that is new, Sing to Jehovah all the earth.

2 Sing to Jehovah, bless his name; Publish from day to day his salvation.

3 Tell among the heathen his glory; Among all the peoples his wonders.

4 For great *is* Jehovah, and to be praised highly; Terrible [*is*] he above all gods.

5 For all the gods of the nations are vanities; But Jehovah made the heavens.

6 Strength and majesty *go* before him; Power and glory *are* in his sanctuary.

7 Ascribe to Jehovah, O ye congregations of peoples! Ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength.

8 Ascribe to Jehovah the glory of his name; Bring an offering, and enter into his courts.

9 Worship before Jehovah in the beauty of the sanctuary; Tremble before his face let the whole earth.

10 Say ye among the heathen, "Jehovah reigneth; "Truly established shall be the world, it shall not be moved: "He shall judge the peoples in righteousness."

11 Rejoice let the heavens, and exult let the earth; Thunder let the sea, and the fullness thereof.

12 Exult let the field, and all that is in it; Shout for joy together let all the trees of the wood

13 Before Jehovah; for he cometh, For he cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world in righteousness, And the peoples in his truth.

PSALM 97

1 Jehovah reigneth: Exult let the earth, Rejoice let the great islands.

2 Clouds and darkness *are* round about him; Righteousness and judgment *are* the seat of his throne.

3 A fire before his face shall go, And shall burn up round about his enemies.

4 Enlighten did his lightnings the world; See and tremble shall the earth.

5 The mountains like wax melted at the presence of Jehovah, At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

6 Declared have the heavens his righteousness, And seen have all the peoples his glory.

7 Confounded be all those who serve graven images, Who glory in *their* inventions: Worship before him let all the gods.

8 Heard and rejoiced hath Zion; Exulted have the daughters of Judah, Because of thy judgments, O Jehovah!

9 For thou, O Jehovah! *art* high above all the earth: Exceedingly exalted art thou above all gods.

10 Ye who love Jehovah, hate evil: He preserveth the souls of his meek ones; From the hand of the ungodly he will deliver them.

11 Light is sown for the righteous, And for the upright in heart joy.

12 Rejoice, O ye righteous! in Jehovah, And celebrate the memory of his holiness.

PSALM 98

A Psalm

1 Sing ye to Jehovah a song that is new, For marvels he hath done: Salvation wrought for him hath his own right hand, And the arm of his holiness.

2 Made known hath Jehovah his salvation: In the sight of the heathen he hath revealed his righteousness.

3 He hath remembered his goodness and *his* truth towards the house of Israel: Seen have all the ends of the earth the salvation of our God.

4 Exult to Jehovah all the earth; Make a loud noise, and exult, and sing psalms.

5 Sing psalms to Jehovah upon the harp, Upon the harp, and with the voice of song:

6 With trumpets, and the voice of the cornet, Sing psalms before the King, Jehovah.

7 Roar let the sea, and the fullness thereof; The world, and those who dwell therein.

8 Let the floods clap the hand: Together let the mountains exult

9 Before Jehovah: for he cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world in righteousness, And the peoples with rectitude.

PSALM 99

1 Jehovah reigneth; tremble let the people: He dwelleth *between* the cherubim; moved let be the earth.

2 Jehovah in Zion is great; And exalted is he above all nations.

3 They shall acknowledge thy great and terrible name: It is holy.

4 And the strength of the king loveth judgment; Thou hast established rectitude; Judgement and righteousness in Jacob thou hast done.

5 Exalt ye Jehovah our God, And worship at his footstool: He is holy.

6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, And Samuel among those who call upon his name; They cried to Jehovah and he answered them.

7 In the pillar of the cloud he spake to them: They kept his testimonies And his statutes which he gave them.

8 O Jehovah, our God! thou didst answer them: A God propitious thou wast to them, And [*yet*] taking vengeance upon their works.

9 Exalt ye Jehovah our God, And worship at the mountain of his holiness; For holy *is* Jehovah our God.

PSALM 100

A Psalm for praising

1 Sing aloud to Jehovah, [365] all ye *inhabitants* of the earth.

2 Serve Jehovah with gladness; Come into his presence with exultation.

3 Know that Jehovah He is God; He made us, and not we ourselves: *We are* his people, and the flock of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with praise, his courts with exultation; Celebrate him, [366] bless his name:

5 For good is Jehovah, For ever *endureth* his mercy, And from generation to generation his truth.

365 "Exsultate Jehovae." — *Lat.* "Chanter a haute voix au Seigneur." — *Fr.*

366 In the French it is "give glory to him."

PSALM 101

A Psalm of David

1 Of mercy and judgment I will sing; To thee, O Jehovah, will I sing psalms.

2 I will act wisely in a perfect way, Until thou comest to me; I will walk in the integrity of my heart in the midst of my house.

3 I will not set before my eyes a wicked thing; The work of those who turn aside I hate; It shall not adhere to me.

4 A heart perverse shall depart from me; Evil I will not know.

5 He who slandereth in secret his neighbor, him will I destroy: The lofty in look and the wide in heart him I will not suffer.

6 My eyes *shall be* upon the faithful of the land, That they may dwell with me: He who walketh in an upright way, [*Even*] he shall minister to me.

7 He shall not dwell in the midst of my house, he who worketh deceit; He who speaketh lies shall not be established before my eyes.

8 Early will I destroy all the ungodly of the land; That I may cut off from the city of Jehovah all the workers of iniquity.

PSALM 102

A Prayer for the afflicted when he shall be shut up, and shall pour out his meditation before Jehovah

1 O Jehovah! hear my prayer, And let my cry to thee come.

2 Hide not thy face from me in the day of my afflictions; Incline to me thy ear; In the day when I cry, make haste, answer me.

3 For consumed like smoke are [367] my days, And my bones as a hearth are burnt up.

4 Smitten like grass, and withered is my heart, Because I have forgotten to eat my bread.

5 By reason of the voice of my groaning, Cleave do my bones to my flesh.

6 I am become like a pelican of the desert, I am become as an owl of the solitudes;

7 I have watched and am as the sparrow *Which is* solitary upon the roof of the house.

8 Daily reproach me do my enemies; And those who are mad against me, by me have sworn.

9 For ashes as bread I have eaten, And my drink with weeping [368] I have mingled.

10 Because of thy indignation and thy wrath; For thou hast lifted me up and cast me down.

11 My days *are* as a shadow which declineth; And as grass I am dried up.

12 And thou, O Jehovah! for ever shalt dwell, And thy memorial from generation to generation.

13 Thou thyself shalt arise, thou shalt have mercy upon Zion; For it is time to compassionate her, For come is the appointed time.

14 For take pleasure do thy servants in her stones, And upon her dust they will have compassion.

15 And fear shall the Gentiles the name of Jehovah, And all the kings of the earth thy glory.

16 For Jehovah hath builded Zion, He hath appeared in his glory.

17 He hath regarded the prayer of the solitary, And hath not despised their prayer.

18 This shall be written for the generation to come, And the people [*to be*] created shall praise him.

19 For he hath looked from the high *place* of his holiness, Jehovah from the heavens upon the earth hath looked,

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoners To release the sons of death;

21 That declared in Zion may be the name of Jehovah, And his praise in Jerusalem;

22 When gathered shall be the peoples together, And the kingdoms to serve Jehovah.

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367 From verse 3d to verse 11th inclusive, the verbs we have rendered in the present tense are in the preterite in the Latin version, but in this instance we follow the French version in which they are in the present.

368 "Tears" — *Fr.*

23 He hath afflicted in the way my strength, He hath shortened my days.

24 I said, O my God! take me not away in the midst of my days; *For* throughout generations of generations *are* thy years.

25 Aforetime the earth thou hast founded; And the work of thy hands serve the heavens.

26 They shall perish but thou shalt endure; And they all as a garment shall grow old; As a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed.

27 But thou *art always* the same, And thy years shall not fail.

28 The children of thy servants shall dwell, And their seed before thee shall be established.

PSALM 103

Of David

1 Bless, O my soul! Jehovah, And all my inward parts *bless* his holy name.

2 Bless, O my soul! Jehovah, And forget not all his bounties.

3 Who forgiveth all thy iniquities; Who healeth all thy infirmities;

4 Who redeemeth from the grave thy life; Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassions;

5 Who satisfieth with good thy mouth: Renewed as *that* of the eagle shall be thy youth.

6 Execute doth Jehovah righteousness And judgments for all who are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways to Moses, To the children of Israel his doings.

8 Compassionate and merciful *is* Jehovah, Slow to anger and abundant in goodness.

9 He will not always chide; Neither for ever will he keep [*his anger*.]

10 Not according to our sins hath he dealt with us, Nor according to our iniquities hath he recompensed us.

11 For in proportion to the height of the heavens above the earth, Hath been the greatness of his goodness upon those who fear him.

12 As far distant as is the east from the west, So far hath he removed from us our sills.

13 As a father is compassionate towards his children, So is Jehovah compassionate towards those who fear him.

14 For he knoweth of what we are made; He hath remembered that dust are we.

15 Man... as grass *are* his days: As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 As soon as the wind passeth over it, it is not; And know it no more shall the place thereof.

17 But the goodness of Jehovah *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him, And his righteousness upon the children's children;

18 To those who keep his covenant, And are mindful of his statutes to do them.

19 Jehovah in the heavens hath established his throne; And his kingdom over all hath dominion.

20 Bless Jehovah, *ye* his angels mighty in strength! Who do his commandment, in hearing the voice of his word.

21 Bless Jehovah, all *ye* his armies! Ye ministers of his, who do his pleasure.

22 Bless Jehovah, all ye his works! In all places of his dominion: Bless, O my soul! Jehovah.

PSALM 104

1 Bless, O my soul! Jehovah: O Jehovah, my God! thou art great exceedingly; With praise and honor thou hast clothed thyself.

2 Being arrayed with light as with a garment; Spreading out the heavens as a curtain;

3 Flooring in the waters his upper rooms; Making the clouds his chariot; Walking upon the wings of the wind:

4 Making the winds his messengers; His ministers a fire that flameth.

5 He hath founded the earth upon its foundations, So that it shall not be moved for ever.

6 With the deep as with a garment he hath covered it: Above the mountains stand shall the waters.

7 At thy rebuke they shall flee; At the voice of thy thunder they shall suddenly pass away.

8 Ascend shall the mountains and descend shall the valleys To the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 A boundary thou hast set, they shall not pass over *it*: They shall not return to cover the earth.

10 Sending out springs by the valleys, *Which* between the hills shall run.

11 Drink *thereof* shall all the beasts of the field: Quench shall the wild asses their thirst.

12 Nigh time the fowl of the heaven shall dwell, From the midst of the branches they shall send out their voice.

13 Watering the mountains from his chambers: From the fruit of thy works satisfied shall be the earth.

14 Making grass to grow for cattle, And herb for the service of mm: That he may bring forth bread out of the earth.

15 And wine cheereth the heart of man, To make *his* face to shine with oil, And bread sustaineth the heart of man.

16 Satiated shall be the trees of Jehovah; The cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted:

17 For there the birds build their nests: [*As for*] the stork, the fir trees are her dwelling.

18 The high mountains *are* for the deer; The rocks a place of shelter for the hedgehogs.

19 He hath made the moon for set times: The sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night; Wherein do creep forth all the beasts of the forest.

21 The lions roar after their prey, And in seeking from God their food.

22 Rise shall the sun, and they shall gather themselves together, And in their dens shall lie down.

23 Go forth shall man to his work, And to his labor, until the evening.

24 How magnificent are thy works! O Jehovah! All things in wisdom thou hast made: Filled is the earth with thy riches.

25 This sea great, and wide in extent; Therein are creeping things inntanerable, Beasts both small and great.

26 There the ships go, And the leviathan, which thou hast formed to sport in it.

27 All things on thee do wait, That thou mayest give *them* their food in its season.

28 Thou shalt give it them, they shall gather [*it*:] Thou shalt open thy hand, they shall be satisfied with good.

29 Thou shalt hide thy face, they shall be afraid: Thou shalt take away their spirit, they shall die, and to their dust shall return.

30 Thou shalt send forth thy Spirit, they shall be created: And thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

31 Glory be to Jehovah for ever: Rejoice let Jehovah in his works.

32 He looketh upon the earth, and it trembleth: If he touch the mountains, they shall smoke.

33 I will sing to Jehovah whilst I live: I will sing psalms to my God as long as I have my being.

34 Let my speech be acceptable to him: I will rejoice in Jehovah.

35 Perish let sinners from the earth, And the ungodly till they cease to be any more. Bless, O my soul! Jehovah. Hallelujah.

PSALM 105

1 Celebrate ye Jehovah; invoke his name: Announce among the peoples his works.

2 Sing ye to him: sing psalms to him: Speak of all his wonders.

3 Rejoice ye in his holy name: Rejoice let the heart of those who seek Jehovah.

4 Seek ye Jehovah, and his strength; Seek his face continually.

5 Remember the marvelous works which he hath done; His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.

6 *Ye* seed of Abraham, his servant, The sons of Jacob his chosen one:

7 He *is* Jehovah our God; Through all the earth are his judgments.

8 He hath remembered for ever his covenant, The word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations:

9 Which he made with Abraham, And his oath *which he swore* to Isaac;

10 And established it to Jacob for a law, To Israel for an everlasting covenant:

11 Saying, "To thee will I give the land of Canaan, "The cord of your inheritance."

12 When they were very few in number; And strangers in it;

13 And walked about from nation to nation, From *one* kingdom to another people,

14 He did not suffer men to hurt them; And rebuked for their sake kings;

15 *Saying*, "Touch not my anointed ones, "And to my prophets do no harm."

16 And he called a famine upon the land; All the stall of bread he broke.

17 He sent before them a man, For a slave sold was Joseph.

18 They afflicted in the fetters his feet: The iron entered into his soul:

19 Until the time that his word came: The word of Jehovah tried him.

20 Send did the king and loosed him; Even the ruler of the peoples, and freed him.

21 He made him lord over his house; And ruler over all his substance:

22 To bind his princes at his pleasure; And to teach his elders wisdom.

23 And come did Israel into Egypt; And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.

24 And he increased his people exceedingly, He multiplied them above their oppressors.

25 He turned their heart so that they hated his people, And dealt craftily with his servants.

26 He sent Moses, his servant; Aaron, whom he chose.

27 They set among them the words of his signs, And *his* miracles in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; And they were not rebellious against his words.

29 He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish.

30 Their land brought forth frogs, *Yea even* within the chambers of their kings.

31 He spake and there came a swarm of flies, Lice in all their borders.

32 He gave them for rain, hail, Flaming fire upon their land.

33 And he smote their vines and their fig-trees; And destroyed *every* tree of their border.

34 He spake, and there came the locust, And the caterpillar without number;

35 And they devoured all the herbage in their land, And consumed the fruit of their ground.

36 And he smote all the firstborn in their land, The beginning of all their strength.

37 And he brought them forth with silver and gold: And not one among their tribes was a feeble person.

38 Glad was Egypt at their departure; For fallen upon them had their terror.

39 He spread out a cloud for a covering; And fire to give light by the night.

40 He [369] asked, and brought quails, And with the bread of heaven he filled them.

41 He opened the rock, and there gushed out waters; They ran in the dry *places like* a river.

42 For he remembered the word of his holiness, *Which he had spoken* to Abraham his servant.

43 And he brought forth his people with joy, With exultation his chosen ones.

44 And he gave them the lands of the nations: And the labor of the peoples they inherited.

45 That they might keep his ordinances, And that his law they might observe. Hallelujah.

369 In the Commentary, (vol 4, p. 202) we have translated "they asked," by mistake. Calvin seems to understand this as spoken of God.

PSALM 106

Hallelujah

1 Celebrate Jehovah, for he is good; For to everlasting *is* his mercy.

2 Who shall express the mighty acts of Jehovah? Who shall declare all his praise?

3 Blessed are they who keep judgment, *Blessed* is he who doeth righteousness at all times.

4 Remember me, O Jehovah! with the good will [*which thou bearest towards*] thy people. Visit me with thy salvation;

5 That I may see the good of thy chosen ones, That I may rejoice in the joy of thy nation, That I may glory with thy heritage.

6 We have sinned with our fathers, We have acted iniquitously, we have done wickedly.

7 Our fathers in Egypt understood not thy wonders; They remembered not the multitude of thy kindnesses; And they rebelled at the sea, at the Red Sea.

8 Yet he saved them for the sake of his own name, That he might cause to be known his power.

9 And he rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up; And he made them walk in the deeps as in a desert.

10 And he saved them from the hand of the enemy, And redeemed them from the hand of the adversary.

11 And cover did the waters their oppressors: One of them was not left.

12 Then they believed his words; They sang his praise.

13 They made haste, they forgat his works; They did not wait for his counsel;

14 And they lusted greatly in the desert, And tempted God in the wilderness.

15 And he gave them their request; But sent leanness into their souls.

16 And they envied Moses in the camp, And Aaron, the saint of Jehovah.

17 Open did the earth and swallowed up Dathan, And covered over the tent of Abiram.

18 And kindled was a fire in their company, The flame burned up the ungodly.

19 They made a calf in Horeb, And worshipped before the molten image.

20 And they changed their glory Into the likeness of an ox that eateth hay.

21 They forgat God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt;

22 Miracles in the land of Ham, Terrible things at the Red Sea.

23 And he said that he would destroy them, Unless Moses his chosen had stood in the breach before his face, To turn away his wrath, that he might not destroy *them*

24 And they despised the land of pleasantness; They believed not his word;

25 And they mutinied in their tents, They hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah.

26 And he lifted tip his hand against them, To destroy them in the desert:

27 And to scatter their seed among the heathen, And to disperse them throughout the lands.

28 And they joined themselves to Baal-peor, And ate the sacrifices of *things* dead.

29 And they provoked *God* to anger by their works: And break in upon them did the plague.

30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: And stayed was the plague.

31 And *that* was imputed to him for righteousness From generation to generation, even for ever.

32 And they provoked *him* to anger at the waters of strife, And it turned out in to Moses on their account:

33 For they embittered his spirit, And he spake [*rashly*] with his lips.

34 They did not destroy the nations, As Jehovah had commanded them:

35 And they were mingled with the heathen, And learned their works:

36 And they served their idols; Which were to them for ruin.

37 And they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons;

38 And they shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and of their daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And polluted was the land with bloods.

39 And they were defiled in their own works, And were adulterous in their own inventions.

40 Then [370] burn did the wrath of Jehovah against his people, And he abhorred his inheritance;

41 And he delivered them into the hands of the heathen; And those had dominion over them who hated them:

42 And subdue them did their enemies, And they were afflicted under their hand.

43 Many times did he deliver them; But they provoked *him* with their counsels, And were oppressed in their iniquity.

44 Yet he saw when they were in distress, And heard their cry:

45 And he remembered towards them his covenant; And it repented him according to the greatness of his mercies.

46 And he made them to find pity Before all who had led them captive.

47 Save us, O Jehovah, our God! And gather us from among the heathen, That we may celebrate thy holy name, That we may glory in thy praise.

48 Blessed *be* Jehovah, the God of Israel, From everlasting to everlasting; And say let all the people, Amen. Praise ye Jehovah.

370 Literally, "And."

PART FIFTH. [371]

PSALM 107

1 "Celebrate Jehovah, for he is good, "For to everlasting is his mercy."

2 Say *this* let the redeemed of Jehovah, Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the afflicter.

3 Whom he hath gathered from the lands, From the east, and from the west, From the north, and from the south.

4 They wandered from the way in the solitary desert; A city of habitation they found not:

5 Hungry, also thirsty, *So that* their soul within them fainted.

6 Then they cried to Jehovah in their distress, And from their troubles he delivered them.

7 And he directed them by a right way, That they might come to a city of habitation.

8 Let them celebrate before Jehovah his mercy, His marvelous works before the sons of men.

9 For he hath satisfied the soul that longeth, And the soul that is famished he hath filled with good.

10 Those who dwell in darkness, and in the shadow of death, Bound in affliction and iron;

11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, And the counsel of the Most High they despised:

12 And he humbled with trouble their heart; They were afflicted and *there was* none to help *them*

13 They cried to Jehovah in their distress: From their troubles he delivered them.

14 He rescued them from darkness and the shadow of death, And their chains he broke asunder.

15 Let them celebrate before Jehovah his mercy, And his marvelous works before the sons of men.

16 For he hath broken the gates of brass, And the bars of iron he hath shivered.

17 Fools on account of the way of their transgression; And on account of their iniquities are afflicted.

18 All food loathe doth their soul; And they approach the gates of death.

19 Then they cry to Jehovah in their trouble: From their straits he sayeth them.

20 He sendeth his word, and healeth them, And rescueth them from all their corruptions.

21 Let them celebrate before Jehovah his mercy, And his marvelous works before the sons of men.

371 According to the Hebrew Division, Part 5 extends from Psalm 107 to Psalm 150 inclusive.

22 And let them sacrifice sacrifices of praise, And announce his works with exultation.

23 Those who go down to the sea in ships, Trading in the great waters,

24 These men see the works of Jehovah, His wonders in the deep.

25 He speaketh and raiseth the wind of storm, And lifteth high the waves thereof.

26 They mount up to the heavens, They descend into the deeps; Their soul in [372] *their* distress is melted away.

27 They are tossed and stagger as a drunken man, And all their skill is swallowed up.

28 And they cry to Jehovah in their distress, And from their troubles he bringeth them out.

29 He maketh the storm a calm, So that quiet are the waves thereof.

30 And they rejoice because they are stilled; And he leadeth them unto the haven of their desire.

31 Let them celebrate before Jehovah his mercy, And his wonders before the sons of men;

32 And let them exalt him in the congregation of the people, And in the assembly of the elders let them praise him.

33 He turneth rivers into a desert, And springs of water into dryness;

34 A land that is fruitful into saltness, For the wickedness of those who dwell therein.

35 He turneth the desert into a pool of water, And the land of barrenness into springs of water.

36 And there he causeth to dwell the famished, That they may prepare a city of habitation;

37 And sow fields, and plant vineyards, And eat the fruit of increase.

38 And he blesseth them, and they multiply exceedingly; And their cattle he doth not diminish,.

39 Afterwards they are diminished and brought low, By reason of anguish, affliction, and sorrow.

40 He poureth contempt upon princes, And maketh them to wander in the waste where there is no path.

41 And he raiseth the afflicted from *his* misery, And maketh like a flock [*his*] families.

42 See shall the upright ones and shall rejoice: And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

43 Who is wise, and he will observe these things, And they shall understand the loving-kindness of Jehovah?

372 "With" or "from." — *Fr.*

PSALM 108

A Song of a Psalm of David

1 Prepared *is* my heart, O God! prepared is my heart, I will chant and will sing psalms, even with my glory.

2 Awake, psaltery and harp: I will arise at the dawn of day.

3 I will celebrate thee, among the peoples, O Jehovah! And will sing psalms to thee among the nations:

4 For great above the heavens, is thy goodness; And unto the clouds is thy truth.

5 Be thou exalted above the heavens, O God! And above all the earth thy glory:

6 That thy beloved ones may be delivered: Save by thy right hand, and hear me.

7 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, And the valley of Succoth I will measure.

8 Mine *is* Gilead, mine is Manasseh; And Ephraim *is* the strength of my head; Judah my lawgiver.

9 Moab the pot for my washing; Over Edom will I cast my shoe; Over Palestina will I triumph.

10 Who will lead me into the city fortified? Who will lead me even into Edom?

11 Wilt not thou, O God! who hadst cast us off? And [*thou*] O God! [*who*] didst not go forth with our armies?

12 Grant us relief from [373] trouble; For vain is the help of man.

13 Through God we shall do valiantly, And he shall tread down our adversaries.

373 In the French version it is "in."

PSALM 109

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David

1 O God of my praise! be not silent;

2 For the mouth of the ungodly man, and the mouth of deceit upon me are opened; They have talked with me with a tongue of guile:

3 And with words of hatred they have encompassed me, And have fought against me without a cause.

4 [*In return*] for my love they have been my adversaries; But I *set myself* to prayer.

5 And they have requited me evil for good, And hatred for my love.

6 Set thou over him an ungodly man; And let the adversary stand at his right hand.

7 When he is judged let him go forth condemned, [374] And let his prayer be turned into sin.

8 Let his days be few; His office let another receive.

9 Let his children be fatherless, And his wife a widow.

10 And in wandering let his children wander and beg, [375] And seek [*for bread*] out of their waste places. [376]

11 Catch let the extortioner all which he hath, And let strangers plunder his labor.

12 Let there be none prolonging mercy to him; And let there be none to have compassion upon his orphans.

13 Let his posterity be destroyed; [377] In the generation following let their name be blotted out.

14 Remembered let be the iniquity of his fathers before Jehovah; And the wickedness [378] of his mother let it not be blotted out.

15 Let them be before Jehovah continually, And let him blot out from the earth their memorial;

16 Because he remembered not to do mercy, And persecuted the man [*that was*] wretched and poor, And afflicted in heart, to put *him* to death.

17 He loved cursing, and let it come upon him: He delighted not in blessing, and let it be far from him.

18 And let him be clothed with cursing as with a garment; And let it come as water into his entrails, And as oil into his bones.

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374 Literally, "wicked" or "ungodly."

375 In the French version it is — "And let his children be vagabonds and beg."

376 In the French version it is — "And seek [*for bread*] going out of their waste *or* ruined dwellings."

377 Literally, "be to destruction."

378 In the French version it is "sin."

19 Let it be to him as a mantle to cover him, And as a girdle with which continually he may gird himself

20 Let this be the recompense [379] of my adversaries from Jehovah, And of those who speak evil against my soul.

21 But thou, O Jehovah, my Lord! deal thou with me for the sake of thy name: Because good *is* thy mercy, deliver me;

22 For poor and needy I am, And my heart is wounded within me.

23 As a shadow when it declineth, I walk about; I am shaken off as the locust.

24 My knees are become feeble through fasting; And my flesh hath fallen away from *its* fatness.

25 But I am become a reproach to them; When they see me they shake their head.

26 Help me, O Jehovah, my God! Save me according to thy mercy.

27 And they shall know that this is thy hand, *That* thou, O Jehovah! hast done it.

28 They shall curse, but thou shalt bless; When they rise up they shall be put to shame; But thy servant shall rejoice.

29 Clothed shall be my adversaries with disgrace, And they shall be covered as with a garment with their own shame.

30 I will praise Jehovah greatly with my mouth; And in the midst of the great I will celebrate him:

31 Because he standeth at the right hand of the poor one, To save from condemnations his soul.

379 Literally, "work."

PSALM 110

A Psalm of David

1 Jehovah said to my Lord, “Sit thou at my right hand, “Until I make thy enemies thy footstool.”

2 The scepter of thy power send shall Jehovah out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thy enemies.

3 Thy people *shall come* with voluntary offerings, On the day *of the assembling* of thy army, In beauty of holiness: From the womb as from the morning dawn To thee *has been* the dew of thy youth.

4 Sworn hath Jehovah, and he will not repent: “Thou art a priest for ever “According to the manner of Melchisedek.”

5 The Lord at thy right hand Hath crushed in the day of his wrath kings.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill *all* with ruins; He shall crush the head over a great country.

7 Of the torrent in the way he shall drink, Therefore shall he lift up the head.

PSALM 111

Hallelujah

1 I will celebrate Jehovah with *my* whole heart, In the congregation of the just, and in the assembly.

2 Great are the works of Jehovah, Sought out of all who have pleasure in them.

3 Beautiful and honorable [380] *is* his work; And his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 He hath made a memorial by his wonderful works: Merciful and compassionate *is* Jehovah.

5 A portion he hath given to those who fear him: He will remember for ever his covenant.

6 The might of his works he hath proclaimed to his people, To give them the heritage of the heathen.

7 The works of his hands *are* truth and judgment: True *are* all his statutes,

8 And established for ever — Made in truth and rectitude.

9 Redemption he hath sent to his people; He hath commanded for ever his covenant: Holy and terrible *is* his name.

10 The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Jehovah; A good understanding *have* all those who do them: His praise endureth for ever.

380 Literally, "beauty and honour."

PSALM 112

Hallelujah

1 Blessed is the man who feareth Jehovah; In his commandments he will delight greatly.

2 Mighty on the earth shall be his seed: The generation of the upright ones shall be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house; And his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 There ariseth in darkness light to the upright ones: *He is* merciful and compassionate and righteous.

5 A good man showeth pity and lendeth; He manageth his affairs [381] in uprightness.

6 Truly he shall not for ever be moved; In everlasting remembrance shall be the righteous one.

7 Of evil tidings he shall not be afraid; Established is his heart, because he trusteth in Jehovah.

8 Sustained *is* his heart, he shall not be afraid, Until he see *his desire* upon his adversaries.

9 He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor ones; His righteousness continueth for ever; His horn shall be exalted with glory.

10 The ungodly one shall see *it*, and be incensed; With his teeth he shall gnash and waste away: The desire of the ungodly ones shall perish.

381 In the Latin version it is "verba," "words," but Calvin rejects this translation in the commentary. In the French version it is "affairs."

PSALM 113

Hallelujah

1 Praise ye, O ye servants of Jehovah! Praise ye the name of Jehovah.

2 Let the name of Jehovah be blessed, From henceforth and for ever.

3 From the rising of the sun even to his going down, Worthy to be praised *is* the name of Jehovah.

4 High above all nations *is* Jehovah, Above the heavens is his glory.

5 Who *is* like Jehovah our God,

6 Who hath his dwelling on high, [382] Who humbleth himself to behold *that which* is done in heaven and on earth?

7 Who raiseth from the dust the needy one; From the dunghill he lifteth up the wretched one;

8 To make him sit with princes, With the princes of his people.

9 Who causeth the barren woman to dwell with a family, Rejoicing that *she is* a mother of children. Hallelujah.

382 Literally, "who exalteth himself to dwell."

PSALM 114

1 When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people barbarous;

2 [*Then*] was Judah for his holiness, Israel, his dominions.

3 The sea saw, and fled, Jordan was turned backward.

4 The mountains leaped as rams, The hills as the lambs of the flock.

5 What ailed thee, O sea! that thou fleddest? *And thou*, O Jordan! *that* thou wast turned back?

6 Ye mountains, *that* ye leaped like rams; Ye hills, as the lambs of the flock?

7 At the presence of the Lord, tremble, O earth! At the presence of the God of Jacob;

8 Who turned the rock into pools of water, The flinty rock into a fountain of waters.

PSALM 115

1 Not to us, O Jehovah! not to us, But to thy name give glory, On account of thy mercy, on account of thy truth.

2 Why should the heathen say, "Where *is* now their God?"

3 But our God *is* in the heaven: Whatever pleased him he hath done.

4 Their idols *are* silver and gold, The work of the hands of men.

5 A mouth have they, [383] and they do not speak: Eyes have they, and they do not see:

6 Ears have they, and they do not hear: Noses have they, and they do not smell:

7 Hands have they, and they do not feel: Feet have they, and they do not walk: They do not speak through their throat.

8 Like to them shall be those who make them, And every one who trusteth in them.

9 O Israel! trust thou in Jehovah: Their help and their shield is He:

10 O house of Aaron! trust in Jehovah: Their help and their shield is he:

11 Ye who fear Jehovah! trust in Jehovah: Their help and their shield *is* He.

12 Jehovah hath remembered us; he will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron.

13 He will bless those who fear Jehovah, The small together with the great.

14 Jehovah will add to you, To you and to your children.

15 Blessed are ye of Jehovah, Who made heaven and earth.

16 The heavens, the heavens *are* Jehovah's: But the earth he hath given to the sons of men.

17 The dead shall not praise *thee*, O God! Nor any who go down into silence.

18 But as for us we will bless God, From this time, and even for evermore. Hallelujah.

383 In the French version it is "they have mouths."

PSALM 116

1 I have loved, because heard hath Jehovah the voice of my prayer;

2 Because he hath inclined his ear to me, When in my straits I called upon him. [384]

3 They encompassed me, the snares of death, And the sorrows of the grave found me: Trouble and grief I found.

4 And on the name of Jehovah I will call: "I beseech thee, O Jehovah! deliver my soul."

5 Merciful *is* Jehovah and righteous; And our God *is* compassionate.

6 Guard doth Jehovah the simple: I was brought low and he saved me.

7 Return, O my soul! to thy rest; For Jehovah hath dealt kindly with thee. [385]

8 Because thou hast rescued my soul from death My eye from tears, My foot from falling.

9 I will walk before Jehovah in the land of the living.

10 I have believed, for I will speak: "I am afflicted greatly."

11 I said in my fear, "Every man is a liar."

12 What shall I render to Jehovah? All his benefits *are* upon me.

13 The cup of salvation I will take, And upon the name of Jehovah I will call.

14 My vows to, Jehovah I will perform Now in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the eyes of Jehovah is the death of his meek ones.

16 Come! O Jehovah! for I, *am* thy servant; I *am* thy servant, the son of thy handmaid; Thou hast broken my fetters.

17 To thee will I sacrifice the sacrifice of praise, And upon the name of Jehovah will I call.

18 My vows to Jehovah will I perform Now in the presence of all his people,

19 In the courts of the house of Jehovah In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem! Hallelujah.

384 The translation of these two verses is free, being modified by Calvin's Commentary. For the literal translation, see Vol. 4.

385 Literally, it is "hath recompensed upon thee."

PSALM 117

1 Praise ye Jehovah, all ye nations! Celebrate him all ye peoples!

2 For great towards us is his mercy, And the truth of Jehovah *continueth* for ever. Hallelujah.

PSALM 118

1 Celebrate ye Jehovah! for *he is* good: For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

2 Let now Israel say: "For [386] to everlasting *endureth* his mercy."

3 Let now the house of Aaron say: "For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy."

4 Let now those who fear Jehovah say: "For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy."

5 In my distress I called upon God; God answered me *by setting me* at large.

6 Jehovah *is* with me: I will not fear what man can do to me.

7 Jehovah *is* with me among those who help me, And I shall see *my desire* upon my adversaries.

8 It is better to hope in Jehovah Than to place confidence in man:

9 It is better to hope in Jehovah Than to place confidence in princes.

10 All the nations encompassed me: *But* in the name of Jehovah I will surely cut them off.

11 They encompassed me, yea they encompassed me, *But* in the name of Jehovah I will surely cut them off'.

12 They encompassed me as bees: They were extinguished as a fire of thorns: In the name of Jehovah I will surely cut them off.

13 Thou hast thrust and [387] thrust at me, that I might fall: But Jehovah helped me.

14 My strength and *my* song is God, And he hath become to me salvation.

15 The voice of exultation and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: The right hand of Jehovah hath done valiantly.

16 The right hand of Jehovah is exalted, The right hand of Jehovah hath done valiantly.

17 I shall not die, yea, I shall live, And recount the works of God.

18 Chastised me sorely hath [388] God; But he hath not delivered me up unto death.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; *And* having entered into them, I will celebrate God.

20 This is the gate of Jehovah, The just ones shall enter into it.

21 I will celebrate thee because thou hast heard me, And hast been my salvation.

22 The stone which the builders rejected Is become the head [*stone*] of the corner.

23 By Jehovah hath this been done: It is marvelous in our eyes.

24 This *is* the day which Jehovah hath made; Let us exult and rejoice in it.

25 I beseech thee, O Jehovah! save me; I beseech thee, I beseech thee, O Jehovah! give prosperity I beseech thee.

386 In the French version, in this and the two following verses, it is "that."

387 Literally, "thrusting thou has thrust."

388 Literally, "chastising hath chastised me."

26 Blessed is he who cometh in the name of Jehovah: We bless you from the house of Jehovah.

27 God *is* Jehovah, and he hath given light to us: Bind ye the lamb with cords, even to the horns of the altar.

28 My God art thou, and I will celebrate thee: My God, I will exalt thee.

29 Celebrate ye Jehovah; for *he is* good: For to everlasting *is* his mercy.

PSALMS 119—150

PSALM 119

□ [**Aleph**.]

1 □ Blessed *are* those who are upright in *their* way, Walking in the law of Jehovah.

2 □ Blessed *are* those who keep his testimonies, *Who* with *their* whole heart seek him.

3 □, Surely they do not work iniquity, *Who* in his ways do walk.

4 □ Thou hast commanded That thy statutes be kept carefully.

5 □ O that my ways may be directed To the keeping of thy statutes!

6 □ Then shall I not be ashamed, When I shall have been attentive to all thy commandments.

7 □ I will celebrate thee with uprightness of heart, When I shall have learned the judgments of thy righteousness.

8 □, Thy statutes I will keep: Do not thou forsake me very far.

□ [**Beth**.]

9 □ By what [*means*] shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to thy word.

10 □ With my whole heart have I sought thee; Let me not go astray from thy commandments.

11 □ In my heart I have hidden thy word, That I might not sin against thee.

12 □ Blessed *art* thou, O Jehovah! Teach me thy statutes.

13 □ With my lips have I declared All the judgments of thy mouth.

14 □ In the way of thy testimonies I have taken delight, As much as in all riches.

15 □ Upon thy statutes will I meditate, And I will consider thy paths.

16 □ In thy commandments will I delight myself; I will not forget thy words.

□ [**Gimel**.]

17 □ Do good to thy servant, And I shall live and keep thy word.

18 □ Open mine eyes, And I shall behold the wonders of thy law.

19 □ I am a stranger on the earth: Hide not from me thy commandments.

20 □ Broken is my soul with the desire *it hath* To thy judgments at all times.

21 □ Thou hast destroyed the proud ones; Cursed are those who decline from thy commandments.

22 □ Remove from me reproach and contempt; For thy testimonies I have kept.

23 □ Princes also have sat, against me they have spoken: Thy servant meditated upon thy statutes.

24 □ Also thy testimonies *are* my delights, The men of my counsel.

□ [**Daleth**.]

25 □ Cleave to the dust doth my soul: Quicken me according to thy word.

26 □ I have declared my ways, and thou hast answered me: Teach me thy statutes.

27 ☒ The way of thy commandments make me to understand, And I will meditate upon thy wonders.

28 ☒ Drop away doth my soul for grief: Raise me up according to thy word.

29 ☒ The way of falsehood remove from me, And thy law grant me graciously.

30 ☒ The way of truth I have chosen; Thy judgments I have set before me.

31 ☒ I have cleaved to thy testimonies, O Jehovah Let me not be put to shame.

32 ☒ The way of thy statutes I will run, When thou shalt have enlarged my heart.

☒ [**He**.]

33 ☒ Teach me, O Jehovah! the way of thy statutes, And I will keep it unto the end.

34 ☒ Make me to understand, and I will observe thy law, And keep it with my whole heart.

35 ☒ Direct me in the way of thy statutes; For in it is my delight.

36 ☒ Incline my heart to thy testimonies, And not to covetousness.

37 ☒ Turn away my eyes from seeing vanity; In thy way quicken me.

38 ☒ Confirm to thy servant thy word, Who to thy fear *is devoted*

39 ☒ Remove my reproach which I have dreaded, For thy judgments are good.

40 ☒ Behold! I have longed after thy commandments: In thy righteousness quicken me.

☒ [**Vau**.]

41 ☒ And let come to me thy mercies, O Jehovah! Thy salvation according to thy word.

42 ☒ And I will answer a word to him who reproacheth me; For I have trusted in thy word.

43 ☒ And take not from my mouth the word of truth utterly: Because for thy judgments I wait.

44 ☒ And I will keep thy law continually, For ever and ever.

45 ☒ And I will walk at large; For thy statutes I have sought.

46 ☒ And I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, And will not be ashamed.

47 ☒ And I will delight myself in thy commandments Which I have loved.

48 ☒ And I will lift up my hands to thy commandments Which I have loved; And I will meditate upon thy statutes.

☒ [**Zain**.]

49 ☒ Remember thy word to thy servant, Upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

50 ☒ This is my consolation in my affliction; For thy word revives me.

51 ☒ The proud ones have derided me exceedingly: From thy law I have not declined.

52 ☒ I remembered thy judgments of old, O Jehovah! And comforted myself.

53 ☒ Terror hath seized upon me, Because of the ungodly who forsake thy law.

54 ☒ Thy statutes have been songs to me In the house of my pilgrimage.

55 ☒ I remembered in the night thy name, O Jehovah! And I will keep thy law.

56 ☒ This is done to me, Because thy statutes I have observed.

ח [**Cheth**.]

57 ח *Thou art* my portion, O Jehovah! I have said that I will keep thy words. [389]

58 ח I have sought thy face with my whole heart; Have mercy upon me according to thy word.

59 ח I thought upon my ways, And turned my feet to thy testimonies.

60 ח I made haste and delayed not To keep thy commandments.

61 ח The cords of the ungodly have caught hold of me; Thy law I have not forgotten.

62 ח At midnight I will rise to praise thee, Because of the judgments of thy righteousness.

63 ח A companion am I to all who fear thee, And who keep thy statutes.

64 ח Of thy mercy, O Jehovah! the earth is full: Thy statutes teach thou me.

ט [**Teth**.]

65 ט Kindly hast thou dealt with thy servant, O Jehovah! According to thy word.

66 ט Goodness of taste and knowledge teach me; For thy commandments I have believed.

67 ט Before I was brought low I went astray; But now thy word I keep.

68 ט Good *art* thou, and beneficent: Teach me thy statutes.

69 ט Weaved a lie [390] against me have the proud ones; *But as for me* I with my whole heart will keep statutes.

70 ט Fat as grease is their heart; *But as for me* I in thy law do delight.

71 ט *It hath been* good for me that I have been afflicted, That I might learn thy statutes.

72 ט Better to me is the law of thy mouth Than thousands of gold and silver.

י [**Yod**.]

73 י Thy hands have made and formed me; Make me to understand, and I shall learn thy commandments.

74 י Those who fear thee shall see me and rejoice; Because for thy word I have waited.

75 י I have known, O Jehovah! that righteousness are thy judgments; And in truth thou hast humbled me.

76 י To thy word to thy servant.

77 י Let come to me thy compassions, and I shall live; For thy law is my delight.

78 י Ashamed let be the proud, for they have falsely wronged me: As for me I will meditate upon thy precepts.

79 י Let those turn unto me who fear thee, And have known thy testimonies.

80 י Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, That I may not be put to shame.

כ [**Caph**.]

81 כ Fainted for thy salvation hath my soul: For thy word I wait.

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389 Here the reading in the Latin text is ambiguous. The above is the reading in the French version; and as determined by Calvin in the Commentary.

390 In the French version it is, "have forged lies."

82 Failed have my eyes [*in looking*] for thy word, While I say, "When wilt thou comfort me?"

83 For I have been as a bottle in the smoke; *And yet* thy statutes I have not forgotten.

84 How many are the days of thy servant? When wilt thou execute judgment on my persecutors?

85 The proud have digged pits for me, Which is not according to thy law.

86 All thy commandments are truth: Deceitfully do they persecute me; *therefore* help thou me.

87 Almost have they consumed me upon the earth; Yet I have not forsaken thy statutes.

88 According to thy goodness quicken me; And I will keep the testimony of thy mouth.

[**Lamed**.]

89 For ever, O Jehovah! Thy word endureth in the heavens.

90 From generation to generation *is* thy truth: Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

91 By thy judgments they continue to this day; For all are thy servants.

92 Unless thy law *had been* my delight, Then should I have perished in my affliction.

93 Never will I forget thy statutes, For in them thou hast quickened me.

94 Thine I am; O save me! For thy statutes I have sought.

95 For me wait do the ungodly to destroy me: *But* I consider thy testimonies.

96 In all perfection I have seen an end: Broad is thy commandment exceedingly.

[**Mem**.]

97 O how have I loved thy law! All the day it is my meditation.

98 Than my adversaries thou hast made me wiser by thy commandments; Because for ever they are with me.

99 Than all my teachers thou hast made me wiser; Because thy testimonies are my meditation.

100 Than the aged I have more understanding; Because thy statutes I have observed.

101 From every evil path I have restrained my feet, That I may keep thy word.

102 From thy judgments I have not declined; For thou thyself hast taught me.

103 How sweet to my palate have been thy words! More [*sweet*] than honey to my mouth!

104 By thy statutes I have gotten understanding; Therefore I have hated every path of falsehood.

[**Nun**.]

105 A lamp to my feet is thy word, And a light to my path.

106 I have sworn and will make sure, To observe the judgments of thy righteousness.

107 I am afflicted exceedingly, O Jehovah! Quicken me according to thy word.

108 I Let the freewill *offerings* of my mouth, I pray thee, be pleasing to thee, O Jehovah! And thy judgments teach me.

109 My soul *is* in my hand continually; And thy law I have not forgotten.

110 Laid have the ungodly a snare for me: Yet from thy statutes I have not erred.

111 I have as [*my*] inheritance thy testimonies for ever; For the joy of my heart are they.

112 I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes For ever, and even to the end.

[**Samech**.]

113 *Crooked* thoughts I have hated; But thy law I have loved.

114 My hiding-place and my shield art thou: In thy word I have trusted.

115 Depart from me, ye wicked men! And I will keep the commandments of my God.

116 Sustain me by thy word, and I shall live: And make me not ashamed of my expectation.

117 Establish me, and I shall be safe, And I will consider thy statutes continually.

118 Thou hast trodden down all who go astray from thy statutes; For falsehood is their deceit.

119 *As* dross thou hast made to cease all the ungodly of the earth; Therefore I have loved thy testimonies.

120 Tremble [391] for fear of thee did my flesh, And of thy judgments I was afraid.

[**Ain**.]

121 I have done judgment and righteousness: Give me not up to my oppressors.

122 Become surety for thy servant for good, That the proud may not oppress me.

123 My eyes have failed for thy salvation, And for the word of thy righteousness.

124 Deal with thy servant according to thy goodness, And thy statutes teach thou me.

125 Thy servant am I, give me understanding, That I may learn thy testimonies.

126 *It is* time [*for thee*] to work, O Jehovah! *For they* have destroyed thy law.

127 Therefore I have loved thy statutes Mere than gold and fine gold.

128 Therefore all *thy* commandments I have esteemed *to be* altogether right: Every way of falsehood I have hated:

[**Phe**.]

129 Marvelous things *are* thy testimonies; Therefore observed them hath my soul.

130 The entrance of thy words is light, Giving understanding to the little ones.

131 My mouth I opened and panted, Because thy commandments I loved.

132 Look upon me and have pity upon me, According to *thy* judgment towards those who love thy name.

391 "Horruit." — *Lat.*

133 ם My steps direct thou according to thy word, And let not any iniquity have dominion in me.

134 ם Redeem me from the oppression of men, And I will keep thy precepts.

135 ם Thy face cause thou to shine upon thy servant, And teach me thy statutes.

136 ם Rivers of waters run from my eyes, Because they have not kept thy law.

צ [**Tsadde**.]

137 צ Righteous art thou, O Jehovah! And right *are* thy judgments.

138 צ Thou hast commanded righteousness *in* thy testimonies, And truth exceedingly.

139 צ Consumed me hath my zeal, Because forgotten thy words have my adversaries.

140 צ Refined *is* thy word exceedingly: And thy servant hath loved it.

141 צ Small *am* I, and despised; [*Yet*] thy precepts I have not forgotten.

142 צ Thy righteousness *is* righteousness for ever, And thy law is truth.

143 צ Trouble and anguish have come upon me; *But* thy commandments *have been* my delights.

144 צ The righteousness of thy testimonies *endureth* for ever; Make me to understand, and I shall live.

ק [**Koph**.]

145 ק I have cried with my whole heart; Answer me, O Jehovah! *And* thy statutes I will keep.

146 ק I have called upon thee, save me, And I will keep thy testimonies.

147 ק I have prevented the dawn of the morning, [392] and have cried: To thy word I have looked up.

148 ק Prevented have my eyes the watches *of the night*, To meditate upon thy word.

149 ק My voice hear thou, according to thy mercy, O Jehovah According to thy judgment quicken me.

150 ק Drawn near have the pursuers of malice; From thy law they have departed.

151 ק Near art thou, O Jehovah! And all thy commandments *are* truth.

152 ק From the beginning I have known from thy testimonies, That for ever thou hast founded them.

ר [**Resh**.]

153 ר Behold my affliction, and rescue me; For thy law I have not forgotten.

154 ר Debate my cause, and redeem me; According to thy word quicken me.

155 ר Far from the ungodly is safety; Because thy statutes they have not sought.

156 ר Thy compassions *are* great, O Jehovah! According to thy judgments quicken me.

157 ר Many *are* my persecutors and my oppressors: From thy testimonies I have not declined.

392 Literally, "I have prevented the twilight." — But see the Commentary.

158 I saw the perfidious, and chid them; Because thy word they have not kept.

159 Behold how thy commandments I have loved: According to thy clemency quicken me.

160 The beginning of thy word *is* truth; And to everlasting *is* all the judgment of thy righteousness.

[**Shin**.]

161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause Yet at thy word afraid hath been my heart.

162 Joyful am I over thy word, As he who hath found much spoil.

163 Deceit I *have* hated and abhorred; Thy law I *have* loved.

164 Seven times a day have I praised thee, Because of the judgments of thy righteousness.

165 Much peace have those who love thy law, And they have no stumbling-block.

166 I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah! And thy commandments I have done.

167 Kept hath my soul thy testimonies, And I have loved them exceedingly.

168 I have kept thy commandments and thy testimonies; For all my ways *are* before thee.

[**Thau**.]

169 Come let my cry into thy presence, O Jehovah! According to thy word give me understanding.

170 Come let my prayer into thy presence: According to thy word deliver me.

171 Speak shall my lips praise, When thou shalt have taught me thy statutes.

172 Speak shall my tongue of thy word; For all thy precepts are righteousness.

173 Let thy hand be to succor me; For thy commandments I have chosen.

174 I have longed for thy salvation, O Jehovah! And thy law *hath been* my delights.

175 Live let my soul, and let it praise thee; And let thy judgments succor me.

176 I have wandered like a lost sheep; Seek thy servant, for thy statutes I have not forgotten.

PSALM 120

A Song of Degrees

1 To Jehovah in my distress I cried, And he answered me.

2 O Jehovah! deliver my soul from the lip of falsehood, From the tongue of deceit.

3 What give thee, and what avail thee Shall the tongue of deceit?

4 The arrows of a strong *man* sharpened, With coals of junipers.

5 Alas for me! that I have been a sojourner in Meseeh, *And* have dwelt among the tents of Kedar.

6 Long dwelt hath my soul with him who hateth peace.

7 I [*am for*] peace; But when I speak, they [*are*] for war.

PSALM 121

A Song of Degrees

1 I will lift up my eyes to the mountains, Whence come shall my help.
2 My help *cometh* from Jehovah, Who made heaven and earth.
3 He will not suffer thy foot to stumble; Slumber not shall thy guardian.
4 Behold! slumber not nor sleep Shall the guardian of Israel.
5 Jehovah *is* thy guardian; Jehovah *is thy* defense on thy right hand.
6 By day the sun shall not smite thee, Nor the moon by night.
7 Jehovah shall keep thee from all evil; He shall keep thy soul.
8 Jehovah shall keep thy going out and thy coming in, From this time, and for ever.

PSALM 122

A Song of Degrees Of David

1 I was glad when they said to me, "Into the house of Jehovah we will go.

2 "Our feet shall be standing in thy gates, O Jerusalem!"

3 Jerusalem built as a city, compact in itself together.

4 Thither ascended the tribes, the tribes of God, For a testimony to Israel, To celebrate the name of Jehovah.

5 For there have sat [393] thrones for judgment, The thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray ye for the peace of Jerusalem: Prosper may those who love thee!

7 Peace be within thy bulwark! Prosperity within thy towers!

8 For the sake of my brethren and my neighbors, I will say now, "Peace [*be*] within thee!"

9 For the sake of the house of Jehovah our God, I will seek good for thee.

393 In the French version it is, "for there are set."

PSALM 123

A Song of Degrees

1 To thee will I lift up mine eyes, [*O thou*] who dwellest in the heavens!

2 Behold! as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters; As the eyes of a handmaid *look* to the hand of her mistress, So our eyes [*look*] to Jehovah our God, Until he have mercy upon us.

3 Have mercy upon us, O Jehovah! have mercy upon us; For we are exceedingly filled with reproach.

4 Exceedingly filled in itself is our soul With the mockery of the rich, With the contempt of the proud.

PSALM 124

A Song of Degrees. Of David

1 "But for Jehovah who was on our side" — Say now may Israel:

2 "But for Jehovah who was on our side, "When men rose up against us;

3 "Then alive had they swallowed us up, "When kindled was their wrath against us;

4 "Then the waters had overwhelmed us, "The torrent had gone over our soul:

5 "Then had gone over our soul the proud waters."

6 Blessed *be* Jehovah, Who gave us not for a prey to their teeth.

7 Our soul as a bird, hath been rescued [394] from the snare of the fowlers; The snare hath been broken, and we have been delivered.

8 Our help *is* in the name of Jehovah, Who made heaven and earth.

394 "Is escaped." — *Fr.*

PSALM 125

A Song of Degrees

1 They who confide in Jehovah *are as* mount Zion, *Which* shall not be removed, *but* shall abide for ever.

2 As the mountains *are* about Jerusalem, So Jehovah *is* round about his people, From henceforth, and for ever.

3 For rest not shall the scepter of the ungodly ones upon the lot of the just, Lest the just ones should put forth to iniquity their hands.

4 Do good, O Jehovah! to the good, And to *those who* are upright in their hearts.

5 But those who turn aside into their crooked paths, Jehovah shall make them walk with the workers of iniquity: *But there shall be* peace upon Israel.

PSALM 126

A Song of Degrees

1 When bring back did Jehovah the captivity of Zion, We were like those that dream.

2 Now filled with laughter *shall* be our mouth, And our tongue with exultation: Now shall they say among the heathen, "Great things Jehovah hath done for them."

3 Great things Jehovah hath done for us, *Whereof* we have been made glad.

4 Bring back, O Jehovah! our captivity, As rivers in the South.

5 They who sow in tears In exultation shall reap.

6 Going forth, he shall go and weep, Carrying the price of the seed: Returning he shall return with exultation, Bearing his sheaves.

PSALM 127

A Song of Degrees. Of Solomon

1 Except Jehovah build the house, In vain they labor that build it; Except Jehovah keep the city, In vain watcheth the watchman.

2 Vain *is it* for you early to hasten to rise, To go late to rest, To eat the bread of sorrows: *For* thus will he give to his beloved one sleep.

3 Lo! the heritage of Jehovah are children: The reward *which he bestows* is the fruit of the womb.

4 As arrows in the hand of a strong man, So *are* the sons of youth.

5 Blessed is the man who shall have filled his quiver with them; *For* they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

PSALM 128

A Song of Degrees

1 Blessed *is* the man who feareth Jehovah, Who walketh in his ways.

2 The labor of thy hands when thou shalt eat thou shalt be blessed, And it *shall be* well with thee.

3 Thy wife *shall be* as a vine fruitful on the sides of thy house: Thy children as plants of olives around thy table.

4 Lo! surely, thus blessed shall be the man who feareth Jehovah.

5 Bless thee shall Jehovah from Zion; And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

6 And thou shalt see thy children's children, *And* peace upon Israel.

PSALM 129

A Song of Degrees

1 "Often have they afflicted me from my youths" Say now let Israel:

2 "Often have they afflicted me from my youth; "Yet they have not prevailed against me.

3 "Upon my back ploughed have the ploughers; "They have made long their furrows.

4 "Jehovah, who is righteous, hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked."

5 Confounded and turned backward shall be all who hate Zion.

6 They shall be as the grass of the housetops, Which before it cometh forth is withered:

7 With which the mower hath not filled his hand, Nor his bosom he who gathereth handfuls.

8 Nor have they said who pass by, "The blessing of Jehovah *be* upon you, "We bless you in the name of Jehovah."

PSALM 130

A Song of Degrees

1 Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O Jehovah!

2 O Lord! hear my voice; Let thy ears be attentive to the voice of my prayers.

3 If iniquities thou shouldest mark, O God! O Lord! who shall stand?

4 For with thee is forgiveness that thou mayest be feared.

5 I have waited for Jehovah, waited hath my soul; And in his word have I hoped.

6 My soul [*hath waited*] for the Lord Before the watchers of the morning, the watchers of the morning.

7 But [395] hope let Israel in Jehovah; For with Jehovah *there is* mercy, And with him there is plenteous redemption.

8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

395 This supplement is in the Latin version but not in the French.

PSALM 131

A Song of Degrees. Of David

1 O Jehovah! my heart hath not been elated, Nor lifted up have been my eyes, Nor have I exercised myself in great matters, Or in things hidden from me.

2 If I have not framed [*or set*] and quieted my soul, Like one that is weaned from his mother, — [396] Like a child that is weaned is my soul upon me.

3 Hope shall Israel in Jehovah From henceforth, and for ever.

396 These two lines which are David's oath are in the abrupt form in which the Jews were accustomed to swear.

PSALM 132

A Song of Degrees

1 Remember, O Jehovah! David With all his affliction:

2 Who sware to Jehovah, [*Who*] vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob:

3 "If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house, "If I shall go up upon the covering of my bed,

4 "If I give sleep to my eyes, "To my eyelids slumber,

5 "Until I find a place for Jehovah, "Habitations for the mighty God of Jacob," — [397]

6 Lo! we heard of it at Ephratha; We found it in the fields of the wood.

7 We will enter into his habitations, We will worship at his footstool.

8 Arise, O Jehovah! into thy rest, Thou and the ark of thy strength.

9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, And let thy meek ones exult.

10 For the sake of David thy servant Turn not away the face of thy Christ.

11 Sworn hath Jehovah to David in truth, Nor will he turn from it: "Of the fruit of thy belly will I set upon thy throne.

12 "If thy children shall keep my covenant, "And my testimonies, which I will teach them; "Also their children for ever shall sit upon thy throne."

13 For chosen hath Jehovah Zion; He hath desired her for a habitation to himself.

14 "This is my rest for ever; "Here will I dwell, because I have loved her.

15 "Her provision blessing I will bless;" Her poor I will satisfy with bread.

16 "And her priests I will clothe with salvation; "And her merciful ones with exultation shall exult.

17 "There will I make to bud the horn of David: "I have prepared a lamp for my Christ.

18 "His enemies will I clothe with shame, "And upon him flourish shall his crown."

397 These two verses have also the abrupt termination characteristic of the Jewish form of swearing.

PSALM 133

A Song of Degrees. Of David

1 Behold! how good, and how becoming, That brethren should even dwell together!

2 Like the precious oil upon the head, Which descendeth [398] upon the beard, the beard of Aaron, Which descendeth upon the skirt of his garments.

3 Like the dew of Hermon, Which descendeth upon the mountains of Zion: For there commanded hath Jehovah the blessing, Life for evermore.

398 "Descendit." — *Lat.* "Descend." — *Fr.*

PSALM 134

A Song of Degrees

1 Behold! bless ye Jehovah, All ye servants of Jehovah! Who stand in the house of Jehovah nightly.

2 Lift up your hands to the sanctuary, And bless ye Jehovah.

3 May Jehovah bless thee out of Zion, [*Even he*] who hath made heaven and earth.

PSALM 135

Hallelujah

1 Praise ye the name of Jehovah; Praise [*it*] O ye servants of Jehovah!

2 Who stand in the house of Jehovah, [*And ye who stand*] in the courts of the house of our God.

3 Praise God; for good *is* Jehovah: Sing to his name; for it is pleasant:

4 For God hath chosen Jacob to himself, Israel for his own possession.

5 For I know that great is Jehovah, And *that* our God is above all gods.

6 All things which Jehovah pleaseth, he doeth in the heavens and on the earth, In the sea and in all the deeps.

7 Causing the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth: The lightnings for the rain he maketh, Bringing forth the wind out of his secret places.

8 He smote the first born of Egypt, From man even unto beast.

9 He sent signs and wonders in the midst of thee, O Egypt! On Pharaoh and on all his servants.

10 He smote great nations, And slew mighty kings.

11 Sihon, king of the Amorites, And Og the king of Basham, And all the kingdoms of Canaan.

12 And gave their land for an heritage, An heritage to Israel, his people.

13 O Jehovah! thy name *is* for ever; O Jehovah! thy memorial *is* from generation to generation.

14 For judge will Jehovah his people, And concerning his servants he will repent himself.

15 The images of the nations *are* silver and gold, The work of the hands of man.

16 A mouth have they, and they will not speak; [399] Eyes have they, and they will not see.

17 Ears have they, and they will not hear: Also, there is no breath in their mouth.

18 Like unto them are those who make them, *And* every one who trusteth in them.

19 O house of Israel! bless ye Jehovah; O house of Aaron! bless ye Jehovah;

20 O house of Levi! bless ye Jehovah; O ye who fear Jehovah! bless ye Jehovah.

21 Blessed *be* Jehovah out of Zion, Who dwelleth at Jerusalem. Hallelujah.

399 In the French version the verb for "speak" in this line; and the verbs for "see" and "hear" in the two next lines, are in the present tense.

PSALM 136

1 Praise Jehovah, for *he is* good, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

2 Praise the God of gods, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

3 Praise the Lord of lords, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

4 Who hath done wonders great alone, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

5 Who hath made the heavens in wisdom, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

6 Who hath stretched out the earth above the waters, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

7 Who hath made the great lights, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

8 The sun for rule by day, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

9 The moon and stars for rule by night, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

10 Who smote the Egyptians in their first born, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

11 And brought out Israel from the midst of them, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

12 With a hand of strength and an arm stretched out, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

13 Who divided the Red Sea into divisions, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

15 And cast Pharaoh and his host headlong into the Red Sea, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

16 And led his people through the wilderness, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

17 Who smote great kings, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

18 And slew renowned kings, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

19 Sihon, king of the Arnorites, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

20 And Og, the king of Bashan, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

21 And gave their land for an heritage, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

22 An heritage to Israel his servant, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

23 Who in our humiliation remembered us, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

24 And rescued us from our oppressors, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

25 Who giveth food to all flesh, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

26 Make acknowledgments to the God of heavens, For to everlasting *endureth* his mercy.

PSALM 137

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, Yea we wept when we remembered thee, O Zion!

2 Upon the willows, in the midst thereof, We hanged our harps.

3 Then they required of us, they who carried us away captive, the words of a song, And, when we were in suspense, mirth, [*Saying*] Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

4 How shall we sing the song of Jehovah, In a strange land?

5 If I shall forget thee, O Jerusalem! Forget let my right hand [*its cunning*.]

6 Cleave let my tongue to my palate, If I do not remember thee, If I do not raise Jerusalem above my highest joy. [400]

7 Remember, O Jehovah! the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem: 'Who said, "Lay it bare — "Lay it bare, even to the foundations thereof."

8 O daughter of Babylon laid waste! Happy he who shall repay thee The retribution with which thou hast retributed us!

9 Happy he who shall take And dash thy little ones against the stones.

400 Literally, "above the head of my joy."

PSALM 138

Of David

1 I will celebrate thee with my whole heart; Before the gods! will sing psalms to thee.

2 I will worship *thee* towards the temple of thy holiness, And sing to thy name for thy mercy and for thy truth; For thou hast magnified above all *things* thy name by thy word.

3 In the day *when*, I cried *to thee*, then thou heardest me, Thou didst abundantly minister to me strength in my soul.

4 Celebrate thee, O Jehovah! let all the kings of the earth; For they have heard the words of thy mouth.

5 And let them sing in the ways of Jehovah, For great is the glory of Jehovah.

6 For high *is* Jehovah; yet the lowly he will regard; And being high will know afar off:

7 If I shall walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me; Against the wrath of my enemies thou wilt put forth thy hand, And save me shall thy right hand.

8 Jehovah will perform in me *his work*, O Jehovah! thy mercy is from everlasting; The works of thy hands thou wilt not forsake.

PSALM 139

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David

1 O Jehovah! thou hast searched me and known *me*

2 Thou hast known my down sitting and my uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 My path and my lying down thou besiegest, And with all my ways thou art acquainted.

4 For there is not a word in my tongue [*But*] lo! O God! thou knowest it altogether.

5 Behind and before thou hast shut me up, And hast laid upon me thy hand.

6 Wonderful is *thy* knowledge above me; It is high, I cannot *attain* to it.

7 Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? And whither from thy time shall I flee?

8 If I ascend up into the heavens, there thou art; If I lie down [401] in the sepulcher, behold! thou [*art there.*]

9 Should I take the wings of the morning, That I may dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

10 Even there thy hand shall lead me, And hold me shall thy right hand.

11 If I should say: "At least the darkness shall cover me; " "And the night shall be light for me;"

12 Even the darkness shall not hide from the And the night as the day shall shine, And the darkness as the light.

13 For thou hast possessed my reins; Thou hast covered me in the womb of my mother.

14 I will celebrate thee; for I have been fearfully and wonderfully made: [402] Marvelous are thy works, And my soul shall know them full well.

15 Not hidden is my strength from thee, Which thou hast made in secret: I was woven together in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 My shapelessness see did thine eyes; [403] In thy book all shall be written; They were formed *in many* days, And *there was* not one of them.

17 And towards me how precious are thy thoughts, O God! How great *are* the sums of them!

18 If I should count them; above the sand they shall be multiplied: I am awakened, and still I am with thee.

19 If thou shalt slay, O God! the wicked, Then ye men of bloods depart from me.

20 Who have spoken of thee wickedly: Taken thy name falsely have thy adversaries.

21 Thy haters, O Jehovah! shall not I hate? And with those that rise up against thee shall I not strive?

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401 "If I make my bed" — *Fr.*

402 Literally, "for terribly I have been made wonderful."

403 "Thine eyes did see me when I was yet without form." — *Fr.*

22 With perfect hatred I have hated them, As my enemies I have held them.

23 Search me, O God! and know my heart: Examine me and know my thoughts.

24 And know whether the way of wickedness be in me, And lead me in the way of this life.

PSALM 140

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David

1 Deliver me, O Jehovah! from the evil man: From the man of injuries do thou preserve me.

2 Who devise mischiefs in *their* heart; Daily do they congregate for wars.

3 Sharpened have they their tongue like a serpent: The poison of an asp is under their lips. Selah.

4 Keep me, O Jehovah! from the hands of the ungodly: From the man of injuries preserve me; Who plot to overthrow my goings.

5 Laid have the proud a snare for me: And with cords they have spread a net: By the wayside traps have they set for me. Selah.

6 I said, O Jehovah! my God are thou: Listen, O Jehovah! to the voice of my supplication.

7 O Jehovah, my Lord! the strength of my salvation, Thou hast put a covering on my head in the day of arms.

8 Grant not, O Jehovah! the desires of the ungodly man: They have devised, consummate thou not, they shall be exalted. Selah.

9 [*As for*] the head of those who encompass me, Let the mischief of his lips cover him.

10 Fall upon them let coals with fire: He shall cast them into deep pits, They shall not rise again.

11 The man of tongue shall not be established in the earth: The man of violence, evil shall hunt him to banishments.

12 I have known that accomplish will Jehovah the judgment of the poor one, The judgment of the afflicted one.

13 Surely the righteous ones will celebrate thy name, Dwell shall the upright ones before thy face.

PSALM 141

A Psalm of David

1 O Jehovah! I have cried to thee: Haste thou to me: Listen to my voice when I cry to thee.

2 Directed let my prayer be as incense before thy face: [*Let*] the lifting up of my hands [*be*] as the sacrifice of the evening.

3 Set, O Jehovah! a watch to my mouth; Keep a guard upon the door of my lips.

4 Incline not my heart to an evil thing, To commit works of ungodliness with the men who work iniquity; And let me not eat of their dainties.

5 Smite me let the righteous man, [*it shall be*] a kindness; And let him chastise me, [*it shall be*] an oil that is precious, It shall not break my head: For yet also my prayer *shall be* in their calamities.

6 Cast down on stony places have been their judges: And they shall hear my words, for they are sweet.

7 As he who breaketh and cutteth on the earth, Scattered have been our bones at the mouth of the grave.

8 Because to thee, O Jehovah! my Lord! *are* my eyes, In thee I have hoped: do not leave destitute my soul.

9 Keep me from the hands of the snare which they have spread for me. From the nets of those who work iniquity.

10 Fall into his nets let the ungodly ones together, Until I escape.

PSALM 142

Maschil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer

1 With my voice to, Jehovah I cried; With my voice to. Jehovah I made supplication.

2 I poured out before his face my meditation; My affliction before his face I declare.

3 When perplexed within me was my spirit, And thou knewest my path: In the way wherein I walked, they laid a snare for me.

4 On looking to the right hand, and beholding, None there was who would know me, Perish did refuge from me, [*There was*] no man seeking after my soul.

5 I cried to thee, O Jehovah! I said, Thou *art* my hope, My portion in the land of the living.

6 Attend to my cry, For under affliction I labor exceedingly: Deliver me from my persecutors, For they are too strong for me.

7 Rescue from prison my soul, That I may celebrate thy name: Crown me shall the righteous ones, For thou shalt recompense me.

PSALM 143

A Psalm of David

1 O Jehovah! hear my prayer; Give ear to my supplication; In thy truth answer me, in thy righteousness.

2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant, For there shall not be justified in thy sight any living man.

3 For persecuted hath the enemy my soul; He hath prostrated on the earth my life; He hath set me in dark *places*, as the dead of an age.

4 And perplexed within me is my spirit Within me astonished is my heart.

5 I remembered the days of old, I meditated on all thy doings; Upon the work of thy hands I meditated.

6 I spread out my hearts to thee; My soul, as the earth without water, *is* to thee. Selah.

7 Hasten, answer me, O Jehovah! Fail doth my spirit: Hide not thy face from me, Because I shall be like to those who descend into the pit.

8 Cause me to hear in the morning thy mercy, For in thee have I hoped: Show me the way in which I may walk, For to thee have I lifted up my soul.

9 Deliver me from my enemies, O Jehovah! With thee have I hidden [*myself.*]

10 Teach me to do thy will, For thou *art* my God: Let thy good Spirit lead me into the right land.

11 Because of thy name, O Jehovah I thou wilt quicken me: In thy righteousness bring out of trouble my soul.

12 And in thy mercy thou wilt scatter my enemies, And wilt destroy all those who afflict my soul; Because I *am* thy servant.

PSALM 144

Of David

1 Blessed *be* Jehovah, my strength, Who teacheth my hands for the fight, My fingers for the battle.

2 My goodness, and my fortress, My citadel, my deliverer for me, My shield, and in him I have hoped, Who subdueth my people under me.

3 O Jehovah! what is man that thou acknowledgest him? The son of man that thou thinkest of him?

4 Man to vanity is like, His days [*are*] as a shadow that is passing.

5 O Jehovah! bow thy heavens and descend: Touch the mountains and they shall smoke.

6 Thunder forth thunderings and scatter them; Shoot out thy arrows, and destroy them.

7 Send thy hand from on high; Rescue me and deliver me from waters great, From the hand of the sons of the alien.

8 For their mouth hath spoken falsehood, And their right hand is a right hand of deceit.

9 O God! a song that is new I will sing to thee: Upon the nablum, upon the psaltery I will sing psalms to thee

10 Who givest salvation to kings, Who redeemest David his servant from the hurtful sword.

11 Redeem me, and rescue me, From the hand of the sons of the alien, Whose mouth hath spoken falsehood, And their right hand *is* a right hand of deceit.

12 Because our sons *are* as plants Which have grown up in their youth; Our daughters as corners polished After the similitude of a palace.

13 Our recesses full, Supplying all kinds of good things. Our sheep bringing forth thousands, [*Yea*] ten thousands in our streets.

14 Our oxen to the burden accustomed; No breach, nor going out, Nor cry in our streets.

15 Happy the people to whom it is so, To whom Jehovah is their God.

PSALM 145

Praise of David

1 I will exalt thee, my God, *my* King! And will bless thy name for ever and ever.

2 Every day will I bless thee, And praise thy name for ever and ever.

3 Great *is* Jehovah, and to be praised greatly, And his greatness is incomprehensible.

4 Generation to generation shall praise thy works, And thy power they shall declare.

5 Upon the majesty of the glory of thy excellence, And upon the words of thy wonders, I will meditate.

6 And the might of thy terrible *works* shall they recount; And thy greatness I will declare.

7 The memory of the greatness of thy goodness they shall speak forth; And of thy righteousness they shall sing.

8 Gracious and compassionate *is* Jehovah, Slow to anger and great in clemency.

9 Good *is* Jehovah to all, And his compassions *are* over all his works.

10 Celebrate thee, O Jehovah! shall all thy works, And thy meek ones shall bless thee.

11 Of the glory of thy kingdom they shall tell, And of thy power they shall speak:

12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, And the glory of the beauty of his kingdom.

13 Thy kingdom *is* a kingdom of all ages, And thy dominion is throughout generations of generations.

14 Uphold doth Jehovah all the falling, He raiseth up all who are bowed down.

15 The eyes of all in thee do hope, And thou givest them their food in its season.

16 Thou openest thy hand And satisfiest every living *creature* by thy good pleasure.

17 Righteous *is* Jehovah in all his ways, And merciful in all his works.

18 Near *is* Jehovah to all who call upon him, To all who call upon him in truth.

19 The desire of those who fear him he will perform, And their cry he will hear, told he will save then,.

20 Keep doth Jehovah all who love him, And all the wicked he will destroy.

21 The praise of Jehovah speak shall my mouth: And bless shall all flesh his holy name for ever and ever.

PSALM 146

Hallelujah

1 Praise, O my soul! Jehovah.

2 I will praise Jehovah in my life; I will sing psalms to my God, while I have being.

3 Confide not in princes, *Nor* in the son of man, in whom there is not help.

4 Go forth shall his breath, He shall return to his earth, In that day perish shall his thoughts.

5 Blessed *is* he who hath for his help the God of Jacob; Whose hope is in Jehovah, his God:

6 Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that is in them: Who keepeth truth for ever:

7 Who doeth judgment for those who are unrighteously oppressed: Who giveth bread to the hungry: Jehovah looseth the prisoners;

8 Jehovah enlighteneth the blind; Jehovah raiseth up those who are bowed down; Jehovah loveth the righteous;

9 Jehovah keepeth the strangers; The orphan and the widow he succoureth; And the way of the ungodly he will destroy.

10 Reign shall Jehovah for ever: Thy God, O Zion, *is* from generation to generation. Hallelujah.

PSALM 147

1 Praise ye God; For it is a good *thing* to sing psalms to our God, For *it is* pleasant, comely *is* praise.

2 Build up Jerusalem doth Jehovah, The dispersed of Israel he will gather.

3 He healeth the contrite in heart; He bindeth their sorrows. [404]

4 He counteth the multitude of the stars: To each of them names doth he give.

5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power, His understanding is infinite.

6 Raise up the afflicted ones doth Jehovah, He casteth down the ungodly ones to the ground.

7 Sing to Jehovah in praise, Sing psalms to our God upon the harp.

8 Who covereth the heavens with clouds, Who prepareth for the earth rain, Who maketh to spring up grass upon the mountains,

9 Who giveth to the cattle their food, To the young ones [405] of the ravens which cry to him.

10 Nor in the strength of the horse will he take pleasure, Nor in the legs of man will he delight.

11 Delight doth Jehovah in those who fear him, [*In those*] who hope in his mercy.

12 Celebrate, O Jerusalem! Jehovah; Praise thy God, O Zion!

13 For he strengtheneth the bars of thy gates; He blesseth thy children in the midst of thee.

14 Who maketh in thy borders peace; With the fatness of wheat he satisfieth thee.

15 When he sendeth forth his word upon the earth, Very swiftly run doth his word.

16 Who giveth snow *white* as wool; The hoarfrost as ashes he scattereth.

17 He casteth forth his ice as morsels: Before his cold who shall stand?

18 He shall send his word: red shall melt them: Blow shall his breath, *and* flow shall the waters.

19 He announceth his words to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments to Israel.

20 He hath not done so to every nation, And his judgments he hath not made known to them. Hallelujah.

404 "Their wounds." — *Fr.*

405 Literally, "to the sons."

PSALM 148

Hallelujah

1 Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens; Praise him in the heights.

2 Praise him, all ye his angels! Praise him, all ye his armies!

3 Praise him, ye Sun and Moon! Praise him, all ye shining stars!

4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens! And ye waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For he commanded and they were created:

6 And he established them for ever: For ever he hath set for them a decree, and it shall not pass beyond.

7 Praise Jehovah, ye *creatures* from the earth! Dragons, and all deeps!

8 Fire and hail, snow and ice! Wind of storm, executing his word!

9 Mountains, and all hills! The tree bearing fruit, and all cedars!

10 Wild beasts, and all cattle! Reptile, and winged birds!

11 Kings of the earth, and all peoples! Princes, and all judges of the earth!

12 Young men, and also maidens! Old men with children!

13 Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For high is his name alone; His praise is above the earth and heavens.

14 And he hath exalted the horn of his people: Praise *is* to all his merciful ones, To the children of Israel, A people which is near to him. Hallelujah.

PSALM 149

Hallelujah

1 Sing ye to Jehovah a song that is new: His praise *is* in the assembly of the merciful ones.

2 Rejoice let Israel in his Maker; Let the children of Zion exult in their king:

3 Let them praise his name on the pipe: On the timbrel and the harp let them sing psalms to him.

4 For taken pleasure hath Jehovah in his people: He will glorify the poor ones unto salvation.

5 Exult let the merciful ones in glory; Let them shout with joy on their couches.

6 The exaltations of God are in their mouth, And a sword of two edges in their hand;

7 To execute vengeance on the heathen, Chastisements on the nations:

8 To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron:

9 To execute upon them the judgment written. This honor is to all his merciful ones. Hallelujah.

PSALM 150
Hallelujah
1 Praise God in his sanctuary; Praise him in the firmament of his power.
2 Praise him in his might; Praise him for the multitude of his greatness:
3 Praise him with sound of trumpet; Praise him with nablum and harp.
4 Praise him with timbrel and pipe; Praise him with strings and organ.
5 Praise him with cymbals of sound; Praise him with cymbals of shouting.
6 Let every thing that breatheth praise God. Hallelujah.

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